

Art meant for subway stop
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While talks continued yesterday among family and friends deciding on Norval Morrisseau's final resting place, plans were being finalized for a show of seven generally unknown major works by the great Indian artist who died last week at age 75.

Yet, if the Ontario-born painter had his way, unseen work such as Thunderbird Transformation would have been part of Toronto's daily life from the 1980s on, after it had been translated into enormous displays of tile for the University Ave. subway station adjacent to the Royal Ontario Museum.

"He had an agreement with the City of Toronto in the '80s," Joseph McLeod, of the Maslak McLeod Gallery in Yorkville, said yesterday.

"But there were problems about details and about whether he was getting the proper amount of money. In the end, the original paintings were turned over to a single buyer who decided to sell them about a year ago," McLeod said.

"Norval Morrisseau RSVP," an exhibit of the seven large-scale "subway" canvases, opens Jan. 11 at the gallery.

Individual asking prices for the seven Morrisseau works such as Standing Brave are "around \$100,000," said McLeod, who insists they were determined well before the painter's death from complications associated with Parkinson's disease.

News of his death has sparked renewed interest in Morrisseau's work.

In Vancouver, where he sold artwork to survive his nights living on the street, collectors are turning up at the House of the Spirit Bear Gallery with works big and small - "even with bits of gypsum wall that he drew on," said gallery operator Darrell Gilmore yesterday.

The "RSVP" in the title of the Maslak McLeod Gallery exhibit is intended to facilitate viewing times in the tiny space at 118 Scollard St. A bigger space might now be needed, McLeod admitted.

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