



## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
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### **Canada welcomes Michel Hacala, French-Basque artist** **who is painting Canadian-Basque whaling scenes**

**(Toronto)** Michel Hacala has come to Quebec and Ontario to paint huge colourful images of Basque fishermen chasing whales in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in the late 1500s-early 1600s.

The highly successful painter-sculptor is himself from the Basque region of southwest France, and he even enjoyed a first career as a fisherman (in the Bay of Biscay, off France and Spain).

But why would he want to paint dreamy images from the pre-Jacques-Cartier era of Canada? You could say that he is chasing his ancestors and the contact they had with Canada's whales and its First Nations peoples.\*

An international exhibit of Hacala's historic Canadian whaling series is being planned by the Basque Museum of Bayonne (France) and the new Cité de l'Océan (opening in Biarritz, France, in 2011). Exhibition partners are being sought in Canada, Spain, and North American locales where Basque people have settled over the centuries.

Hacala spent the month of September doing creative research and then painting in the Bas-St-Laurent region of Quebec (St. Lawrence Lowlands), thanks to *Parc de l' aventure basque en Amérique* in Trois-Pistoles ([www.aventurebasque.ca](http://www.aventurebasque.ca)), and artist Caroline Jacques's workshop and gallery in St-Fabien ([www.carolinejacques.com](http://www.carolinejacques.com)). The seven images Hacala worked on were recently shown at the *Parc de l' aventure basque en Amérique* and in Ontario for museums, galleries, media, and other interested parties to see.

Evelyne Dufau, founder of Expérience Authentique ([www.FrenchSouthwest.com](http://www.FrenchSouthwest.com)), is Michel Hacala's agent in North America. Please contact her for further information about Hacala in Canada at (866) 760-9813 or 66 Baby Point Crescent, Toronto, Ontario M6S 2C1. Expérience Authentique organizes trips to the Basque coastal region of France and Spain, and more.

To see Michel Hacala's extraordinary body of work (paintings, sculptures, mosaics), visit [www.Hacala-art.com](http://www.Hacala-art.com). His recent large Painted-in-Canada paintings (200cm x 130cm) are priced at 6,000 euros (about \$8,500 Canadian).

\* Right and bowhead whales, once plentiful in the coastal Labrador waters and the Gulf of St. Lawrence estuary, attracted whalers from the Basque country during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. A thriving industry developed around whale oil, a highly prized commodity in Europe. Every spring until about 1626, the Basque sailed to their North American whaling stations, where they built stone ovens to prepare whale oil. Such ovens can be found on the Ile aux Basques (island of the Basques) that faces Trois-Pistoles, as well as a number of other artifacts.

Thanks to Guillaume Lamontagne, *Parc de l' aventure basque en Amérique*, for information for this news release.