Berkshire Museum Press Release
For Immediate Release: May 8, 2017
Media contact: Lesley Ann Beck, Senior Communications Manager
413.443.7171 ext. 320; lbeck@berkshirermuseum.org

Images available on request.

Berkshire Museum presents Berkshire Now: Shaun O’Boyle,
June 2 through August 21, 2017

[Pittsfield, Mass.] – The Berkshire Now gallery space at the Berkshire Museum will feature extraordinary images of Antarctica by photographer Shaun O’Boyle, on view from June 2 through August 21, 2017. The exhibition will open on Friday, June 2, from 5 to 8 p.m., in conjunction with Pittsfield’s First Fridays Artswalk, when the Museum’s Berkshire Now gallery is open to the public at no cost.

Breathtaking landscapes of glaciers, mountains, and ocean will be displayed alongside images of seals and penguins in their element, all taken during a seven-week photography project in Antarctica. Berkshire-based photographer Shaun O’Boyle was selected to participate in the National Science Foundation’s Antarctic Artists and Writers program; from October to December 2015 he took a series of pictures that now comprise Portraits of Place in Antarctica. Some of the most fascinating pictures in the exhibition are of architecture — the historic huts built over 100 years ago during the first explorations of the continent, and present day science stations and field camps.

“Photographing regions where human culture and history have shaped a unique architecture, infrastructure, and landscape is a driving force behind this work,” says O’Boyle. “This work attempts to look at the nuances and cultural significance of architecture and its place on the landscape. Buildings, particularly older ones in ruin, can be seen as having their original utility exhausted by the advance of progress. The
photographs leave an understanding of original architectural intent while at the same time the ruined or abandoned state calls into question that intent. Now, outside of the social framework in which the structure was conceived, history, narrative, story and time reframe the context in which these structures are seen. They become artifacts associated with ideas about exploration, struggle, empire, ownership, place, memory and history.”

An important element of the project, and now the exhibition, is to make comparisons between present day scientific activities and the historic buildings left from the early expeditions of Captain Robert Scott and Sir Ernest Shackleton. The present day science field camps, with their smaller scale and limited equipment make an interesting comparison to the early huts and science carried out by scientists who accompanied Scott and Shackleton. Many of the same scientific disciplines are still active and ongoing today, such as meteorology, glacial studies, biology (including marine biology, penguin and seal studies), volcanism, geology, paleontology, and cartography. Newer sciences which are ongoing at McMurdo Station are related to astronomy, and technology plays an important role. Studies related to global warming are ongoing and include ice core drilling, glacier studies, and studies of ocean acidification related to high carbon absorption by the oceans.

Shaun O’Boyle earned a BFA in architecture and industrial design from Parsons School of Design in 1987; he works as a photographer and as a designer for Hill Engineers. In April 2017, O’Boyle was named a Guggenheim Fellow in Photography, which will lead to new opportunities to take photographs in the Arctic.

A special thank you to Hill Engineers, Architects, Planners, Inc. for helping to make this exhibition possible.

**BerkshireNow** features four exhibits each year ranging from solo artists to group shows. Outfitting the nine-hundred-square-foot gallery space for the new exhibition series was made possible in part by a grant from the Pittsfield Cultural Council.
**About the Berkshire Museum**

Located in downtown Pittsfield, Massachusetts, at 39 South St., the Berkshire Museum, a Smithsonian Affiliate, is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Special seasonal pricing will be in place from May 20 through September 4, during the run of *GUITAR: The Instrument That Rocked the World*; admission will be $16 adult, $8 child; Museum members and children age 3 and under enjoy free admission. For more information, visit [www.berkshiremuseum.org](http://www.berkshiremuseum.org) or call 413.443.7171.

In association with the Smithsonian since 2013, Berkshire Museum is part of a select group of museums, cultural, educational, and arts organizations that share the Smithsonian's resources with the nation.

The Berkshire Museum integrates science, history, and the arts in dynamic educational and engaging programs and exhibitions for visitors of all ages. *Curiosity Incubator* is on view. *GUITAR: The Instrument That Rocked the World* will be on view May 20 through September 4, 2017. Little Cinema is open year-round. Lab102, Feigenbaum Hall of Innovation, Worlds in Miniature, Aquarium, and other exhibits are ongoing.

# # #