



SPRING ICE

EDM. THOMSON, 1877-1917

*The National
Gallery of
Canada*

fig. 1 Mounted 4-colour lithograph of Tom Thomson's, **Spring Ice** (1916), c. 1930, image 16 x 22 cm, mount 38 x 33 cm. From first National Gallery series of reproductions of Canadian art, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada)

ESTABLISHING THE CANON

Nationhood, Identity and the National Gallery's First Reproduction Programme of Canadian Art

Introduction

In most of the writing which has dealt with the role that reproductions have played in the history of Canadian art, it has been assumed that the Sampson-Matthews Ltd. silkscreen project was largely responsible for shaping our notion of Canadian painting and establishing the Group of Seven and landscape painting as the *sine qua non* of Canadian art.¹ The silkscreen project was conceived by A.Y. Jackson and undertaken in co-operation with the National Gallery of Canada during the Second World War. Presented at a meeting of the Canadian Group of Painters, it was initially discussed as a project of the Group. However, given the scale and work involved in soliciting artists to contribute their work and finding corporate sponsors for that work, the administration was essentially left to Sampson-Matthews. The project received both the Department of National Defence's endorsement - the work was intended to raise the morale of Canadian troops - and that of the National Gallery of Canada. The Gallery's role was very carefully defined. It would provide some works in its collection for reproduction and would sponsor the adaptation of the works by living artists. The Gallery established a selection committee which, at least nominally, was responsible for approving submissions.²

In his work on the Group of Seven, Dennis Reid has drawn attention to the importance of reproductions of their work and especially the wartime silkscreen project: "A whole generation of Canadians who grew up following the Second World War learned of the Group almost entirely from reproductive silkscreen prints that seemed to hang in every school library, bank, and doctor's waiting room in the country."³ In her history of the National Gallery, Jean Sutherland Boggs also acknowledges the Sampson-Matthews project, remarking on the large quantities of reproductions distributed to the armed services and "others overseas and throughout Canada." She describes, as well, the Gallery's attempt to maintain a national presence during the Second World War through educational films on Canadian artists (with the National Film Board) and collaboration "on broadcasts on art to schools for which the Gallery printed and distributed over 120,000 small reproductions in 1944-45."⁴ Neither she nor Reid, however, discusses the origins of these projects or the fact that the first programme of reproductions to create a nation-wide consciousness of Canadian art was initiated by the Gallery in the 1920's. By 1940 it had placed hundreds

of thousands of images of Canadian art in classrooms, libraries and homes throughout the country and abroad.

This paper will examine the National Gallery's *original* Canadian reproduction programme and the largely unidentified cultural transactions in which surrogate images played a critical role in defining Canadian art. I will argue that the reproduction programme which was largely responsible for constructing our notion of Canadian art was conceived by the National Gallery almost two decades *earlier* than the Sampson-Matthews project. Complementing the thrust of the Gallery's programme of acquisitions, exhibitions, lectures and articles, it influenced the entire country's idea of what was Canadian about Canadian art.

To understand the importance of the first reproduction programme dedicated to Canadian art and the light it sheds on the Gallery's philosophy, I will look at a number of intertwined histories: the evolution of the programme; the selection of works that were reproduced; how those reproductions were marketed and an audience built; as well as the public response. Each represents an important element in the construction of a national Canadian art.

Early History of Reproductions at the NGC

On December 14, 1913, before the second board meeting of the new National Gallery, Director Eric Brown wrote to Edmund Walker, Chairman of his Board:

I am hoping to lay before the forthcoming meeting of the Trustees an idea regarding the sale of reproductions of the National Gallery pictures which I believe will materially advance the value and importance of the National Gallery throughout the continent

I believe there would be a ready sale in the book stores throughout Canada of both postcards and 5 x 7 reproductions in the Vandyck process and I suggest that with an expenditure of about \$1000 over a term of 18 months we can not only have on sale here all the reproductions we require but we can also have them on sale in every important city in the Dominion and lastly make considerably more than the original outlay from their sale.⁵

Walker wrote the next day from his Toronto office at the Canadian Bank of Commerce to encourage Brown in the enterprise.⁶ At the December 15th meeting, the Trustees approved the recommendation and the Director was instructed to obtain proofs.⁷ On May 5, 1914, the proofs were shown to the Board, prices were approved and Brown was instructed to have them on the market as soon as possible. In 1915, the Gallery obtained "several thousand photogravure reproductions of [its] pictures" from the British firm of Vandyck Printers Ltd.⁸ Twenty-four 5" x 7" plates were made; the first run was 1000 prints on 12" x 10" marked, medium cream stock. Another 5000 postcards of eighteen different subjects were printed. By September the prints were on sale individually and in portfolios of six.⁹ We have, at present, little evidence of the range of paintings from

the collection that were included in the 1914 reproduction programme but there does not appear to have been any particular focus on Canadian works. By September 1921, when the Gallery attempted to re-order, the company replied that they had discontinued printing on hand-presses and were devoting themselves entirely to the more rapid and very economical machine photogravure.¹⁰

The Gallery's commitment to the use of visual surrogates was not limited to making reproductions from its own collection. It also acquired the full set of 142 Medici Prints, representing masterpieces of European collections, which it advertised and circulated throughout the country for educational purposes. For libraries, galleries and schools which could not offer museum-standard security or display conditions, these prints provided an excellent way to familiarize Canadians with the masterpieces of European art.¹¹

It is however the second phase of the National Gallery of Canada's reproduction programme, begun in 1927, and its focus on Canadian art that is the principal subject of this paper. As early as 1929, Arthur Lismer, writing in the *Yearbook of the Arts in Canada*, remarked on the:

excellent reproductions in colour of well-known Canadian paintings, especially the Tom Thompson [*sic*] northern landscapes, which are available at a very low price to the public. These prints are to be seen nowadays on the walls of a great many public schools in Canada. The national gallery, or any gallery, can be a source of educational enlightenment to thousands, old and young, who never get a chance to enter its doors.¹²

Hansard records a 1930 discussion about the reproduction programme in the House of Commons, emphasizing the programme's enormous popularity with the general public and its effect in "making available to the people of Canada at very low cost, colour reproduction [*sic*] of Canadian pictures hitherto unattainable anywhere...."¹³

Describing the important role which the Gallery had played through its extension work, the 1951 Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences reported retrospectively:

In 1922 [*sic*] the present Director [Eric Brown], on tour in Western Canada, discovered the need for reproductions of Canadian pictures. A year or two later a series of reproductions in large and in postcard sizes was begun. These were sent out to the schools with lesson leaflets prepared by an expert in art education. This educational programme was carried further with the development of radio which made possible broadcasts from the Gallery over the national network. The National Gallery has also taken an active part in the production of films dealing with the work of Canadian artists.... The officials of the National Gallery consider that broadcasts and films on art undertaken at national expense are a legitimate and essential part of the Gallery's responsibilities.¹⁴

With the development of advanced techniques for mechanical reproduction, both the public and the private sector quickly recognized the opportunities that such images could provide.¹⁵ Elected President of the American Association of Art Museum Directors in 1924, Eric Brown would have been familiar with the colour reproduction programmes upon which his American colleagues were embarking and the educational thrust of those projects, as well as the growing business in reproductions of Canadian art which was centred in Toronto. In 1926, Rous and Mann advertised the *Portfolio of Canadian Art*, with a text by Brown and Fred Jacobs, as "prints suitable for framing" with special terms for boards of education and teachers. That collection, described by a contemporary reviewer as works by "dead painters - exquisitely done," included Krieghoff, Jacobi, Kane, Fowler, Brymner, Peel, Blair Bruce, Morrice and Thomson.¹⁶ There were as well, individual artists whose popularity had warranted the publication of reproductions. Colour lithographs of Cornelius Krieghoff's paintings were popular and Nelson's Ltd. had published a large-size series of Canadian historical paintings by C.W. Jefferys. Dennis Reid has discussed the interest in original prints among the Group of Seven in the 1910's and '20's, describing Lismer's war lithographs and Casson's silkscreen work. In 1925, Rous and Mann published a limited edition set of signed photolithographs of drawings by Group members. In 1931, A.Y. Jackson worked with William E. Coult's Company on a silkscreen Christmas card project, entitled *Painters of Canada*, of forty-six different cards by twenty-six artists.

In 1930, Brigden's in Toronto described itself as an "art reproduction house," and not as "merely colour engravers or printers." Toronto-based Claudius Gregory Fine Arts Prints combined distribution of reproductions from the National Gallery's collection with the marketing of original prints and signed limited-edition photolithographic reproductions of works by Canadian artists. The British Empire Art Company, which advertised black-and-white etchings, exclusive colour prints and original colour woodcuts principally by non-Canadian artists, also included the work of Winnipegger W.J. Phillips who had established a significant reputation in the United States.

The development of techniques for the production of relatively inexpensive high-quality colour lithographs of art works coincided with the National Gallery's recognition that outreach would have to play an even greater role in the fulfillment of its national mandate to support Canadian art. Thus its 1927 reproduction programme focused on Canadian art and targeted the school population as its principal market.

To contextualize the focus of the reproduction programme, the shape it would take and the role it would play within the larger framework of Gallery activities, it is important to understand the philosophy of the Gallery and its directors. As the Gallery had defined its purpose in its 1921-22 *Annual Report*, it

was first to build a "collection of the standards of all art, ancient and modern, by which contemporary standards might be judged and sound artistic education obtained." Secondly, to fulfill its civic responsibility, it would "do everything possible for the art of its own country, by purchasing it, exhibiting it, and bringing its importance as a national asset and an influence for good before the people generally, and by creating and cultivating in them correct artistic taste."¹⁷ The directors saw their task as establishing the country's patrimony by determining what was significant production in Canadian art and bestowing value upon it through acquisition and recognition. Nurturing and promoting that art, the Gallery could educate and elevate Canadians through Ottawa-based exhibitions and a national programme of loan exhibitions, lecture tours, prepared slide-lectures, and the dissemination of reproductions of works in its collection. The 1927 reproduction extension programme was constructed in such a way that, as well as providing information and education about the history of western art, it would validate Canadian art by locating it in its rightful context within that history.

Nationalism and identity would be related determining factors in shaping the Gallery's Canadian reproduction programme. Describing art as "closely interwoven with the history of nations and the geography of countries" and noting that "the story of its growth is the story of all that is intellectual and moral," the Gallery saw nation-building and the establishment of a common heritage for Canadians as key responsibilities.¹⁸ As its 1925-26 *Annual Report* observed, "Canadian art is passing through a period of self-establishment as a national factor Nationalism in art is the result of climate, geography, religion and national character superimposed, however unconsciously, on the individual's desire to paint or to express himself in any one of the art's forms."¹⁹

National unity, the promotion of a common understanding of Canadian life, along with the expression of "national feeling" and vigorous Canadianism would be the motivating factors in the establishment of each new national institution in this period. The visual arts, and more specifically painting, like radio and, later, film, were believed to have the capacity to mold public taste, to create proper moral values and identify the basic truths required to establish a sense of nationhood. Classrooms across Canada offered an ideal means of reaching the new generation of Canadians, including those in remote areas. As Arthur Lismer stated, "Prints of Canadian pictures, wisely used, will go far in establishing a knowledge and love for the work of our own artists and our own country the art of our own country is no less important a medium of study, if our children are to be made conscious of the beauty and character of Canada."²⁰ In a 1931 letter of support for the classroom use of reproductions of Canadian art, Lawrence A.C. Panton, President of the Ontario Society of Artists and Head of the Art Department at Toronto's Western Technical School, wrote:

There is every reason why school children should know of the great achieve-

ments in art of the world in the past; but it will be readily acknowledged that Canadian school children should know of the art and artists of their own country, and of their own time, that their patriotic interest and sympathy may support Canadian art effort, and that they may develop a love for, and understanding of the beauties of their own country, as expressed in Canadian Art.²¹

The Canadian artists series

As the Gallery's promotional material described it: "The National Gallery has prepared a series of colour reproductions of pictures, chiefly by Canadian artists, in the National Gallery collection. The series is designed primarily to furnish a basis for the teaching of art appreciation in Canadian public and high schools."²² Canadian art reproductions would be marketed to schools along with examples from the Gallery's collection of "British and Foreign Artists." The non-Canadian works originally selected included Sir Joshua Reynolds' *Jeffrey, Lord Amherst*, George Romney's *Joseph Brant* and Arnesby Brown's *In Suffolk*. Spencer Watson's *Mary and Guido* and Bernardino Luini's *Infant Jesus and St. John with a Lamb* were added later, as was George Henry's *The Connoisseur*.²³ However, the key element in the process was the Gallery's selection of Canadian art for a reproduction programme which, through images and accompanying study guides prepared by Arthur Lismer, would integrate National Gallery prints into curricula across the country and significantly shape several generations' understanding of Canadian art. In contrast to the European works, the Canadian works selected focused primarily on the landscape and appear to have been chosen to reinforce the idea of artistic progress culminating in the new "national school" of Canadian painting represented by the work of Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven.

Although there is little hard evidence about the process of selecting works for reproduction it seems clear that Eric Brown was the guiding force. He used it to reinforce his effort to position Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven, as he had done at the 1924 British Empire Exhibition at Wembley.²⁴ According to Brown, authentic Canadian painting began with Thomson and the Group:

There is no doubt that the most significant thing about Canadian art today is its group of younger landscape painters From a centre which may be said to be in a certain studio building in Toronto ... these apostles of the decorative landscape have gone forth into the wilds of Canadian nature and have found a veritable wonderland which holds them enthralled.²⁵

In a 1927 article titled "La Jeune Peinture Canadienne," Brown concluded that the nineteenth-century origins of Canadian painting were essentially derivative and second-rate.²⁶ Although the Gallery was collecting broadly in the field of Canadian art, Brown's faith in the redemptive power of art, his commitment to art education as a tool for instilling national pride and his belief in the ability of the work of Thomson and the Group to achieve these aims, would shape the

Canadian artists series much more narrowly. For the school reproduction programme, the works appear to have been selected primarily for their ability to create the requisite sense of identity and to serve as icons for a still young nation.²⁷

A similar project, the Picture Study set, illustrating the development of Canadian art, was initiated by the Art Gallery of Toronto in 1930. The companion study guide was, like those of the NGC, written by Arthur Lismer, who had served as the AGT's Education Director since 1924. But the AGT's selection of work for reproduction was very different, presenting a much broader survey of nineteenth and twentieth-century Canadian painting than the National Gallery series. Series I included works by Krieghoff, O'Brien, Walker, Reid, Cullen, Williamson, Beatty, Thomson, Jackson and Gagnon. Series II included work by Fraser, Peel, Watson, Robert Holmes, Herbert Palmer, Jefferys, Robinson, Gagen, Lawren Harris and J.E.H. MacDonald. (A 1930 note to the file offers a sense of the volume of business; in the Picture Study set, there were 20,000 copies of each of the Canadian prints in stock.)

In December 1927, the National Gallery trustees authorized a special expenditure of \$2500 "to provide colour reproductions of National Gallery pictures," considered "a departure of far reaching importance."²⁸ The justifications for this new phase in the reproduction programme were clear - educational value; access to Canadian works of art in a country whose population was geographically dispersed; prestige for the Gallery; and revenue generation.²⁹ The Canadian prints were issued in two sizes, 8" x 10" and 4 1/2" x 3 1/2".³⁰ The smaller post-card size prints could be obtained on thin paper suitable for mounting in scrap-books. Bulk orders and educational clients were given special rates. It was intended that individual teachers could obtain a large print of a subject for teaching and display purposes while the rates for the smaller prints were such that every school child could begin a personal "collection of Canadian art." Each of the works was accompanied by an "Outline for Picture Study," prepared for the Gallery by Arthur Lismer (except in the case of Lismer's *September Gale* for which Lawren Harris wrote the introductory notes). Essential to the project, the study guides articulated the series' "aim to present an idea of Canadian Art and Artists." Each guide included a page of biographical information on the artist, a page of notes on the companion reproduction, and a page of lesson plans for the specific work with instructions for teaching both public school pupils and high school students. While strategies for formal analysis represented a significant part of the text, the emphasis throughout was on the Canadian experience and Lismer regularly suggested the reproductions could be employed in teaching other subjects and the "discussion of things Canadian." While the objective was to use the National Gallery's collection as the basis for teaching art in Canadian schools, the general public was also a target market for "low cost, colour reproductions of Canadian pictures hitherto unavailable anywhere."

It would take several years before the full Canadian set was complete, although the Gallery began to sell prints as they became available. By September 1928, four subjects were ready; two months later, more than 5,000 copies each were available for Krieghoff's *Winter Landscape*; Clarence Gagnon's *Village in the Laurentians*; and two works by Tom Thomson, *The Jack Pine* and *Northern River*; as well as Romney's *Joseph Brant*.³¹ (By February 15, 1929, there is already reference to a second printing of *Northern River*.) The Brant image is the only one listed which is not by a Canadian and it seems to have been included for its representation of Native Canadian subject matter. No works by Native artists and no images of Native people by Canadian artists were included in the series. While Brown had praised the art of West Coast Native artists in "La Jeune Peinture Canadienne," he considered only painting for the reproduction series. Although Paul Kane was a logical choice for the series and must have been considered, Brown tended to stress the ethnological significance of his work.³² By September 24th, Horatio Walker's *Oxen Drinking*, Homer Watson's *Flood Gate*, and J.E.H. MacDonald's *Solemn Land* were also available. The immediate and "most enthusiastic response" led to the announcement that the study series would be extended.³³ On April 26, 1930, Franklin Brownell's *Beach, St. Kitt's* was ready and the 1929-30 *Annual Report* announced that the series also included Tom Thomson's *Spring Ice* (fig. 1).³⁴ Lismer's *September Gale*, *Georgian Bay* was available before 1932.³⁵

Thus the original series of ten Canadian pictures from the National Gallery included only two nineteenth-century works: Krieghoff's 1849 Québec habitant winter scene and Horatio Walker's 1899 *Oxen Drinking*. From the twentieth century, there were Homer Watson's Doon landscape, *The Flood Gate* (1900-01), Clarence Gagnon's rural Québec scene, *Laurentian Village* (c.1924); and Franklin Brownell's *Beach St. Kitt's* (1913) which may have been chosen for its representation of a somewhat exotic locale. Brownell had been the subject of a National Gallery retrospective exhibition in 1922. Lismer's study guide describes him as a popular Ottawa painter, neither conservative nor "daringly modern" and notes (establishing the American-born artist's Canadian credentials) that the "picture is not a Canadian subject although it is by a Canadian painter, one who has painted nearly all his life in Canada." The representation of modern Canadian expression in the series was left to Thomson, remarkably represented by three works, J.E.H. MacDonald and Arthur Lismer. During the 1930's, the series would be augmented to include Varley's *Stormy Weather*, *Georgian Bay*, Jackson's *Algoma Lake*, and Thomson's *The Artist's Hut*, as well as J.W. Morrice's *The Ferry* and *The Beach, Dieppe*.³⁶ Although Brown had high praise for Lawren Harris and singled out the importance of artists such as William Brymner and Maurice Cullen, as well as the Beaver Hall Group, none of them was included in the series, although some of their work was reproduced as postcards.³⁷

The decision to focus upon Thomson was clearly a calculated one, likely

based on Thomson's already legendary stature as an artist and a folk hero as well as on the popularity of his work. In Ottawa, his *The Jack Pine* was a feature attraction, as was *The West Wind* in Toronto.³⁸ Memorial exhibitions of his work had begun the year of his death. The Group's hagiographer, Frederick Housser, drew an analogy to the Native Canadian experience to establish Thomson's spiritual attachment to the landscape: "He knew the woods as the red indian knew them before him.... Never before had such knowledge and the feeling for such things been given in paint.... His master was Nature."³⁹ Blodwen Davies described Thomson as a hero, a North American genius and her 1930 *Paddle and Palette*, published by Ryerson Press, was cited as a reference in Lismer's study guide for *Spring Ice*.⁴⁰ The Gallery had promoted Thomson's posthumous international recognition, documenting favourable reviews from abroad in its annual reports, and quoting from the London *Times* (1924) which called *The Jack Pine* "the most striking work at Wembley";⁴¹ and from *Le Figaro* (1927): "Thomson never fumbles ... his painting is strong and without subterfuge, the painting of a man immensely concerned with the nature he depicts."⁴² Brown himself wrote of Thomson's genius and his international reputation, at the same time establishing his unsung hero-at-home-in-nature credentials: "He is one of the pioneers of the new movement and a very great artist, unable to earn a living from his art (such is the popular encouragement of genius) ... he found his artistic home in the northern Ontario wilderness."⁴³ For Brown, Thomson and the Group of Seven had ushered in Canada's epic period in which the heroism and vitality of its artists would contribute as much to the construction of a national spirit as the labours of its explorers, politicians and giants of industry.⁴⁴

In the case of Thomson, Brown offered confirmation of the artist's work as the product of genius - an essential component, as Carol Duncan has pointed out, in establishing the museum as the repository of the spiritual wealth of the new nation.⁴⁵ Adopting the conventions of the romantic myth, Brown's account centred on the notion of linear progress, the rejected avant-garde fighting for recognition, and the masculine artist/hero mystically at one with the land. Although he acknowledged in his 1927 article that their work might not be considered unique elsewhere, Brown described the Group of Seven as "the most expert and most original landscape artists in the country" who "sustained attacks on them and still do today." He assured his readers: "We are not exaggerating....The ideal vision of young Canadian painters is expressed through a school which has no direct roots anywhere else and which, at least up to a certain point, is indigenous and spontaneous."⁴⁶

The selection of work for the Canadian series was as remarkable for what it excluded as for what it included. Although the Gallery was collecting nationally and the reproductions were intended for a national audience, all of the works selected to represent Canadian art were by Ontario or Québec artists. Despite the

fact that the Gallery had acquired L. LeMoine FitzGerald's *Williamson's Garage* in 1929 and FitzGerald had exhibited with the Group, no prairie artist or image was included. Nor did the series include artists or subject matter from either the east or west coast, although Varley was already living in British Columbia and members of the Group had regularly travelled to the Rockies since 1924. While Brown had been supportive of Emily Carr's work on his 1927 visit west, subsequently exhibiting it and in 1929 purchasing three of her watercolours, she was not represented in the series.⁴⁷

No urban scenes were included, although forty years earlier *Picturesque Canada* had employed a very different visual rhetoric, portraying an industrialized Canada representing a "catalogue of the resources, visual and material, in which the middle-class of Victorian Canada could take pride."⁴⁸ With the notion of progress inherent in the linear construction of the series, its fulfillment lay in the landscape and the wilderness aesthetic which had captured the North American imagination.⁴⁹ The northern scenes, empty of people, emphasized the grandeur of the landscape and, metaphorically, the Canadian spirit. None portrayed the intrusion of industry into no longer pristine forests (a major source of Canada's growing prosperity), despite the fact that Harris' *The Drive* had been the first of the Group's work to be acquired by the Gallery. Lismer later recounted:

We felt at that time that our job was to make people see what the land looked like and to make them understand that it was not just a place to be exploited industrially. Men like Thomson, Jackson and Harris, going up to the North Country, were trail blazers in a new sense. The Group had felt the need to get away from the cities. Their great contribution was that they had seen and shown a pattern in Canadian landscape.⁵⁰

The rural scenes by Gagnon, Watson and Walker reflected an alternative mythology. They portrayed Canadians at home in their environment, at one with the land in their labour and reaping its fruits. With twentieth-century industrialization, North American urbanization and the subsequent urban degeneration, the pastoral ideal had become an almost utopian vision. It was also a geographically narrow vision of the country; except for Brownell's Caribbean scene, only Québec and Ontario sites were represented. Images of Québec appear to have been selected to convey an idyllic rustic image of French *habitant* life to English Canadians. Lismer described Krieghoff as painting "happy and sympathetic creations of a genial and socially amiable disposition. His keen observation of peasant character enables him to interpret the habitant in his native setting with singular expressiveness and quaint humour."⁵¹ In his description of *Winter Landscape*, Lismer used the word "little" six times in a single long paragraph, creating a storybook mood in describing *habitant* life. Gagnon is cited as a painter who knows and "feel[s] his native environment ... [whose] subjects are interpretations of the life of the French Canadian [and whose work] helps to draw together the differ-

ent racial types in mutual understanding."

Heightening the contrast between the urban wilderness and the solid values of rural life, Lismer described Horatio Walker as: "above all a great Canadian artist by birth, the character of his work, and by the fact that ... the Canadian scene forms the essence of the subjects of his brush ..., [he] paints the habitant farmer [who] still makes and uses primitive tools in his husbandry and his women folk employ them in domestic affairs."⁵² His subject matter is "primitive," a bygone age of "rustic simplicity, quaint and interesting" in the eyes of "[c]ity dwellers who move about in automobiles and street cars, do their shopping and telephone and receive their entertainment from the air." This simple and honest nature of farm life, along with Homer Watson's "Canadianness," are the dominant themes in Lismer's account of *The Flood Gate*. Despite international honours, "he remains the Canadian artist - interpreter of rural Ontario. Founder of no style of painting, his studio is in the field and groves of trees - his life devoted to simple expression of the beauty of the environment." Although industrial communities and wealthy towns have grown up, his work portrays the "old spirit of frugal simplicity and good craftsmanship so typical of early Ontario settlers."⁵³

Lismer's narrative contrasts the traditional approach of Québec artists and their portrayal of the pastoral ideal with the powerful quest for identity in modern English-Canadian art, where the moral order of nature and the mythic notion of the heroic wilderness shaped the new Canadian icon.⁵⁴ Little matter that the site of the wilderness was often, in reality, cottage country to the Toronto (and American) elite or had been designated national parkland decades earlier. The American transcendentalist vision of the land as the spiritual site of nationhood would equally serve Canada's twentieth-century search for national symbols. There is no doubt that these were conscious choices. That the goal was to construct a coherent history and an autonomous identity through the aesthetic construct of the landscape is clear from the selection of work and Lismer's companion study guides. Thomson and the Group of Seven were presented as the culmination of that tradition and the texts are permeated by the notion of Thomson, "the first Canadian painter to capture the real spirit of the north country."⁵⁵

In 1933, the Québec government expressed enthusiasm for the reproductions and agreed to purchase 2000 sets of eight images. The series was adjusted to accommodate Québec's interests. The province's selection of work revealed a preference for narrative imagery and rural scenes; but there was no shift towards a stronger Québec orientation in the choice of artists or images. The set eliminated the work of Brownell, Lismer, J.E.H. MacDonald, and Thomson's *Spring Ice*, but retained the Krieghoff, Watson, Walker, Gagnon, and the other two Thomson reproductions. It also included William Cruikshank's image of pioneer farm labour, *Breaking A Road*. It is difficult to explain the addition of *The Connoisseur* by the Glasgow School artist George Henry in a series ostensibly devoted to

Canadian art.⁵⁶ Lismer's study guide compares Henry to Whistler, noting the Japanese influence on his work and stating that "The subject is not important." Although Suzor-Coté and Cullen were represented in the general edition of post-card reproductions and two works by Morrice were later added to the Canadian series, their work was not included in the francophone edition of the series.

Marketing the Canadian Reproductions

Marketing was a critical aspect of the Gallery's strategy for the popularization and dissemination of the prints to achieve the goal of broad national participation. Advertisements were placed in educational journals and strategic contacts made. *The School* regularly carried advertisements promoting the National Gallery's Canadian series and Lismer's study guides, offering discount rates for teachers and for bulk orders.⁵⁷ Private-sector agents were contracted to sell the Canadian reproductions across the country.⁵⁸ These included Mortimer Company, which actually produced the prints, as well as distribution agents such as J.M. Dent and Claudius Gregory Fine Arts Prints (later known as The Canadian Fine Art Guild). All worked in the school and the retail markets.⁵⁹ The British Empire Art Company also distributed the Gallery's reproductions and lobbied for the right to reproduce Thomson's *The Jack Pine* in a much larger format.⁶⁰

The marketing strategy for school audiences included contacting teachers and teachers' associations, principals and superintendents, school boards and provincial ministries of education, and the direct lobbying of politicians, in addition to an advertising campaign geared particularly to educational publications and magazines such as *The Canadian Forum*.⁶¹ In 1931 James MacKenzie of Claudius Gregory Fine Arts Prints solicited Arthur Lismer's assistance in promoting the prints. Lismer (without declaring his interest in the project) offered his endorsement for the public record: "I think your scheme for introducing Canadian paintings into the schools and homes of Canada is an excellent one. As school decorations they are admirable - as examples of Canadian Art they are good in colour and well-selected - making them of great value in the study of Art appreciation."⁶² The Gallery provided glowing support for the reproduction programme's importance for MacKenzie's fall 1931 campaign to capture Ontario's education market. This included meetings with Ontario's Director of Education, the Toronto Board of Education's Management Committee and the head of art at the College of Education.⁶³

In November, 1931, J.M. Dent & Son, publishers of *Everyman's Library* and *The Canadian Forum*, wrote, "As I expected, the portfolio is taking the schools by storm when shown to them personally - the teachers are so interested in the pictures, they don't take time to look at our books. Our trade travelers are convinced they can sell the portfolios complete to dealers in goodly quantities."⁶⁴ A month later he wrote, "We are piling up lists of requests for pictures large and small....

In January, there will be 4 of us on the 'warpath' in the field and we want to get the pictures well established so that we can make a real 'killing' with the 1932-33 school year."⁶⁵ Competing for the line, MacKenzie, of The Canadian Fine Art Guild, wrote to the Gallery, "We have many interested customers for your prints.... I am going to advertise in school magazines.... I hope that much may be done through stores. I take it I shall have the agency for the Province at least."⁶⁶ In February 1932 he wrote to H.O. McCurry, "I have arranged a good many shows in smaller school towns and these sell well.... It is rare that I do not get an order for at least some of the sets."⁶⁷ A list of accounts receivable, documented at the time of the firm's bankruptcy in 1933, indicates sales to schools and businesses throughout Ontario, Québec, Alberta and Nova Scotia, and to galleries in Detroit and Buffalo.⁶⁸

Promotional efforts by the Gallery's agents were augmented by the Gallery's own work. Throughout his tenure as Director, Eric Brown conducted an advocacy campaign of lecture tours and travelling exhibitions to promote Canadian art, the Gallery and the reproduction programme. Lismer also publicized the reproduction programme widely; his praise of the National Gallery's initiative in the 1928-29 *Yearbook of the Arts* was the first official acknowledgment of the project on a national basis. In the spring of 1932, Lismer gave three lectures in Vancouver and Jock Macdonald, teaching at the newly-founded B.C. College of Art, wrote to the Gallery praising the talks and requesting some of the "new National Gallery colour prints."⁶⁹

Despite the Depression, sales of the reproductions were brisk. At the May 1932 meeting of the Board of Trustees, the Assistant Director reported on the Mortimer Company's proposal to purchase 60,000 prints as payment for the current Gallery debt for plates and prints owing from the 1931-32 budget year.⁷⁰ This allowed the Gallery to continue the development of its reproduction programme without significant cash expenditures in a year when its Parliamentary appropriation had been reduced because of the Depression. The same meeting also approved J.M. Dent's offer to purchase about 50,000 prints at 10 cents each for school purposes.⁷¹

Requests for the reproductions were continuous from both rural and urban centres in all parts of the country and would continue throughout the 1930's into the 1940's. That there was a hunger for such material was clear. In March 1935, the *Prairie Farmer* ran an article in the form of a letter, titled "New Scenes Charm" and signed "Color Kate." Discussing her selection of National Gallery colour prints for 1934 Christmas gifts, she remarked, "We certainly needed some change from calendars and the two framed pictures of 'The Gleaners' and 'The Angelus' which we're tired to death of looking at, especially as they were all in brown....[It is] so nice for the children to live with these pictures of other parts of Canada. Of course this new way of painting things with a sweep seemed odd to me just at

first, but now I like them better than the old kind...." Her article brought requests for prints from individual readers in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta, as well as British Columbia.⁷²

Framing the Curriculum: Working the Provinces

The Gallery did not rest on the success of its agents. To enhance distribution and to lobby for the inclusion of its prints in their curricula, the Gallery contacted provincial governments directly. There is correspondence on file with Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Québec, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, encouraging them to adopt a curriculum that would include the series of Canadian reproductions.⁷³ To gain political support for the project from the ministries in Québec and Ontario, J.M. Irving, a senior manager at Mortimers, arranged to provide members of the legislatures with sets of reproductions from the Gallery.⁷⁴

Looking for support from Alberta, McCurry wrote to the Minister of Education in the fall of 1931, "Our school reproductions have been wonderfully received everywhere by Departments of Education. In Regina the Commissioner of Education decided to circularize all the schools of the province with information about them.... I offered as our share to send out a sufficient quantity of the small prints to include a sample with each circular."⁷⁵ In response, the School Book Branch of the Department of Education in Edmonton included a full-page circular about the programme in its communication with teachers. In May the Book Branch wrote to McCurry, "We have given considerable space in the new catalogue to these pictures [and] considerable advertising has been done ... particularly in Calgary at the last Teachers' Convention."⁷⁶ Alberta's response was excellent but it came in the form of irregular monthly orders. In an attempt to encourage greater volume, McCurry wrote to the head of the School Book Branch, "The reception to the National Gallery's reproductions by your Department and in Alberta generally has been so encouraging that I am anxious to give you the best terms possible." His letter encouraged the Branch to order in bulk and made provisions for the return of works that did not sell.⁷⁷

In January 1934, McCurry was negotiating directly with the Ontario Department of Education to supply every public school with a set of Canadian reproductions along with the study guides. Information about the series was sent to school inspectors in both the public and private schools. To garner political support for the project, a lobbying strategy was designed and a meeting arranged with the Premier of Ontario.⁷⁸ In his letter to the Premier, McCurry noted that distribution plans were already in place in Alberta and Québec was considering a similar proposal. The reproductions, he added, "have received world wide approbation and are being adopted by the Board of Education of the City of New York."⁷⁹

As noted earlier, the Québec government purchased 2000 sets of eight sub-

jects, in a series designed for the Québec market, in the spring of 1934.⁸⁰ In 1934, Prince Edward Island's Premier and Minister of Education agreed to order a small number of sets for the larger schools and to have some on hand for interested teachers, although he was not prepared to distribute them to every school: "If teachers have no appreciation for them, it would do more harm than good."⁸¹ In 1938, Manitoba's Minister of Education wrote to the National Gallery requesting reproductions and assistance for an experimental programme in art education being developed in partnership with the Faculty of Architecture and Fine Arts at the University of Manitoba, indicating "a large number" of the prints were being used.⁸²

It is striking that of all the provinces contacted, only Saskatchewan responded with a request for reproductions of works by local artists. In 1933 John Huff, Deputy Minister of Education, asked the National Gallery to "reproduce *The Ferry Trail* by Gus [Augustus] Kenderdine, a typical Saskatchewan scene, painted by a Saskatchewan artist" and a work which the Gallery had just purchased. But the Gallery begged off for financial reasons, saying that it was not making any new plates at that time.⁸³ In 1941, the Chair of the province's Art Revision Committee examined the Saskatchewan course of studies and indicated particular interest in artists from her province. She requested that the Gallery reproduce James Henderson's *The End of Winter* which was being incorporated into the Grade VI curriculum. In this case, the Gallery acquiesced and the Henderson painting was reproduced in postcard size.⁸⁴

In February 1934, the Gallery Board approved a new strategy for popularizing the prints and making them more accessible to the general public. At their 55th meeting, the Trustees agreed that complementary sets of the reproductions of Canadian art should be presented to important public libraries in the province of Ontario.⁸⁵ This programme, begun in March 1934, met with enormous success. It appears that every public library approached responded positively. As a condition of the gift, the libraries were required to frame and hang all of the reproductions in their public rooms, publicizing the fact that the prints had been presented by the National Gallery of Canada. Recipients were required to confirm that the conditions had been met. Correspondence from libraries such as those in Niagara Falls, Sault Ste. Marie and Chatham, often included newspaper articles reporting on the installation, indicating the enthusiasm with which the initiative was greeted. A resident of Amherstburg wrote to the Gallery requesting information about the programme for his local library which, despite being "a lovely modern Carnegie Library ... lacks the culture which pictures on the wall give like the watercolours I saw at the Owen Sound Library and Huron Institute at Collingwood."⁸⁶ In 1936, Amherstburg's library was added to the list of recipients of the reproductions. In a speech that same year, Eric Brown reported:

Quite a large business is ... growing up in the sale of both large and small

coloured reproductions of National Gallery pictures, both to the public schools and commercially. They are made available to the schools and sent out complete with lesson plans which can be used in class and I am glad to say that the use of them is spreading rapidly and cannot fail to bring to the children a better knowledge of the work of Canadian artists and the program of the arts in Canada.... The greatest need in Canada for the growth of the arts is active public awareness... [and] the National Gallery is the radiating centre for art knowledge.⁸⁷

The Gallery's reproductions of Canadian art also found an audience much further afield, thanks to such advocates as Canada's Acting Trade Commissioner, M.T. Stewart, who presented the Western Australia Department of Education with a set of the Canadian artists series. The spring 1935 edition of the *Education Circular for Western Australia* carried an article extolling the importance of the arts in education and listing the works in the series with the following comments:

The Canadian pictures referred to above are accompanied by instructive pamphlets which give not only a brief account of the artist concerned but contain in addition material highly suggestive as a basis for discussion of the pictures in question. Some of the pictures tell a story and would thus prove useful to our middle groups and especially to children whose course in geography includes Canada. The most striking...are mainly decorative. Prominent amongst the latter are those by Tom Thomson and "September Gale" by Arthur Lismer. In these, one immediately realizes that the artist has ably fulfilled his purpose of conveying to others his own impressions of the beauty and order in Nature; and through his eyes we are made aware of the beautiful forms and colours which may easily be, and very commonly are, passed unnoticed.

One teacher wrote that through these works which had been framed and shown throughout his school, his students had come to truly understand the Canadian experience.⁸⁸

Extended Impact: The Domination of the Images

The broad dissemination of these reproductions as quintessential images of Canadian art was reinforced by contemporary journal articles and books examining the arts in Canada. These publications, as often as not, selected the same works to illustrate their themes. It was natural for an author to look first to a country's national art collection for examples of the best that country had produced. The fact that plates and progressive proofs might be obtained free of charge from the Gallery, saving time and expenditures certainly contributed to the frequency with which works in the National Gallery's Canadian series were chosen to illustrate texts on Canadian art. The Gallery's working relationship with Albert Robson, author of *Canadian Landscape Painters* (1932) and a number of monographs on

Canadian artists published by Ryerson Press during the 1930's, offers a case in point. Robson was Director of Rous and Mann in Toronto and thus had the capacity to print colour reproductions, but Ryerson's inventory of plates for reproductions in the texts was, in large part, built up through the generosity of public galleries.⁸⁹ (The fact that Robson was also Vice-President of the Art Gallery of Toronto during this period was helpful to his project.) *Canadian Landscape Painters* reproduced all of the works in the NGC's Canadian series and a large number of the works from the AGT's study collection. To encourage the National Gallery to lend Rous and Mann the plates, Robson stressed the benefits that it would derive by having works from its collection reproduced in these texts.⁹⁰ The case of Donald Buchanan's article "The Story of Canadian Art" for the *Canadian Geographical Journal* is also typical. His article is broadly comprehensive, stylistically and geographically, in terms of the artists included. However, nineteen of the thirty reproductions were from the National Gallery's collection and seven were from the Canadian artists series.⁹¹

Sales of the Canadian reproductions remained steady throughout the decade. In March 1938, the Gallery re-ordered 5000 each of five images and 10,330 of Thomson's *Spring Ice*.⁹² The demand for Romney's *Joseph Brant*, which was reprinted in October of that year, also remained constant. In October, the Gallery ordered 5060 large and 35,568 small prints of J.W. Morrice's *The Beach, Dieppe* which had originally been reproduced in 1936.⁹³ Correspondence from the early forties indicates that prints like Thomson's *Spring Ice* sold quickly, "though we have taken no trouble to push it."⁹⁴ In 1941, McCurry wrote requesting new editions of 5000 each of the large prints of *The Jack Pine*, *September Gale* and *Oxen Drinking*, adding "We need them quickly as, in many cases the stock is exhausted and departments of education want the prints."⁹⁵ Although the Sampson-Matthews silkscreen project, developed during the war years, would significantly enhance the number and quality of the images of Canadian art available to the public, the Gallery continued to rely on lithographic reproductions for its education programmes. They could easily be produced in large quantities and were extremely inexpensive. Moreover, they could be reproduced in various sizes according to use and cost.

Young Canada Listens

In the early forties, the original programme of Canadian reproductions for schools became the basis for a joint venture which the Gallery embarked upon with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.⁹⁶ The idea stemmed from discussions between the CBC and H.O. McCurry, regarding the importance of capturing the school audience through broadcasts on art appreciation.⁹⁷ Called *Young Canada Listens* in its first incarnation, the three annual series of broadcasts on Canadian art were aired from 1945 through 1947. The intention was to base the series on the small reproductions in the National Gallery and Art Gallery of Toronto Canadian

series; and early plans analyzed the number of works available for reproduction, whether there was extant literature on the artist, and whether lesson leaflets already existed.⁹⁸

Radio offered the ideal medium for extending the impact of the reproduction programme. Broadcast throughout the country and into the most remote areas, it had the capability through the CBC's education offices, to develop support material and to reach an enormous audience of children and adults alike. Credit for *Young Canada Listens* was given to the National Gallery. But in R.S. Lambert, the Supervisor of Educational Broadcasts, Harry McCurry found an enthusiastic partner who, as a would-be writer on Canadian art, had a personal interest in the topic.

Correspondence between McCurry and Lambert suggests that McCurry's original idea (a significant departure from the strategy the Gallery had adopted for its original educational reproductions series) was to focus on the nineteenth century. He proposed a series that included Kane, Krieghoff, O'Brien, Sandham, Cruikshank, Watson and Walker.⁹⁹ Seeking more dramatic hooks to capture its audience, the first series actually featured Kane ("adventurous life and journey across Canada to paint the Indians"), Krieghoff ("life in Quebec among the British officers and the habitants"), Morrice ("colourful career in Paris, North Africa and West Indies as well as Canada"), Gagnon ("whose life alternated between Old and New France"), Thomson ("Canada's greatest native-born painter") and Jackson ("who has explored Canada from coast to coast and almost to the North Pole").¹⁰⁰ McCurry's notes suggest that Walker and Watson ("a pioneer Ontario painter") would have been included if there had been the opportunity to cover eight rather than six artists.¹⁰¹ Lismer was also considered for this series but Jackson was selected as the "living artist," most likely in light of the northern theme of "The Beothic at Bache Point, Ellesmere Island," and actually participated in the programme.

The creation of a parents' guide was an important strategy to capture the interest of adults through their children. Reaffirming the pre-eminence of Thomson in the Canadian art firmament (only he was the subject of two broadcasts) and the hagiographic style of earlier writers, the parents' guide began: "Everyone acknowledges Tom Thomson as the Canadian artist *par excellence*." It went on to ask: "What makes him so? What connection is there between living in the wilds, and interpreting wild nature by painting pictures?" And, shifting from fact and earlier positioning, "Why do many European critics fail to appreciate Tom Thomson's art at first sight?"¹⁰² Here he is portrayed as a figure only fully appreciable by those who know and understand the Canadian experience as opposed to Brown's depiction of him as an artist recognized abroad but unappreciated at home. Thomson was the subject on February 9, 1945 and again on March 28, 1947.

Through Lambert's CBC office an exchange of correspondence between departments of education across the country, prospective audiences, writers and collaborators shaped the *Young Canada Listens* programme.¹⁰³ The National Gallery took responsibility for providing the core material on each artist and work of art and suggested lines of treatment. Dorothy McCurry "assisted in the preparation of the music material," and CBC writer Earle Levy prepared the text.¹⁰⁴ Like Lismer's study guides, the texts lacked any critical focus. They offered popularized accounts focusing on the Canadian experience represented in the art work and the creation of a national consciousness. One caustic letter from a knowledgeable listener asked McCurry if he thought it appropriate that the script should be so simple-minded as to not even mention Impressionism or Post-Impressionism in its discussion of J.W. Morrice's *The Ferry*.¹⁰⁵ Listeners offered their viewpoints on such subjects as gender and geographical representation, as well as the quality of the broadcasts. Catherine Venables, an art instructor from Neepawa Public School (Manitoba), wrote:

The children enjoyed the adventures and dramatizations, preferring the Thomson broadcast best, and next the one on Jackson. They liked the buffalo hunt and the Indians singing in Paul Kane, and the Habitant songs in Cornelius Krieghoff. The disliked the poor acting of French parts in Morrice. *They would like to hear some stories about Canada's Women artists*¹⁰⁶ [italics mine]

The programmes were broadcast over forty stations of the CBC Trans-Canada Network and were heard in an estimated 3500 schools with a pupil audience of at least 125,000. 120,000 postcard-size colour prints were distributed and a quantity of larger prints was also available for teaching purposes. While some of the reproductions were already available from the Gallery's stock, others were produced for the programme. The suggested reading list for each of the artists in the first series included Albert Robson's short monographs published by Ryerson Press and Lismer's texts for the Art Gallery of Toronto's *Canadian Picture Study* and for the National Gallery's *Outline(s) for Picture Study*, as well as general sources of information.

Lambert's report, which he proposed as an article for *Canadian Art* magazine, outlined the success of the programme in glowing terms: "The recent series of national school broadcasts on *The Adventure of Canadian Painting* planned by the National Advisory Council on School Broadcasting at the request of and in close cooperation with the National Gallery of Canada has proved the most successful series yet put on the air by the CBC Education Department."¹⁰⁷ The obvious success of the first series led McCurry to write to Lambert with a proposal for the following year, "covering much of the same ground historically, but dealing with other painters."¹⁰⁸ Later broadcasts included Robert Harris, Antoine Plamondon, Homer Watson, Maurice Cullen, Horatio Walker, Tom Thomson (again), J.E.H.

MacDonald, Lawren Harris, Emily Carr, Carl Schaefer and Charles Comfort. Of the eighteen broadcasts, six covered artists associated with the Group of Seven.¹⁰⁹ In the early 1950's, the Gallery and the CBC again embarked on a joint initiative: *Our Canadian Painters*.¹¹⁰

Conclusion

Although circulating exhibitions were the most direct way in which the National Gallery's presence was manifested in communities across the country during the first decades of this century, such exhibitions depended on the existence of an adequate venue. The reproduction programme, however, required only a receptive ministry of education, school board, individual teacher or committed citizens to provide classrooms and individual students across the country with their own "collections" of Canadian art.

While works by artists from other parts of the country represented a significant part of the Sampson-Matthews silkscreen project of the 1940's, the selection of the images seems to have been motivated more by the politics of the art world, geographical requirements and sponsorship concerns than by aesthetic criteria. In contrast, the Gallery's reproductions which decorated classrooms and were integrated into *curricula* between 1929 and *circa* 1950 were almost exclusively central Canadian and landscape-based, representing paintings created before 1930.¹¹¹ Although the Sampson-Matthews project greatly increased the quantity, size and quality of reproductions available, its focus on living artists and their work, however conservative, did not translate into a heavy demand for these prints. The real attraction was still Thomson, the Group of Seven and the Canadian wilderness aesthetic which had been consolidated by the earlier programme.

The impact of the early reproductions of Canadian art was heightened by the lack of other reference points. Those who frequented galleries in most major centres would have had the opportunity to see loan exhibitions of original works. But for most, the surrogate images, framed by text, classroom experience and the authority of the Gallery, came to represent Canadian art. Subject matter linked the works in a coherent narrative; meaning was conferred through the verbal descriptions.¹¹² Issues of scale, of texture, of painterly quality could only be imagined.

That more artists (or audiences) did not raise their voices at the narrowness of the reproduction programme and the lack of commitment to artists from across the country reflects the dominance of the central institutions. Saskatchewan's admonishments that the National Gallery had some responsibility to make known the work of that province's artists appear to have been unique. It was only in response to the *Young Canada Listens* series that questions were raised about the lack of representation of women artists in an aesthetic construct in which ruggedness, vigour and drama (terms regularly employed by Lismer in his description of works included in the National Gallery series) were considered the highest praise.

Today the validity of the meta-narrative has been rejected; but at the time, the creation of a linear history designed to position Thomson and the Group of Seven at the apex of Canadian artistic achievement and to establish the pivotal role of the National Gallery in the minds of Canadians was a central purpose of the programme. The Gallery aspired to provide an aesthetic education for the country's expanding population, "creating and cultivating... correct artistic taste."¹³ Through its education programme, it offered aesthetic sustenance to nourish the nation, providing the requisite "sense of beauty" and the "intellectual and moral" impetus that would create a great society. Nationalism and patriotism were key elements in the project, and Lismer's texts suggest that it was also intended to improve understanding between English and French Canadians.

Carol Duncan might well have been writing about the National Gallery of Canada and in particular its first Canadian art reproduction programme, when she described how art museums serve as repositories for the higher authoritative truths of our society and how they bind the community into a civic body. As such, Duncan argues the museum was seen to identify society's "highest values, its proudest memories and its truest truths."¹⁴ The National Gallery of Canada's reproduction programme was a critical component in that institution's attempt to position itself and the conceit of a national art in the minds of Canadians. Establishing the basic truths essential to the ritual of nation-building, the Gallery established a Canadian art canon whose iconography would dominate the Canadian psyche for more than half a century.

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Notes

1 National Gallery of Canada Archives, *1.8 Reproductions of Paintings (1.8 R.P.)*, *Sampson-Matthews Ltd.* Note that Sampson-Matthews letterhead varies; occasionally the firm's name is written Sampson, Matthews Ltd., and on other occasions, Sampson-Matthews Ltd. I am using the hyphenated version as it is most commonly used in written documents concerning the firm and this project. Unless otherwise noted, archival material referred to in this paper is in the collection of the NGC Archives. I am indebted to Cindy Campbell, Archivist at the National Gallery, for her assistance.

2 *1.8 R.P., Sampson-Matthews*. Letter to H.O. McCurry from Peter Haworth, 5 Feb. 1943, Sampson-Matthews would sell the work and invoice clients. An excerpt from a letter from McCurry dated 16 Nov. 1942, and included in the Sampson-Matthews promotional literature, reads, "The National Gallery cordially welcomes the generous offer of a number of artists to design and donate for reproduction by your 'Colour Craft' process suitable pictures which might be distributed ... to the

armed forces of Canada." As well, "Each picture which is presented for sponsorship has been submitted to the Curator of the National Gallery in Ottawa." The Gallery wrote Sampson-Matthews that the text that appeared with the reproductions should read, "Produced in Co-operation with the National Gallery of Canada."

3 Dennis REID, *The Group of Seven: Selected Watercolours, Drawings and Prints from the Art Gallery of Ontario* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1989), 23.

4 Jean Sutherland BOGGS, *The National Gallery of Canada* (Toronto: Oxford Press, 1971). Boggs credits McCurry, then Director of the Gallery, with the implementation of these projects.

5 Brown to Walker, 14 Dec. 1913. (Fisher Rare Books Library, Toronto: Walker [Sir Edmund] Papers, Manuscript Collection 1, Box 12, File 11) Brown also wrote: "There is a very excellent profit to be made upon the sale of reproductions both large and small and I have found a way by which we can order the necessary large numbers of prints yet not be hindered with either the cost or the material."

6 1.8 R.P. Walker to Brown, 15 Dec. 1913.

7 NGC, Meetings of the Board of Trustees, vol. I, 102.

8 *Ibid.*, 105. In a note dated 9 June 1914, the Director, observing the 1912 introduction of copyright law in England, noted: "We must have the copyright with every picture we possess and in future must be careful to mention the fact when we buy." Correspondence from Brown to Walker, 1 Apr. 1914 (Fisher Rare Books Library, Toronto: Walker [Sir Edmund] Papers, Manuscript Collection 1, Box 12, File 11) indicates that the total cost for the first edition was \$978. The wholesale price was 7.25 cents to be retailed at 50 cents each; the postcards cost half a cent each and sold at two for five cents. "So the profit is considerable," Brown writes, "I am anxious to demonstrate the value of the reproductions to the National Gallery."

9 Walker Papers, 30 Sept. 1914, Box 27B, File 21. A complete set of the postcards was on sale and "being bought freely" by the end of October (29 Oct. 1914).

10 1.8 R.P., *Vandyck Printers Ltd.*, 22 Sept. 1921; reply dated 3 Feb. 1922. They recommended printing large sheets of images and cutting and tipping the pictures, which were engraved on a copper cylinder rather than plates.

11 *The National Gallery of Canada Annual Report of the Board of Trustees for the Fiscal Year 1921-22* (Ottawa: The King's Printer, 1922). This Annual Report offers evidence of the interest shown in the Medici print collection. That year it had circulated in whole or part to, among other places, public schools in Ottawa, the art galleries of Hamilton and Toronto, the Tillsonburg Library, Collingwood, Port Arthur, Fort William, Regina, Medicine Hat and Vancouver's B.C. Art League.

12 Arthur LISMER, "Art Appreciation," 1928-29 *Yearbook of the Arts in Canada*, ed., Bertram Brooker (Toronto: MacMillan, 1929), 64.

13 *Hansard*, vol. LXV, 36-1930-2 1/2 (Friday, 11 Apr. 1930):1557. A Western M.P. recommended that "the Gallery should cooperate with some of the large departmental stores throughout western Canada," noting that the T. Eaton Co., was "responsible for most of the art which appears upon the walls of our homes." It was noted that "Those stores are being stocked with etchings [sic] at a very reasonable price with a view to encouraging and fostering interest in Canadian art."

14 *The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences 1949-1951* (Ottawa: The King's Printer, 1951), 78-79. The report submitted by the National Gallery to the Massey Commission describing the first reproduction programme contained inaccuracies. For example, the Massey submission implies that the Gallery was responsible for the Sampson-Matthews project but, in fact, while it worked in co-operation with them and lent its imprimatur to the project, its direct contribution of works was limited. Documents suggest that the Gallery wanted to limit the appearance of responsibility for the venture. Despite the fact that these prints remained in distribu-

tion into the post-war years, the programme was never fully documented.

15 In *The Publications and Reproductions Program of The Metropolitan Museum of Art: A Brief History* (N.Y.: Metropolitan Museum, 1981). Regina Maria Colourman notes that by 1920 colour reproductions of paintings by several firms were being sold on a commission basis. Postcard-size colour-collotype prints of objects in the Museum were produced by 1927. In 1928 the programme was extended to included 8" x 10" prints. These were also issued in a series of eight portfolios, each containing six prints at \$6.00 per portfolio. The first in this series, *Metropolitan Museum Color Prints*, was offered in 1928.

16 "In the Galleries," *Toronto Globe and Empire*, 18 Dec. 1926. Rous and Mann, along with numerous other agents, became distributors for the National Gallery's 1927 Canadian reproduction series and the works were listed in their catalogue.

17 NGC, *Annual Report*, 1921-22, 7.

18 *Ibid.*

19 NGC, *Annual Report*, 1925-26, 5. Charles Hill confirms that the annual reports were written by Eric Brown.

20 Arthur LISMER, *Canadian Picture Study* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Toronto, 1930) written in conjunction with the Art Gallery of Toronto's reproduction programme. The most widely circulated reproductions of Canadian art, other than those of the National Gallery, were those of the Art Gallery of Toronto which Dent and some of the other companies also marketed. In 1929, the AGT advertised a set of twelve coloured reproductions of Canadian work at \$1.00 per set (75 cents for teachers) and the availability of larger images, sold individually, including Paul Peel's popular *The Tired Model*. In 1930, the AGT introduced its Canadian Picture Study set.

21 1.8 R.P., *Claudius Gregory Fine Arts Prints*. Lawrence A.C. Pantton to James MacKenzie, 2 June 1931.

22 1.8 R.P. Undated promotional material titled "The National Gallery of Canada." The document is "Obtainable through the School-Book Branch, The Department of Education, Edmonton."

23 Veronese's *The Repentant Magdalene* was also one of the earliest colour prints available but was not included in the series and was published only in a larger size.

24 Although Lismer wrote the texts for the Canadian study guides, it seems likely that Brown was instrumental in selecting the work. The representation is very different in spirit from that of the Art Gallery of Toronto's more conventional reproduction programme for which Lismer also wrote the text.

25 Eric BROWN, "Canadian Art and Artists," undated typescript (c.1919-21).

26 BROWN, "La Jeune Peinture Canadienne" *L'art et les artistes*, no. 75 (March 1927): 181 ff. (There is a typescript copy similar to this article in English titled *Canadian Art* which Brown probably wrote for translation.)

27 BOGGS, *The National Gallery of Canada*, 12. Describing the essentially Victorian belief that art's role was to uplift and not to shock as being at the heart of the Gallery's purpose during Brown's mandate, Boggs notes Jackson's description of Brown as very conservative, believing that Picasso, the German Expressionists, Mondrian and Kandinsky were "unhealthy."

28 NGC, *Annual Report*, 1928-29, 15. Minutes of the Board of Trustees 42nd Meeting, 21 Dec. 1927, 304.

29 NGC, *Annual Report*, 1926-27. Discussing a recent acquisition, the board report stated that "writers of books on this period must include work in reproduction" and that the prestige is invaluable.

30 1.8 R.P., *Mortimer Co., Ltd.* L. Campbell, Sales and Service Dept., Mortimer Co., Ltd., to the NGC, 27 Sept. 1927, quoting prices for photographing and making a set of four colour plates 5" x 6 1/2", at \$130 per set in quantities of 5000. On August 27, 1928 an order was placed for 60,000 mounts, 10" x 13". The Gallery's 1928-29 *Financial Statement* shows that up until November 29, 1928, Mortimer Co., received \$1,625.59 for colour prints. Revenues from the sale of colour prints were listed as refunds to the 1928-29 appropriation in the amount of \$309.10. Expenditures since April 1, 1929 to Mortimer Co. for engraving, printing and colour prints were \$1,170.82.

9.21B, *Board of Trustees, Minutes of Meetings, January 17, 1923 to May 12, 1932*. The minutes of the 46th Board meeting on 29 May 1929 record, under the heading "Reproductions," "A statement of the progress of the series of colour reproductions being reproduced by the Mortimer Co., was submitted. Authority was granted to continue the work in accordance with previous minutes." On January 23, 1930, the Trustees received and approved a report of the project and "Authority to proceed was granted as means became available."

31 1.8 R.P., *Canadian Forum 1929-1930*. McCurry to Barker Fairley, 25 Feb. 1929. (Fairley had expressed interest in publicizing the Canadian reproduction series in *The Canadian Forum*.)

32 In the typescript *Canadian Art* (p.4), Brown described Kane's work as "usually more topographical and anthropological than artistic but contributing an invaluable aboriginal record."

33 NGC, *Annual Report*, 1928-29.

34 The minutes of the Board of Trustees indicate that by this time, they had given permission for the project to go ahead as money became available.

35 A mid-1940's typescript list of Gallery reproductions indicates that all ten of the works remained in print, as did their study guides, throughout the thirties and forties. Several differently numbered editions were published and there are variations in the numbers assigned to the texts. In the series in the National Gallery Library, the three Thomson works are the first three numbers of the study guides, Gagnon is #4, MacDonald #5, Walker #6, Brownell #7, Watson #8, Krieghoff #9 and Lismer #10. Postcard-size prints were added for Cullen's *Ice Harvest*; Lawren Harris' *Snow II*; James Henderson's *The End of Winter*; Edwin Holgate's *Totem Poles*, *Gitsegwiklas*; Jackson's *Early Spring* and *The Edge of the Maple Wood*; Paul Kane's *Blackfoot Chief and Subordinates*, *Indians Playing At Alcoloh* and *White Mud Portage*; J.W. Morrice's *Dieppe*, *The Beach*, *Grey Effect*; and J. Henry Sandham's *Hunters Returning with their Spoil*.

36 1.8 R.P., *Mortimer Co.*, 1946 inventory statement of holdings of NGC reproductions. The reproduction of Jackson's *Algoma, November* (1935) was titled *Algoma Lake*. There is no record of study guides for the later 1930's reproductions.

37 BROWN, "La Jeune Peinture Canadienne," 188ff. By 1932 postcard format prints were available of Lawren Harris's *Snow II*, Cullen's *Ice Harvest*, Suzor-Coté's *Settlement on a Hillside* and Gagnon's *Street Scene, Quebec*. (1.8 R.P., James MacKenzie, Canadian Fine Art Guild to McCurry, 15 Jan. 1932 noted that, had these been available on thin stock, he would have ordered 1000 of each.)

38 W. PERRY, "The West Wind," *The School* XVII (November 1928): 226.

39 F.B. HOUSSE, *A Canadian Art Movement: The Story of the "Group of Seven"* (Toronto: Macmillan Co., 1926), 119-120.

40 LISMER, *Outline for Picture Study*, "Spring Ice by Tom Thomson," Series I, no. 3 (Ottawa: NGC, c.1930). Lismer's text misnames Davies' book, referring to it as *Palette and Paddle*.

41 "Palace of Fine Arts, Dominion Tendencies," *The Times* (London), 6 May 1924 (excerpt reprinted NGC, *Annual Report*, 1924-25, 7).

42 "At the Musée de Jeu du Paume Exhibition of Canadian Art," *Le Figaro Artistique* (Paris), 5 May 1927 (excerpt translated NGC, *Annual Report*, 1927-28, 12).

43 BROWN, "La Jeune Peinture Canadienne," 191. The same year the Canadian artists series

was published, Merrill Dennison, describing the RCA exhibition at the Art Gallery of Toronto, wrote in "No More Pyrotechnics at Painting Exhibitions," *The Toronto Star*, 22 Dec. 1928, of "the end of an epoch of splendid dissension in Canadian painting.... No longer can the Group enjoy the vilification that is the reward of the precocious few, because the many have now joined them and the calliope has become merely an overcrowded band wagon.... The revolutionary movement in Canadian painting has ceased to be."

44 BROWN, "La Jeune Peinture Canadienne," 181.

45 Carol DUNCAN, "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship," *The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1991), 90.

46 BROWN, "La Jeune Peinture Canadienne," 192.

47 BOGGS, *The National Gallery of Canada*, 37. Emily Carr wrote to Dorothy Brown, "I owe him so much for I was overwhelmed by despair about my work when he came west [in 1927] and pulled me out and made me start again."

48 REID, *Our Own Country Canada*, 303.

49 Roderick NASH, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1982), offers an excellent description of this movement.

50 Lismer speaking to the Massey Commission, c.1950; *The Royal Commission on Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 205. See also Paul WALTON, "The Group of Seven and Northern Development," *RACAR* 17, no. 2 (1990): 171-79.

51 LISMER, *Outline for Picture Study*, "Winter Landscape by Cornelius Krieghoff," Series I, no. 6 (Ottawa: NGC, c.1928).

52 *Ibid.*, "Oxen Drinking by Horatio Walker, R.C.A., N.A.," Series I, no. 9 (Ottawa: NGC, 1929).

53 *Ibid.*, "The Flood Gate by Homer Watson, R.C.A., O.S.A.," Series I, no. 8 (Ottawa: NGC, 1929).

54 LISMER, *A Short History of Painting With A Note On Canadian Art* (Toronto: Andrews Brothers, 1926). He compared Québec's quaint simplicity to Ontario's sense of design and its focus on lakes and rivers, and to the West's ample sense of space and pioneer life.

55 The sentence appears in all of the study guides which discuss Tom Thomson.

56 Cruikshank's *Breaking A Road* is listed as #2 in Series I and there is also a Series II in which *The Connoisseur* is #1. Since both of these were commissioned from Lismer in 1932, I presume the original set was renumbered at that time (to include the Cruikshank) and Series II developed (perhaps as English-language guides for the Québec series).

57 In "Studies in Canadian Art," *The School* XVII, no. 4 (December 1928): 331, S.W. PERRY reproduced Gagnon's *Village in the Laurentian Mountains* and noted that a large coloured print of *Village* could be purchased from the National Gallery for fifty cents.

58 1.8 R.P., *Canadian Forum*. McCurry wrote to Fairley at *The Canadian Forum* (25 Feb. 1929), that agents would not be contracted until the series was more extensive.

59 1.8 R.P., *Mortimer Co.*, and 1.8 R.P., *The Canadian Fine Art Guild*, 1931-34.

60 1.8 R.P., *British Empire Art Co.* H.C. McInnes to McCurry, 15 Nov. 1932: "When the matter of our making large copies of *The Jack Pine* comes up may we say that they will hardly be much competition to the prints you put out at present. The smallest size will be 16 x 20 inches and retail at \$9.00 a print."

61 A generic ad in the Gallery's files, dated 16 Apr. 1930, intended for educational journals across the country, began: "Secondary School teachers should visit the Gallery - the only representative collection of Canadian art in existence and its collection of British paintings and old masters is one of the most important in America." In September 1929, Rous and Mann advertised, "Be sure to send Christmas cards of the Canadian Artists Series all designed by Canadian artists and made in Canada. They include reproductions in full colour of paintings from the National Gallery collection. Teachers will find them useful in class work," *The School* XXIII, no. 1 (September 1929) and no. 2 (October). The selection of ten was advertised at \$2.00. The British Empire Art Company placed ads in the 1930 fall issues of *The Canadian Forum* promoting "Art Appreciation" X, no. 120-121 (30 Sept. and 30 Oct.).

62 1.8 R.P., *The Canadian Fine Art Guild, 1931-34*. Lismet, Educational Superintendent of the Art Gallery of Toronto to Mr. MacKenzie, 15 May 1931.

63 1.8 R.P., *The Canadian Fine Art Guild, 1931-34*. McCurry to MacKenzie, 15 Sept. 1931. MacKenzie was selling both the National Gallery reproductions and original lithographs of Canadian artists' work which he had produced. He noted, "I had the first proof of Jackson's picture *Winter St. Fidele* and I think it will be one of the best I have done so far." A letter from MacKenzie dated 2 Oct. 1931 mentions his afternoon with Mr. Rogers, Director of Education, at Queen's Park and Miss Marsh at the College of Education: "In order to put this plan across in its entirety [*sic*] it is essential that I get at least 200 Collegiates, Technical Schools, Universities, and Private Colleges interested."

64 1.8 R.P., *Dent & Son, J.M., 1931*. Henry Button, Trade Dept., Canadian Director, J.M. Dent, Toronto, to McCurry, 2 Nov. 1931. The letter requested one hundred portfolios, fifty of each subject loose and twenty-five portfolios for those who order six or more at a time and one thousand each of the teachers' notes, "As soon as the question is settled, we'll start advertising in school journals."

65 1.8 R.P., *Dent & Son, J.M., 1931*. Button to McCurry, 1 Dec. 1931. This letter was an urgent plea for a better organized promotional strategy, requesting order forms with lists of the works available. It also indicated that Dent saw the end of the 1931-32 academic year as their basis for establishing the programme and their long-term approach to marketing the prints.

66 1.8 R.P., *The Canadian Fine Art Guild, 1931-34*. MacKenzie to McCurry, 5 Dec. 1931. On 29 Dec. he requested his consignment, noting great interest from schools. On 15 Jan. he informed McCurry that 3000 small prints had already been parceled and inquired if there "will be Jackson and Lismet in small Canadian sections."

67 1.8 R.P., *The Canadian Fine Art Guild, 1931-34*. MacKenzie to McCurry, 24 Feb. 1932.

68 1.8 R.P., *The Canadian Fine Art Guild, 1931-34*. Maurice Long to MacKenzie, 28 January 1933, Auditors' statement as of Dec. 31, 1932.

69 1.8 R.P. J.W.G. Macdonald to McCurry, 9 Apr. 1932. Macdonald's request included reproductions from both the NGC and the AGT series. It is likely that Lismet did not distinguish between the sets but was perceived to be representing the National Gallery. Moreover, the National Gallery appears to have handled the Art Gallery of Toronto's prints - at least on a selective basis. In 1942, McCurry wrote to Martin Baldwin at the AGT to congratulate him on his *West Wind* project, adding, "We will list your reproduction and keep it in stock."

70 Minutes of the Board of Trustees 51st Meeting, May 12, 1932, 367. The Assistant Director explained that unpaid accounts payable to Mortimer for plates and prints equaled \$4415.20. The proposed contract would take care of this debt and leave a considerable balance in the National Gallery's favour which it proposed to use to continue preparation of prints and plates. In this way development of further reproductions could be continued without drawing on the reduced vote.

71 1.8 R.P., *The Canadian Fine Art Guild, 1931-34*. The Canadian Fine Art Guild would complain to McCurry on February 24, 1932 that Dent was undercutting their school prices since

Dent was "selling the larger size in the teachers' magazines at 19 cents." MacKenzie argued, "I promote them in the schools, then they say they'll order from Dents since their price is cheaper." He noted he had arranged a good many shows in the smaller school towns and that these sold well.

72 1.8 R.P., *Prairie Farmer Free Press*, 1934-35. Orders started arriving in January. There is a checklist of those requesting prints after the article was published.

73 Eaton's, apparently interested in reaching future buyers through identification with a project of this status and breadth, approached the Gallery about the possibility of corporate support. Correspondence [25 July 1936] suggests that Eaton's proposed to contribute a relatively minimal amount to the reproductions and lesson plans for schools in Ontario, Québec and the Maritime provinces. McCurry rejected the proposal, which hinged on Eaton's imprint appearing on the reproductions, on the basis that the real cost of production had been borne by the Gallery and not by Eaton's.

74 1.8 R.P., *Mortimer Co., Ltd.*, 1932-34. "Folio: The National Gallery of Canada Reproduction of Pictures: Canadian Series" (13" x 15"). M. Irving to McCurry 18 Apr. 1934. Irving ordered folios for 110 sets of works for the Ontario Government. Correspondence dated 3 Apr. 1934, from Irving deals with colour reproductions for the Québec legislature.

75 1.8 R.P., *Alberta Dept. of Education*, 1930-32. McCurry to Hon. Perren E. Baker, Minister of Education, Edmonton, 12 Nov. 1931.

76 1.8 R.P., *Alberta Dept. of Education*, 1930-32. NGC to School Book Branch, Alberta Dept. of Education [1931]. A letter to McCurry 25 Nov. 1931 says they will include a circular about the school reproductions of Canadian pictures as recommended, and requests a copy of the Saskatchewan circular. On May 16, 1932 they wrote McCurry and enclosed a catalogue (p.10 and 11 of which featured additional advertising). Letters dated 18 Jan., 18 Feb., and 5 May, 1932 indicate significant numbers of orders filled.

77 1.8 R.P., *Alberta Dept. of Education*, 1930-32. McCurry to Mr. Noble, School Book Branch, Alberta Dept. of Education: "Would it be feasible for you to complete an order for 1000 prints and make returns quarterly instead of paying cash? Prints that are slow selling could be returned and replaced by others. In January the NGC shipped 4000 circulars and 4000 small prospectuses." On February 18th, the NGC sent 1100 small prints, 80 large prints and 12 portfolios with leaflets, etc.

78 1.8 R.P., *Public Schools of Ontario*, 1934. Irving of Mortimer Co. had compiled a list of MPP's to contact which he conveyed to McCurry as part of the lobbying strategy to promote the reproduction programme.

79 1.8 R.P., *Public Schools of Ontario*, 1934. McCurry to Mr. Henry, 15 Jan. 1934.

80 1.8 R.P., *Public Schools of Quebec*, 1934. Irving to McCurry, 2 Apr. 1934. Re: discussion of the translation and printing in French of the study guides. See also memo to McCurry from Tom Davey, 1936, re: French study leaflets, which lists those works and indicates that translations were ready and that french mounts were in the hands of Mortimers.

81 1.8 R.P., *Public Schools of New Brunswick*, 1934. W.J.P. MacMillan, Charlottetown, P.E.I., to E.A. Tough, Mortimer Co., 26 June 1934. (This is filed with the New Brunswick correspondence.)

82 1.8 R.P., *Manitoba Department of Education*, 1938. Minister of Education, 12 July 1938.

83 1.8 R.P., *Saskatchewan Department of Education*, 1931-36. John Huff to McCurry, 13 June 1933.

84 1.8 R.P., *Saskatchewan Department of Education*, 1931-36. Elsie Dorsey, Chairman, Art Revision Committee, Regina Public School Board to McCurry, 7 Apr. 1941.

85 Minutes of the Board of Trustees 55th Meeting, 8 Feb. 1934, 391.

- 86 1.8 R.P. The letter stating the conditions of the gift was dated March 15, 1934 and addressed to Ontario's librarians. An August 19, 1934 letter from McCurry explained to the Publicity Director, A.W. Marsh of Echo Printing Co., of Amherstburg, Ont. the terms under which the library gifts occurred.
- 87 BROWN, *The National Gallery and Art in Canada*, NGC, 1936 Brown lecture file.
- 88 1.8. R.P., *Australia, Canadian Trade Commission 1934-42*. L.M. Cosgrave, Canadian Trade Commissioner, Melbourne to McCurry, 17 June 1935. The file contains letters from head teachers, etc. in a number of schools in different parts of the province. Though McCurry informed Ontario's Premier that the reproductions had been adopted by the Board of Education of the City of New York, I have not, to date, found any records of sale to substantiate this claim. 1.8 R.P., *The Canadian Fine Art Guild*. Bankruptcy documents of Claudius Gregory Fine Arts Prints indicate that they had sold work to galleries in Buffalo and Detroit.
- 89 1.8 R.P., *Rous and Mann, 1937-38*. B. MacDougall for Rous and Mann to McCurry, 5 Aug. 1937. In some cases, the cost of production of plates was shared between the National Gallery and Rous and Mann. The NGC Archives contain 1937/38 correspondence with Rous and Mann concerning the plates.
- 90 1.8 R.P., *Rous and Mann, 1937-38*. Robson to McCurry, 7 Dec. 1937. "The reproductions of the National Gallery paintings certainly publicize the splendid work you have been doing down there."
- 91 Four colour electros and progressive proofs were received from Mortimer Co., on the instructions of the NGC for the December 1938 issue.
- 92 Purchase Order NGC from Mortimer Co., 28 Mar. 1938. Lawren Harris' *Snow II* had been added to the list, although only in postcard-size.
- 93 Purchase Order NGC, Mortimer Co., 31 Oct. 1938. 5 Oct. 1936, correspondence on National Gallery letterhead signed by Mortimer Co., acknowledges receipt of Morrice's painting from the NGC for reproduction.
- 94 1.8 R.P. McCurry to Baldwin, AGT, 13 Aug. 1942.
- 95 1.8 R.P., *Mortimer Co., 1937-1941*. McCurry to Mortimer Co., 6 Oct. 1941. On November 14, 1941 he approved new formats for the mounts with the title on the left and the artist's name on the same line on the right with affiliation and dates; the next line to read Canadian school; and the last to read NGC, Ottawa.
- 96 7.4C, *Outside Activities/Organizations, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, File 1*. McCurry to R.S. Lambert, 12 Jan. 1943. "I think there are unlimited possibilities for broadcasts to schools on art appreciation built around the small reproductions which are issued by the National Gallery. These prints are approximately postcard-size and are printed on thin and inexpensive paper so that they can be supplied to schools in quantities [at] about 1 1/2 cents each."
- 97 *Ibid.*, File 1. Lambert to McCurry, 20 Oct. 1943. Jean Boggs, makes reference to this project but suggests that it was limited to 1944-45; BOGGS, *The National Gallery of Canada*, 39.
- 98 *Ibid.*, File 5. "Re Series of Radio Talks based on small reproductions in the National Gallery and Toronto 'Canadian Painting'."
- 99 *Ibid.*, File 1. McCurry to Lambert, 12 Jan. 1943.
- 100 Letter from CBC confirming conversation for programme dated 21 March 1944. Note the earliest suggestion for this programme predates this by about two years.
- 101 See also printed programme for National School Broadcasts 1944-45.
- 102 *The Adventures of Canadian Painting: Hints to Parents on Co-Study* (5 and 6).

- 103 7.4C, *Outside Activities/Organizations, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, File 2*. Lambert to McCurry, 25 June 1945, discusses letters from Superintendents of Schools in Manitoba and Alberta commenting on the proposed strategies for the school broadcasts.
- 104 *Ibid.*, File 2. McCurry to Lambert, 21 June 1945 and Lambert to McCurry same date.
- 105 1.8 R.P. ? James, Toronto, to McCurry, 26 June 1945.
- 106 15 March 1945. Quoted in LAMBERT, *Radio and Art Appreciation in School and At Home, A Report*, 3. The original notes for the programme suggest that, had prints been available, Emily Carr and Prudence Heward might have been included.
- 107 *Ibid.*, the phrase "at the request of" was added in pen and indicates Lambert's recognition of the political importance of crediting the Gallery with the idea for the series.
- 108 7.4C, *Outside Activities/Organizations, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, File 2*. McCurry to Lambert, 13 March 1945.
- 109 List of Canadian Artist Broadcast Series.
- 110 Summary of Sales for CBC series *Our Canadian Painters* as of 31 Oct. 1952. British Columbia, Alberta, New Brunswick and Ontario were the largest subscribers. This inventory suggests there was a 1948 series as well.
- 111 1.8 R.P., *Sampson-Matthews Ltd., Files 1-12*. This file includes correspondence and public relations statements regarding the silkscreen project. An undated public relations statement titled "Art Reproduction of Canadian Pictures" notes that "in selecting both the artists and their subjects, the committee has taken care to see that all parts of Canada were covered. The collection as a whole (predominantly landscape) reflects different types of scenery...the East is represented...[there is] a study of maritime fisherfolk...the far West...the North and other districts...." A letter from Jackson to McCurry, 15 Apr. 1943 discusses the unevenness of the submissions and the problem of sponsors who want calendar art; an excerpt from a letter from Jackson to McCurry 27 Apr. 1943 reads, "We need a good western one badly...."
- 112 In the 1928-29 *Yearbook of the Arts in Canada*, 89. Fred HOUSSER described the work of Yvonne McKague: "Her compositions have masculine strength and intellectuality, showing much intelligent feeling and consideration for structure, design, form and spatial qualities."
- 113 NGC, *Annual Report*, 1921-22, 7.
- 114 DUNCAN, "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship," 90-91.

COMMENT ON A FIXÉ LE CANON

Le sentiment national, l'identité et le premier programme de reproductions d'art canadien de la Galerie nationale

Dans la plupart des écrits traitant du rôle des reproductions dans l'histoire de l'art canadien, il était admis que le projet de sérigraphies Sampson-Matthews, conçu par A.Y. Jackson et entrepris en collaboration avec la Galerie nationale durant la Seconde guerre mondiale, avait largement contribué à former notre conception de la peinture canadienne, et à établir le Groupe des Sept et la peinture paysagiste comme composantes *sine qua non* de l'art canadien.

Le présent article étudie un programme de reproductions commencé par la Galerie nationale en 1927 et ignoré jusqu'à maintenant, et les transactions culturelles, pour la plupart non identifiées, dans lesquelles les images substitués ont joué un rôle décisif pour la définition de l'art canadien. Il veut démontrer que le programme de reproductions qui a été en grande partie responsable de notre conception de l'art canadien a été créé par la Galerie nationale près de deux décennies avant le projet Sampson-Matthews, et que l'édification de la nation et la création d'un héritage visuel commun aux Canadiens ont été des facteurs majeurs dans la détermination du contenu. Complément essentiel du programme d'acquisitions, d'expositions, de conférences et d'articles de la Galerie, le projet a influencé les conceptions de tout un pays sur ce qui était «canadien» dans l'art canadien, et a fait du paysage, de la nature sauvage et du Groupe des Sept les icônes qui ont continué à dominer la psyché canadienne.

L'étude du programme de reproductions révèle plusieurs histoires qui s'entrecroisent: l'évolution du programme, la sélection des oeuvres à reproduire, la mise en marché des reproductions et la formation d'une clientèle, et la réaction du public. Comme on pouvait le lire dans la documentation promotionnelle: «La Galerie nationale a préparé une série de reproductions en couleurs de tableaux, principalement d'artistes canadiens, de la collection de la Galerie. La série est destinée en premier lieu à servir de base à l'enseignement de l'appréciation de l'art dans le public et les écoles secondaires au Canada.» Destinées aux écoles, avec des modèles tirés de la collection «d'artistes britanniques et étrangers» de la Galerie, les images du Canada sélectionnées pour être reproduites étaient surtout des paysages, ce qui renforçait l'idée d'un progrès artistique culminant dans la nouvelle «école nationale» de peinture canadienne représentée par Tom Thomson et

le Groupe des Sept. La Galerie collectionnait dans tout le champ de l'art canadien, mais le directeur, Eric Brown, responsable pour une grande part du projet, se concentrait sur ces oeuvres qui, croyait-il, pouvaient susciter la fierté nationale. Sa conviction que les oeuvres de Thomson et du Groupe pouvaient produire ce résultat a donné à la série une structure beaucoup plus restreinte.

Les lithographies canadiennes étaient produites en deux formats, 8" x 10" et 4 1/2" x 3 1/2". Les plus petites étaient disponibles en format carte postale sur papier mince afin de pouvoir être mises dans des albums. Les enseignants achetaient d'ordinaire des gravures grand format pour les exposer en classe, alors que le coût peu élevé des petites permettait à chaque écolier d'avoir sa «collection d'art canadien». Chaque oeuvre était accompagnée d'un guide d'étude préparé pour la Galerie par Arthur Lismer.

Bien que l'objectif ait été d'utiliser la collection de la Galerie nationale comme base pour l'enseignement de l'art dans les écoles du Canada, on offrait aussi au grand public «des reproductions de tableaux canadiens, en couleurs et à bas prix, qu'on ne pouvait auparavant obtenir nulle part.» La Galerie nationale et ses agents à travers le Canada développèrent des marchés (particulièrement les maisons d'enseignement à travers le Canada) qu'ils pénétrèrent au moyen de campagnes stratégiques.

En étudiant la manière dont la série a été élaborée, et son intérêt marqué pour l'oeuvre de Tom Thomson, représenté par trois tableaux sur dix, nous voulons démontrer que le choix des oeuvres était aussi remarquable par ce qui était exclus que par ce qui était inclus. Bien que Brown ait souligné dans des textes antérieurs l'importance d'artistes comme William Brymner et Maurice Cullen ainsi que le Groupe du Beaver Hall, leurs oeuvres n'étaient pas représentées. La Galerie collectionnait dans tout le pays et les reproductions étaient destinées à un marché national; cependant toutes les oeuvres sélectionnées pour représenter l'art canadien dans la série, provenaient d'artistes de l'Ontario ou du Québec.

La notion de progrès artistique était inhérente à la construction linéaire de la série: elle se réalisait dans le paysage et dans l'esthétique de la nature sauvage qui s'était emparée de l'imaginaire nord-américain. Les scènes nordiques, vides de personnages, mettaient en relief la majesté du paysage et, symboliquement, de l'âme canadienne. Les scènes rurales dépeignaient une autre mythologie. La série représentait les Canadiens dans leur environnement, en harmonie avec la terre et récoltant ses fruits. Avec l'industrialisation du XX^e siècle, l'urbanisation nord-américaine et la dégénérescence urbaine qui s'ensuivit, l'idéal bucolique était représenté comme une vision presque utopique. Les scènes du Québec donnaient une image rustique idéalisée de la vie de l'*habitant*, mettant en contraste l'ambiance pastorale et la puissante quête d'identité nationale dans l'art canadien anglais contemporain, où l'ordre moral de la nature et la notion mythique de la

nature héroïque façonnaient le nouvel icône canadien. Les femmes peintres étaient exclues d'une imagerie considérée comme «héroïque».

Les oeuvres d'artistes d'autres parties du pays formaient une part importante du projet Sampson-Matthews, dont les décisions concernant la représentativité étaient motivées davantage par les politiques du milieu artistique, les exigences de la géographie et les commanditaires que par des critères esthétiques. Par contraste, les reproductions de la Galerie nationale qui décoraient les salles de classe et faisaient partie du programme d'études, de 1929 jusque vers 1950, provenaient presque exclusivement des provinces centrales, étaient centrées sur le paysage et avaient été créées avant 1930. Bien que le projet Sampson-Matthews ait considérablement accru le nombre, le format et la qualité des reproductions, son accent sur les artistes vivants et leur oeuvre, si conservatrice qu'elle ait été, ne se traduisait pas par une demande populaire. On continuait de préférer Thomson, le Groupe des Sept et l'esthétique de la nature canadienne qui avaient été solidement implantés par le premier programme de reproductions.

En plus de tracer le développement des reproductions, leur diffusion et leur impact, l'article examine la durée du programme et de ses successeurs. L'association entre la Galerie nationale du Canada et la station radiophonique CBC pour la série *Young Canada Listens*, de 1945 à 1947, et celles qui lui ont succédé a étendu le programme de reproductions et son impact jusque dans les années cinquante en rejoignant un vaste auditoire d'adultes et d'enfants.

Bien que les expositions itinérantes aient été la façon la plus directe de rendre la Galerie nationale présente dans des communautés à travers le Canada durant les premières décennies de ce siècle, ces expositions dépendaient de lieux adéquats. Le programme de reproductions, par contre, ne demandait rien d'autre qu'un ministre de l'Éducation réceptif, une commission scolaire, des enseignants ou des citoyens intéressés à fournir des salles de classe, et des élèves dans tout le Canada avec leurs propres «collections» d'art canadien.

L'impact des premières reproductions d'art canadien était augmenté par l'absence d'autres points de repère. Les images substitués, situées dans le système de référence du texte, de l'expérience pédagogique et de l'autorité de la Galerie, ont fini par représenter l'art canadien. Le sujet était l'élément qui reliait les oeuvres entre elles dans un récit linéaire cohérent. Le sens était donné par les descriptions verbales qui les accompagnaient. L'ensemble de la connaissance visuelle de l'art canadien était fondé sur ces images.

La création de la «méta-imagerie» de l'art canadien complétait l'objectif de la Galerie nationale d'occuper une place centrale dans l'esprit des Canadiens. Par son programme de diffusion et d'éducation par l'art, la Galerie offrait une nourriture esthétique à une nation encore jeune, lui fournissant l'indispensable «sens du Beau» et l'élan «intellectuel et moral» qui devait créer une grande société. Le nationalisme et le patriotisme étaient les éléments clés de l'entreprise, et les textes

de Lismer suggèrent qu'il entrevoyait aussi comme un résultat souhaitable, une meilleure compréhension entre Canadiens anglais et Canadiens français. Le fait que peu d'artistes (ou d'auditoires) aient protesté contre les limites du programme de reproductions et le manque d'intérêt pour les artistes des régions, reflète la domination et la relative maturité des institutions centrales.

Carol Duncan aurait aussi bien pu parler de la Galerie nationale du Canada, et en particulier de son premier programme de reproductions, lorsqu'elle décrivait l'évolution du musée d'art jusqu'à devenir le dépositaire des plus hautes vérités de notre société et son rôle dans la formation de la communauté en une entité civique. Duncan dit que le musée en est venu à représenter «les plus hautes valeurs de la société, ses plus fiers souvenirs et ses vérités les plus vraies». Le programme de reproductions de la Galerie nationale a été une composante majeure dans la tentative de cette institution de se situer elle-même dans l'esprit des Canadiens et de l'éveiller à la conscience d'un art national. En établissant les vérités fondamentales essentielles au rituel de fondation d'une nation, la Galerie a construit un art canadien dont l'iconographie allait dominer la psyché canadienne pendant un demi-siècle.

Traduction: Élise Bonnette