

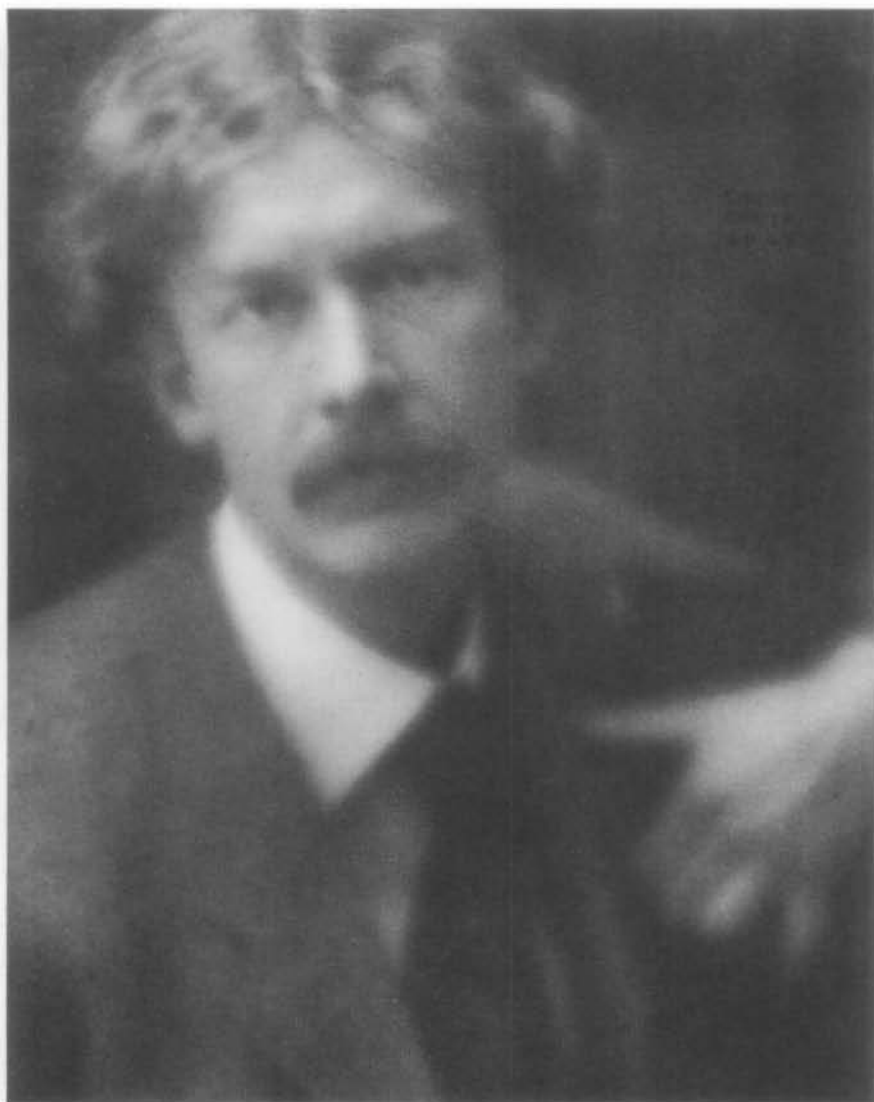


fig.1 Sidney Carter, Self-Portrait, 1907,
gelatine silver, National Archives
of Canada. (Photo: National
Archives of Canada, neg. no.
PA112016)

PHOTOGRAPHY INTO ART

Sidney Carter's Contribution to Pictorialism

By the end of the 19th century, a handful of photographers had begun to fight for a new status for photography, arguing that the medium had its "own canons of art, range, and practice."¹ The battle for public opinion was already well underway when the Pictorialist Sidney Carter (1880-1956) successfully mounted an impressive international exhibition of photography at the Art Association of Montreal in late 1907. This was conceived as one more salvo in photography's long campaign to breach the walls of the art museum, and constituted an early manifestation of modernism in Montréal.

The Pictorialist movement emerged in western Europe shortly before the turn of the century; it soon spread to North America and eventually to much of the industrialized world.² It took the unprecedented (and for some, the perverse and heretical) step of subverting the medium's positivist roots, suppressing the photograph's capacity for detailed information in favour of effect and literary allusiveness. For the first time, photography was promoted on an international scale as a medium capable of self-conscious artistic expression, able to stir in the sensitive viewer as great and profound a range of ideas and aesthetic emotions as any other medium. Pictorialism's ascendancy in Canada, particularly during the Laurier years (1896-1911), coincided with the relative decline of British influence and the rise of the United States as the new world power. Carter was not simply a recipient of various influences, but an active participant in the construction and transmission of Pictorialism. Those Canadians who participated in this movement did so because it struck a sympathetic chord which went beyond simply a common aesthetic. They also shared affinities of class, race and cultural background.

Sidney Carter was born on February 18, 1880, into a solidly middle-class Toronto family with some artistic leanings. His father, William Carter (d.1919), was an "importer" and apparently something of a collector, as he left "many beautiful *objets d'art*, furniture and paintings, etc." to Sidney.³ His uncle, with whom he had some contact when he moved to Montréal, was the watercolourist Henry Thomas Carter (1850-1931) who exhibited work with the British Water-Colour Society and the Royal Canadian Academy.⁴

Sidney Carter's first major exhibition success occurred outside of Canada, with the acceptance of two prints at the *Fourth Philadelphia Photographic Salon* (November 18 to December 14, 1901). The *Philadelphia Photographic Salon*, a product of the joint efforts of the Philadelphia Photographic Society and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, marked the beginning of a new epoch in

the history of American photography.⁵ Adopting the Salon model meant that the jury selected works solely for their artistic merit and that prizes were no longer awarded. Perhaps most significantly, this marked the first time that a major fine arts museum collaborated in an exhibition of art photography in North America.

Exhibitions frequently became the contentious focal points of arguments over the best strategy for promoting the "cause." Those photographers who pushed the fine-art status of photography most aggressively sought out prestigious venues such as art museums and galleries and some lobbied for artistic photography to be exhibited alongside paintings. In fact, many leading American photographers boycotted the *Exposition Universelle de 1900*, as a protest against photography's exclusion from the *Grand Palais des Beaux-Arts*.⁶

At about the time of his participation in the Philadelphia exhibition, Carter became involved in the Toronto Camera Club, organized as the Toronto Amateur Photographic Association in March 1888 and renamed in 1891. It was the pre-eminent club in Canada by virtue of its size, longevity, international ties and influence. The early members were solidly middle-class anglo-Canadians and included, as one Toronto daily noted in 1892, some "100 of the most prominent of Toronto's citizens."⁷ There was an essential conservatism and corporatism about the Toronto Camera Club (hereafter, the TCC) which surpassed that of most other clubs, and contributed to its stability and, ultimately, its longevity. However, this also made it slow to respond to demands for change from within and from outside the organization. A fundamental tension existed between "advancing the cause" and the kind of conservative inertia that characterized many gentlemen's clubs of the period.

Since the TCC so dominated the Toronto amateur photography scene, it was quite natural that an ambitious young photographer like Sidney Carter soon gravitated toward this well-established centre. Exactly when he joined is unknown, but his presence as a member was first recorded at the annual general meeting in November 1901, when he was 21 years old. The Salon model had proved successful elsewhere and before long Carter and the more progressive elements of the TCC began lobbying for the replacement of the annual club exhibitions with a Salon.

The TCC's "First Salon" (1903) trumpeted its artistic credentials, beginning with a jury that included the painters Charles MacDonald Manley (1855-1924, RCA, OSA) and George Agnew Reid (1860-1947, RCA, OSA). Perhaps the most exciting element of the Salon for Carter and the other Toronto Pictorialists was the fact that the Salon replaced the prize-giving exhibition, clearing the way for a loan exhibition of prints from Alfred Stieglitz's recently-formed Photo-Secession. The small but impressive selection (made by Stieglitz, not the jury) represented the work of the leading American Pictorialists and members of the Photo-Secession: Stieglitz, Edward Steichen, Clarence White, Gertrude Käsebier, Frank Eugene

and Alvin Langdon Coburn. It is unknown when, or from whom, the invitation to the Photo-Secession came, but it is likely that Carter was actively involved in securing the loan.⁸ His divided loyalties became evident during 1903, when he was elected to the Photo-Secession - becoming, at the age of 23, one of the youngest photographers and the first of only two Canadians ever to be accorded this honour.⁹

Stieglitz and the Photo-Secession were crucial to Carter's early development as a Pictorialist. Stieglitz, through his photographs, writings and those three great institutions of the Pictorialist movement - the Photo-Secession, the Little Galleries (later 291), and *Camera Work* - galvanized a generation of Pictorialists.¹⁰ Carter's personal contact with Stieglitz, spanning at least a quarter-century, provided him with an ideal, inspired his move away from the TCC and assisted his entry into a much larger photographic network which included many of the leading photographers of the day.

Carter took another important step away from the Toronto Camera Club by participating in the inaugural exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Society of Canada (Toronto, April 1904). The following year he spearheaded the formation of the Studio Club, a small, élite group of disaffected members of the TCC. They first exhibited as a body at the second exhibition of the Canadian Society of Applied Art (renamed from the previous year's Arts and Crafts Society of Canada) in December 1905. Photography's "fatal facility" (Stieglitz) had unleashed hordes of "button-pushers," who had contributed to a general decline of the craft of photography. Many Canadian Pictorialists found the reformist spirit and aesthetics of the Arts and Crafts movement a comfortable corollary to their own beliefs.¹¹ They too were struggling to overcome the imperatives of the machine and to reintroduce subjective vision and the craft of printmaking to the medium. Both movements challenged art's traditional hierarchy and the notion of a necessary superiority of the Fine Arts over the Applied Arts as well as encouraging craftsmanship and the appreciation of beauty in a wide range of areas. While Pictorialism is conventionally seen as photography's struggle for acceptance as a fine art, more recent commentators have also situated Pictorialism within the renewed interest in the applied arts.¹² It was in part this growing popular interest and familiarity with the Arts and Crafts that created a cultural climate that was increasingly receptive to the "new" photography. François-Marc Gagnon has identified the Arts and Crafts movement, Japonisme and, to a lesser extent, Art Nouveau, as the principal aesthetic currents in turn-of-the-century Montréal.¹³

When the bank in which Carter was employed failed in November 1906 he no longer had anything tying him to Toronto and promptly decided to try his luck in Montréal. The Montréal which attracted Carter was Canada's economic and cultural metropolis: a cosmopolitan centre which benefited from both its position within the British Empire and its proximity to American capital and

markets. However, its economic vitality did not necessarily translate into great cultural dividends. After just six months in Montréal (having moved from the West Coast in 1905), Carter's friend and eventual business partner Harold Mortimer-Lamb complained that the "life of Eastern Canada is so imbued with the spirit of commercialism that there is no room for anything else."¹⁴ Carter's reasons for moving to Montréal at the end of 1906 were primarily economic: to make a living as a professional portrait photographer with Mortimer-Lamb's assistance. Mortimer-Lamb was a respected mining engineer, whose move to Montréal had been prompted by his appointment as Secretary of the Canadian Mining Institute.¹⁵ Shortly after their partnership began, Mortimer-Lamb added the editorship of a mining journal to his other responsibilities, leaving him little time for a joint venture with Carter. It is difficult to know the particular dynamics of this partnership, but it would seem that Mortimer-Lamb was the likely bankroller, with Carter responsible for the day-to-day operations. Carter was unknown, having just arrived and with no particular contacts outside the photographic community, so he relied heavily on the friendship and influence of his Toronto mentor, James Mavor.¹⁶ Correspondence from Carter reveals that Mavor assisted the new venture by writing letters to McGill University academics such as Physics professor and Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, John Cox, and members of prominent families such as Dr. W.H. Drummond and Charles Porteous, securing their support in promoting the studio. Carter thanked Mavor, adding: "Your letters have done more for us than anything we could possibly have done for ourselves."¹⁷

Professional portraiture was a relatively new activity for the leading Pictorialists; in fact, Stieglitz had frequently slighted commercial photographers. The Pictorialists had privileged, above all, the notion of the sensitive, creative genius, liberated from all constraints, even the supposed limitations of the photographic process. That an artist's work should be exposed to the base imperatives of the marketplace was anathema to early Pictorialist ideals but that soon began to change. By the time of Carter's arrival in Montréal, H. Snowden Ward, the editor of *Photograms*, could write:

The cheap sneers at the work of the professional photographer, which still form a part of the stock-in-trade of the writer upon art and photography, are becoming quite out of date, in view of the immense improvement in professional work. Largely as a result of the 'amateurs' who have invaded the profession ... the old ideas of 'a pillar, a vase, and a curtain' as the ultimate possibility in pictorial portraiture, have been driven from the minds of all reasonably progressive professionals.¹⁸

Carter and Mortimer-Lamb needed another means of attracting potential clients. From the beginning they envisioned an enterprise that would combine their photographic skills with their love of the visual arts, in the form of a gallery. Carter recognized that exhibitions would greatly raise their business profile. Thus,

in December 1906, the Little Gallery was born in the heart of Montréal (16 McGill College Avenue, at St. Catherine Street). No doubt the name was a nod to Stieglitz's Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession which had opened the previous year at 291 Fifth Avenue.¹⁹ Carter and Mortimer-Lamb acted as agents for E.J. Van Wisselingh & Company, "dealers in paintings and etchings by modern masters," based in Amsterdam and London.²⁰ The Little Gallery did not limit itself to European masters; two weeks after its opening, Carter wrote excitedly about being approached by Charles Porteous, who had suggested they do an exhibition of paintings by Homer Watson (1855-1936).²¹

In the spring of 1907 Carter approached the Art Association of Montreal with an exhibition proposal, setting into motion an ambitious project to promote both Pictorialism and his own photographic activity in Montréal.²² Carter had probably been inspired by an Easter trip to New York, during which he had spent time with Alvin Langdon Coburn and Clarence White. He had studied Coburn's "remarkable work" in a solo exhibition at the Photo-Secession's Little Galleries, and remarked to Mavor on "the especially fine portraits of well-known people" such as Rodin, George Bernard Shaw and John Singer Sargent. He was also deeply impressed by Whistler's *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* (c.1874), newly installed at the Metropolitan Museum and an icon for the Pictorialists.²³ Carter returned from New York with visions of an exhibition on a much larger and more impressive scale than anything that could be accommodated at the Little Gallery. He expressed his aspirations in a letter to Stieglitz: "This will be the opening exhibition of the season ... and will be largely attended and I am particularly anxious not to fall down on it, especially as some of the prominent people here are beginning to take an interest and I should like to overwhelmingly convince them."²⁴

Carter wished to demonstrate beyond any shadow of a doubt that the medium of photography, in the hands of an artist, was capable of the most exquisite results and therefore worthy of the attention and perhaps even the patronage of "prominent" Montrealers. On the afternoon of November 23, 1907, to the strains of orchestral music, five hundred of Montréal's cultural and business elite turned out for the private opening of the resulting international exhibition of pictorial photographs. It was held in the galleries of the Art Association of Montreal, the oldest and most prestigious art museum in the Dominion.²⁵ Carter had single-handedly solicited the support of the Art Association, gathered the prints, written the catalogue and hung the show.

The exhibition presented an international "who's who" of Pictorialism to the Montréal public including Americans Stieglitz, Steichen, White, Käsebier and Coburn; A. Horsley Hinton and Frederick Evans, from England; Austria's Heinrich Kühn and the Hofmeister brothers; and Robert Demachy and Constant Puyo of France. As a devoted Photo-Secessionist, Carter looked to Stieglitz who

believed that too much energy had been "directed towards organizations, rather than towards broad and universal ideals."²⁶ Similarly, Carter produced this exhibition by himself, independent of any camera club and made it strictly invitation-al: no jury and no hanging committee. He directed the exhibition not at photographers, but at a wider "art-loving" public, and later recalled that there was "no other suitable gallery in Canada in which such an Exhibition could be creditably shown."²⁷ The Photo-Secession had described its own audience in similar terms: "While the cultured public naturally includes some photographers, it is rather to the connoisseur than to the mere camerist that the Photo-Secession endeavors to appeal."²⁸

It was to this broader audience that the Montréal catalogue also appealed and the short introduction is infused with the strategy of validation through association. Carter evidently considered "the Art movement in photography" sufficiently mature to be the subject of a historical overview, in which he dated Pictorialism's beginnings to around 1890, with the notable exception of David Octavius Hill (1802-70), whom Carter credited as being "the father of pictorial photography."²⁹

Britain's Linked Ring and the Photo-Secession were cited as crucial factors in "the advance of the movement," but the latter was "broader in its aims and international in its scope," and the consistently high standards of its exhibitions had "*compelled* recognition of the photographic medium, and ... fully substantiated its claims." Carter further advanced these claims by quoting one of the great cultural luminaries of the day, George Bernard Shaw. His essay "The Unmechanicalness of Photography," first published in *The Amateur Photographer* in 1902, was also excerpted in the catalogue to an exhibition of photographs at the New English Art Club in 1907, but it is most likely that Carter had read it in his copy of *Camera Work* 14 (April 1906).³⁰ Carter cited Shaw's pronouncement: "The truth is that neither a photograph nor a painting is necessarily 'artistic'; nor does anybody who knows the A B C of criticism suppose that Fine Art refers to the processes by which works of Fine Art are produced, instead of to certain qualities of the product."³¹ Carter exercised caution in selecting this uncharacteristically reasonable and restrained sentence from an otherwise incendiary article. He prudently avoided repeating the article's central conceit which proceeded, via an exemplary bit of Shavian subversion, to demonstrate that it was not the camera but "the hand of the painter that is incurably mechanical."

The introduction's most puzzling sentence is a simple acknowledgment thanking Stieglitz for permission to reprint an essay from *Camera Work* 2 (April 1903) written by the eminent Belgian symbolist writer Maurice Maeterlinck. No extant copy of Carter's catalogue contains the essay, nor is it apparent that any pages have been removed. There is no explanation in the catalogue, no insert and no mention of the missing Maeterlinck essay in any of the exhibition reviews or in

Carter's own published account of the exhibition. This is not the catalogue's only peculiar omission: there is no reference whatsoever to the phantom "Photo-Club of Canada," which the title page claims as the exhibition's organizer. Carter solved these two mysteries in a letter to Stieglitz, written just days after the opening of the exhibition:

A word of explanation as to the "Photo-Club of Canada." This is a myth and inserted as a scapegoat on the suggestion of the chicken-livered Secretary of the Art Association. This individual is also responsible for the gumming down of the Maeterlinck essay in the catalogue. He did this without consulting me as there was a general howl from the painter-members of the Association and he had nothing to lose in antagonizing me.³²

This bit of subterfuge was so skillfully performed that the missing essay can only be revealed by backlighting the pages and discovering that the catalogue's second sheet is actually made up of two sheets. The essay was printed on the recto of what was originally the third sheet.

Carter had thus intended Maeterlinck's essay to be prominently positioned at the very beginning of the catalogue. It was a pivotal text, considered so precious that *Camera Work* had gone to the trouble of publishing Maeterlinck's handwritten letter in facsimile, in its original French, followed by Sadakichi Hartmann's translation. Despite Stieglitz's haughty claims that photographers alone should judge photography, he and other photographers were quick to enlist any support coming from the cultural elite outside of photography. Like Shaw's essay, Maeterlinck's soon became a key text which struck a chord among Pictorialists and it was reprinted frequently over the years.³³ What heartened the Pictorialists and scandalised the Art Association's "painter-members" was Maeterlinck's belief that he was witnessing in Pictorialism the beginnings of an "important evolution" in art. New technologies were revolutionizing all spheres of human activity, but artists, in their "superannuated pride," had chosen to ignore "the modern voice." Until recently photography had not progressed beyond mere transcriptions of the visible world, "but to-day it seems that thought has found a fissure through which to penetrate the mystery of this anonymous force, invade it, subjugate it, animate it, and compel it to say such things as have not yet been said in all the realm of chiaroscuro, of grace, of beauty and of truth." No wonder certain members of the Art Association felt compelled to pre-empt this threat to painting's authority.³⁴

The catalogue listed 279 works, by 56 exhibitors, from seven countries.³⁵ Besides Carter and Mortimer-Lamb, only two other Montrealers exhibited, B.B. Pinkerton and the unknown "Mrs. C. Lambert." A high proportion of the photographers were affiliated with secessionist societies: there were 16 Photo-Secessionists (13 of the 17 Americans) and 26 members of the Linked Ring. Several of the leading American photographers belonged to both groups. Carter and J.P. Hodgins were Canada's only Photo-Secessionists and both had been

founding members of the now-defunct *Studio Club*, as were Mortimer-Lamb and Arthur Goss.

Carter and Mortimer-Lamb were the best-represented Pictorialists. By far the majority of Carter's 33 prints were either portraits or portrait studies, mixed with a few figure studies. The remarks on the medium show Carter's clear preference, in his more mature work, for the platinum process - which he had declared "the choice among the Pictorialists."³⁶ Like many Pictorialists, Carter's early experiments in which prints were heavily manipulated (most evident in the gum bichromates), were now replaced by a less interventionist approach. The radical, even "painterly," handwork evident in the use of many "control" processes in turn-of-the-century Pictorialism was giving way, particularly among members of the American school (with which Carter was consistently identified), to a more uniquely photographic aesthetic. However, this did not mean that Pictorialists were deserting the poetic for the prosaic, the mysteries of *effet* for the crisp delineation of the topographic.

Carter's portraits of distinguished sitters received much attention. They included the eminent Torontonians James Mavor; George A. Reid, then President of the Royal Canadian Academy; Byron Edmund Walker, President of the Bank of Commerce; and the Montrealers Dr. W.H. and Lady Julia Drummond and Dr. Francis J. Shepherd, Dean of Medicine at McGill University and President of the Art Association. There were two portraits of Rudyard Kipling which had been made on his recent visit to Montréal. Another well-known subject, certainly to members of the Art Association, was the popular American painter Alexis Fournier (1865-1948).³⁷ Last, but not least, Carter exhibited a self-portrait, which presented to the Montréal audience a vision of the young, romantic "long-hair" - an image beautifully rendered in platinum (fig.1). The editor of *Photograms of the Year 1907* had already used Carter's "dreamy sensitive *Self-Portrait*" to introduce a section which contrasted two different schools of portraiture: the more "popular" traditional type exemplified by an Australian image "praised as 'so clear,'" and the approach typified by a print by the Canadian Pictorialist A.A. Gleason which was "at least as good a portrait of all that interests one in the sitter, and is much more pleasing to the picture-lover."³⁸ In short, a good portrait went beyond the anecdotal or a more or less faithful rendering of the particularities of physiognomy, and aspired to a higher pictorial purpose.

Contemporary accounts of the Art Association exhibition indicate that it was exceptionally well received. Press coverage struck all the right notes and the tone and similarity of remarks suggest that Carter successfully communicated his own point of view to journalists. Advance notices, which began to appear two weeks before the opening, proclaimed the exhibition's international scope and the "new" and "unconventional" nature of the pictures. The "splendid results," rather than the process, distinguished the work. The fine-print aesthetic promoted by

the Pictorialists emphasized the unique expressiveness of each work and diminished the sense of photographic automatism. Bourgeois insecurities regarding the artistic status of the prints were quelled by reports that one exhibitor, Robert Demachy, had recently been recognized by New York's Metropolitan Museum, which had acquired a print "at a price a painter might be glad to receive for his work."³⁹

After the opening, reviews continued the appreciative tone: one headline declared the exhibition "A Revelation of What Can Be Done With the Camera," and Japanese and Symbolist influences on the "new movement" were discussed. The quality of the installation, including the fact that the gallery walls had been recovered with "a neutral toned burlap," was also mentioned. Carter's ideas on presentation had no doubt been informed by his regular trips to the Photo-Secession galleries in New York.⁴⁰ Most important, the prints were not viewed and discussed in the usual vocabulary of photography. *The Montreal Star* declared that: "In art it marks a distinct departure in Montreal."⁴¹ The artistic "influences," especially Japanese, and the "symbolism" that could be seen in "modern" painting were also noted. Unlike vernacular photographs, these images rewarded "careful study," and one photographer's landscapes were considered reminiscent of the work of Constable. A number of pictures were sold.

The press also noted the "large attendance at the Art Gallery," a fact borne out by statistics later published in the Art Association's *Annual Report*. With 1,373 visitors, Carter's exhibition surpassed many others at the Art Association, despite only a two-week run. Attendance figures even exceeded those for the Association's 30th Loan Exhibition, *Pictures by Rembrandt and the Great Dutch Painters of the XVII Century*, which had had a three-week run the previous year.⁴² Art Association exhibitions did not pull in a very broad cross-section of people, but as Carter remarked, they did attract "the right kind of people" - an important consideration for both Carter's prospects as a portrait photographer and the "cause" of Pictorialism.

Unfortunately the exhibition did not translate into a business bonanza for the Little Gallery. There were simply not sufficient numbers of the Montréal establishment willing to patronize a young upstart; even the President of the Art Association, Dr. Shepherd, whom Carter photographed for the exhibition, continued to favour the by-now quite traditional portraits of the Notman Studio, as the reproductions in his biography attest. Perhaps Montrealers were not yet ready to place themselves in the hands of the "dreamy sensitive" young man in *Self-Portrait*. Carter still had not committed himself to staying in the city and appears to have kept his options in Toronto open. In February 1907 he told Stieglitz of his intention to stay in Montréal just "long enough to work up a clientele and then to make Toronto my headquarters."⁴³ But in May, Carter informed Mavor that he and Mortimer-Lamb had only recently decided to remain in Montréal, and that

prospects were "brighter": "Within the last few weeks we have done some quite interesting work for people who can appreciate it and who can and probably will be of the greatest assistance to us in making our work known among the right people."⁴⁴

However, difficulties in Mortimer-Lamb's personal life and his mining association responsibilities soon combined to make the partnership untenable. In January 1908 a dejected Carter wrote: "I commenced the new year discontinuing my partnership with Lamb. This was unsatisfactory almost from the first. I feel at times that I must give up the struggle. I have met with so little encouragement."⁴⁵ Without Mortimer-Lamb and, perhaps more critically, without his financial backing, the Little Gallery's days were numbered. Carter was forced to take an office job with the Canadian Pacific Railway, but pleaded with Stieglitz to find him a position with a New York art dealer: "I don't think I can stand the C.P.R. much longer."⁴⁶ Nothing materialized in New York, but Carter was soon in his element when he was taken on by Montréal's foremost art gallery, William Scott & Sons, in early January 1909.⁴⁷

Carter's photographic activities slowed after he began working for Scott & Sons, and his few submissions to exhibitions tended to be recycled images. In 1909 he wrote: "There is little incentive to work in Montreal, and beyond some portraits of somewhat uninteresting people I have accomplished nothing. The notice announcing the [London] Salon came the other day - I haven't decided whether I will send anything - if I do it will probably be some old stuff I have over there."⁴⁸ Nonetheless, even the "old stuff" continued to attract enthusiastic comment, as was demonstrated by a review of an exhibition of work by "colonial workers" sponsored by the London-based *Amateur Photographer & Photographic News* in July and August 1909. Carter was mentioned along with a handful of photographers including Mortimer-Lamb, as demonstrating "to the stay-at-home Britisher that photographers in the colonies are as alive to the possibilities of the camera as a means of artistic expression as they are in this country." Interestingly, although the reviewer referred to the "colonial characteristics" of work from various countries (India, South Africa, Hong Kong, etc.), Carter's and Mortimer-Lamb's work was seen as part of the American School, which the writer described as being "characterised by freshness of outlook and breadth of treatment that stamps it with a quality that compels attention."⁴⁹ Carter was not alone in experiencing a certain *ennui*. Soon after the Art Association exhibition, Pictorialism as a movement reached its nadir and then began to fragment or, perhaps in a more positive light, ceased to be the preserve of certain groups or "schools;" and artistic photography became a more varied, distinctly personal means of expression. As artistic and even experimental photography began to appear in ever-wider spheres (the popular press, advertising, portraiture), the almost messianic fervour with which many of the Pictorialists had fought their battles began to fade. The once-

formidable obstacles to the acceptance of photography as a legitimate means of personal, artistic expression had begun to crumble. The attempt to hold together increasingly heterogeneous styles and a shifting sea of attitudes and philosophical differences, began to fail. There were too few photographers in Canada or elsewhere willing to sustain such an élitist movement for long.

Carter appears to have had few exhibitions in Montréal, except for a three-man exhibition at the Art Association's new galleries on Sherbrooke Street, from October 15 to November 4, 1913. The fact that he collaborated on this exhibition with the partners of a professional portrait studio - Walter Mackenzie and Fenwick Cutten - indicates how far he had moved from the purely artistic use of photography. By 1916, Carter was once again operating his own art gallery, which included studio space allowing him to return to professional portraiture.⁵⁰ It is difficult to assess Carter's professional portrait work as most of it likely resides in private hands. The known portraits in the Carter collection are very probably special commissions, or friends, as in the case of subjects such as James Wilson Morrice, or individuals who Carter pursued because of his admiration for them, such as John Singer Sargent. Carter's photograph of Sargent was exhibited at the London Salon in 1921 and reproduced in *Vanity Fair* in 1924.

Carter was also a well-known figure in the cultural life of Montréal and in 1912 he was a founding member of the Arts Club. He cultivated strong ties with the Art Association of Montreal over the years, first appearing in the *Annual Report* as a lender to an unspecified exhibition in 1919; the following year he donated a "Mezzo-tint of Mrs. Hartley by Marchi, after the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds." Over the next three-and-a-half decades until his death in 1956, Carter frequently appears as a donor or lender, and on his death a special fund was set up in his memory. During his lifetime he was particularly known as a specialist in Oriental antiquities, and was frequently consulted by the Art Association's first Curator of Decorative Arts, F. Cleveland Morgan.⁵¹

As a dealer, Carter handled an eclectic range of art, though he was especially known for his fine Oriental items. When he moved his gallery to the Arts Club building on Victoria Street (just east of McGill College Avenue, and north of Saint Catherine) in 1937, Robert Ayre wrote of the "treasures of paintings, prints and Chinese ceramics." Ayre cited a Homer Watson, Barbizon paintings (by Dupré, Troyon, and Monticelli), "exquisite Japanese prints of the 18th century," as well as figures from the Ming and T'ang Dynasties.⁵² The question arises as to why Carter's activities as an art dealer are not better known, though he evidently sold many works to a wide range of private individuals and to major public institutions such as the National Gallery of Canada and the Art Association of Montreal. Anecdotal evidence gathered from a wide range of sources including his children and artists such as Campbell Tinning, André Biéler and Edwin Holgate seems to agree on one point: while they respected Carter, they observed on numerous occa-

sions that he was "more interested in surrounding himself with beautiful things than in making a profit selling them."⁵³ Carter died at the Montreal General Hospital on March 27, 1956. Obituaries described his gallery, which he operated until 1954, as "a meeting place for artists, poets, collectors and connoisseurs."⁵⁴ His "judgment in the fields of painting and decorative arts ... [was] widely recognized," but by this time, few people even knew of his earlier prominence as one of Canada's pre-eminent Pictorialists.

The Pictorialist movement operated substantially and significantly in the social and political sphere. The struggles and the cleavages that afflicted photographic organizations at the turn of the century went beyond aesthetic differences. Pictorialists achieved their goal - the acceptance of photography as a legitimate medium of artistic expression - when they broke out of the narrowly-circumscribed arena of the camera clubs. Like other Canadian Pictorialists such as Harold Mortimer-Lamb, M.O. Hammond, Arthur Goss, and John Vanderpant, Sidney Carter actively participated in and contributed to, the wider cultural community.⁵⁵

DAVID CALVIN STRONG
Montréal

Notes

1 E.C. LAMBERT, "Judging Photographs," *British Journal of Photography* 43 (25 Sept. 1896): 615, rpt. in Peter BUNNELL, ed. *A Photographic Vision: Pictorial Photography, 1889-1923* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1980), 46.

2 Looking to such varied sources as the Pre-Raphaelites, Symbolism, the Arts and Crafts Movement, and Japonisme, Pictorialism can be seen as another expression of *fin de siècle* Aestheticism. This essay distinguishes between the generic term *pictorial photography*, and *Pictorialism*, a particular art-historical phenomenon. Initially, "pictorial" was taken from the general lexicon and applied to any photographic practice directed at creating an artistic "picture." Only in the 1890's did the word begin to develop a more specialized meaning and, on top of its earlier use as an adjective for an object (that is, a photograph), was added social activity or movement. The Pictorialists themselves clearly distinguished different styles or "schools" within the movement, so the haphazard (and not uncommon) retrospective labeling of work as being in a "pictorialist style" lacks precision. The "straight" - "pictorial" polarity favoured in much historical writing may be attractively simple shorthand, but it is ultimately false and misleading. Looking at Pictorialism as a movement acknowledges both the heterogeneity of the images produced and the increasingly politicized nature of amateur photography during this period.

3 William Carter appears in *The Toronto Business Directory* of 1897 as a "Commission Merchant and Manufacturer's Agent" on Bay Street. Sidney Carter's son, Duncan Carter, described his grandfather as an "importer." The "objets d'art" quote is taken from the written recollections of Sidney Carter's daughter, Betty McTavish, in April 1979; a typescript copy is in the "Sidney Carter, Photographer File," National Archives of Canada. Mrs. McTavish recalled that the items were of suf-

ficient quality to be displayed at the Art Association of Montreal (although she could not remember whether they were loaned or donated to the institution). Beginning in 1919, the Association's *Annual Reports* list Carter as a lender. The National Archives' *Sidney Carter Collection* represents the largest (some 400 items) and most important deposit of Carter's prints.

4 Evelyn de R. MCMANN, *Royal Canadian Academy of Arts: Exhibitions and Members, 1880-1979* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 65.

5 The 1898 jury included Alfred Stieglitz and the highly-esteemed painter William Chase (1849-1916), and the exhibition attracted leading photographers (and future Photo-Secessionists), resulting in "the most remarkable photographic display ever shown to an American public." Joseph T. KEILEY, "The Philadelphia Salon," *Camera Notes* 2.3 (January 1899), rpt. in Bunnell, *A Photographic Vision*, 96.

6 Robert Demachy, France's most renowned and internationally respected Pictorialist, questioned the wisdom of the American action, as it deprived the public of a broad cross-section of art photography. Demachy also wondered about the ability of the public to properly digest a large photographic exhibit alongside an overwhelming show of paintings: "Qu'aurions-nous à espérer d'un public ébloui de couleur et saturé de chefs-d'oeuvre - production choisie de dix ans de travail des premiers artistes de l'univers. Regarderait-on seulement nos photographies? Et si on les regardait?" He noted that the prints and drawings received scant attention, hung together with paintings. Robert DEMACHY, "La Photographie Pictoriale dans les Sections Etrangères," in C. Klary, ed., *La Photographie d'art à l'Exposition Universelle de 1900* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1900), rpt. in Peter Bunnell, ed., *The Universal Exposition of 1900* (New York: Arno, 1979), 79-80.

7 "Toronto Camera Club: Those Who Were Successful at the Yearly Exhibition," *World* (19 May 1892): n.p. *Scrapbook*. Toronto Camera Club collection, Manuscript Division, National Archives of Canada, Vol. 10, file 2.

8 *The Photo-Secession* 2 (April 1903): n.p. The Photo-Secession promoted itself and demonstrated its successes through carefully chosen and selectively lent loan exhibitions.

9 The precise timing of Carter's election and the circumstances precipitating it are unknown, but he first appears as an associate member in *The Photo-Secession* newsletter dated October 1903. Since the previous issue was dated April 1903, his election presumably occurred sometime during that six-month period. The timing suggests the possibility that Carter's election was prompted by his efforts to encourage the loan exhibition. Correspondence between Stieglitz and Carter must have begun by this time, but letters only survive from 1906 onwards.

10 *Camera Work*, which Stieglitz founded in 1902 and edited throughout its 15-year run, set standards for fine reproduction (principally through the photogravure process) which have never been surpassed. The Little Galleries (renamed 291) exhibited the work of the Pictorialists, and introduced North America to the work of European modernists such as Matisse, Rodin, Toulouse-Lautrec and Picasso, well before the Armory Show of 1913.

11 "Through the 1880s and 1890s, references to William Morris and his followers appeared in Canadian journals, which closely followed cultural developments in England and were certainly aware of Morris and his influence on the Arts and Crafts movement in Europe and North America.... Contemporary accounts emphasized above all his achievements as a designer and reformer of the arts. It is in this role that his impact was most strongly felt in Canada." Rosalind PEPALL, "Under the Spell of Morris: A Canadian Perspective," in Katharine A. Lochnan, Douglas E. Schoenherr, and Carol Silver, eds., *The Earthly Paradise: Arts and Crafts By William Morris and His Circle from Canadian Collections* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1993), 19.

12 Several American photographers were active participants in the Arts and Crafts movement: one of the founders of the first Arts and Crafts society in the United States (Rochester 1897) was the photographer John E. Dumont. The Boston Pictorialist F. Holland Day knew William Morris and fashioned his own literary publishing venture (Copeland and Day) after the Kelmscott Press. In the

fullest treatment to date, Christian Peterson considers the many "philosophical and interpersonal links" between the creators of the "photograph beautiful" and the Arts and Crafts movement in the United States. Christian A. PETERSON, "American Arts and Crafts: The Photograph Beautiful 1895-1915," *History of Photography* 16.3 (Autumn 1992): 189-234.

13 François-Marc GAGNON, "La fin d'une époque," *La fin d'une époque: Montréal 1880-1914 / The End of an Era: Montreal 1880-1914*, essays by François-Marc Gagnon, John Bland, and Elizabeth Collard (Montreal: McCord Museum, 1977), 6.

14 Harold MORTIMER-LAMB, "Pictorial Photography in Canada," *Photograms of the Year 1905* (London), 82.

15 I am indebted to Ariane Isler-de Jongh for much of my information on Mortimer-Lamb.

16 Carter likely became acquainted with James Mavor (1854-1925) - "a pivotal figure in the group of Morris followers in Toronto" - when Carter became involved with the Arts and Crafts Society of Canada. The quote is taken from PEPALL, "Under the Spell of Morris," 27. Mavor held the Chair of Political Economy and Constitutional History at the University of Toronto for over 30 years. He was one of the principal lobbyists for an art gallery in Toronto, was a close friend of several artists including Edmund Morris, Horatio Walker and Homer Watson, and was acquainted with European cultural figures such as Oscar Wilde, W.B. Yeats, and Max Beerbohm. He wrote an article on the sculptor Walter Allward (whom Carter photographed) for *The Year Book of Canadian Art* (1913), and his autobiography contains chapters on William Van Horne, John Ruskin and William Morris.

17 Sidney Carter to James Mavor, 3 Dec. 1906, James Mavor Papers, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto (hereafter JMP).

18 H. Snowden WARD, "Photograms of the Year 1907," *Photograms of the Year 1907*, 27.

19 As Christian Peterson has noted, the name was "suggestive of its intimacy and domestic personality," and very much in keeping with Arts and Crafts ideals. PETERSON, "American Arts and Crafts: The Photograph Beautiful 1895-1915," 211.

20 It is not known how contact with Van Wisselingh was established, but it seems likely that Mavor was involved. Just a week after opening, Carter wrote to Mavor: "The Van Wisselinghs have been very decent to us. They have left with us about twenty important paintings including a Corot, W[illem] Maris, three Monticellis..." Carter to Mavor, 3 Dec. 1906, JMP.

21 Carter to Mavor, 16 Dec. 1906, JMP.

22 By this time Mortimer-Lamb was pretty much out of the picture; besides his many professional obligations, he had recently spent time in hospital suffering from nervous exhaustion and shortly thereafter his young daughter died.

23 Carter to Mavor, 8 May 1907, JMP. The Pictorialists appreciated Whistler's modernist sensibility, particularly his explorations of colour harmony, and his rejection of Victorian narrative painting. Undoubtedly, many were also impressed by Whistler's reputation as a spirited and often controversial champion of art for art's sake.

24 Carter to Alfred Stieglitz, 22 Oct. 1907, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University (hereafter YCAL).

25 *Exhibition of Pictorial Photographs Arranged by the Photo-Club of Canada and Held in the Galleries of the Art Association of Montreal, 23rd November to 7th December, 1907*. The exhibition was rediscovered and reported by Andrew BIRRELL, in Greenhill and Birrell, *Canadian Photography: 1839-1920* (Toronto: Coach House, 1979), 129; and subsequently mentioned in Lilly Koltun, ed., *Private Realms of Light: Amateur Photography in Canada, 1839-1940* (Markham, Ont.: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1984), 44. The AAM was subsequently renamed the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

26 Alfred STIEGLITZ, "Some of the Reasons," in Bayley, ed., *The Complete Photographer*

(1906), rptd. in *History of Photography* 15.2 (Summer 1991): 87-88.

27 Sidney CARTER, "Pictorial Photography in Canada," *Photograms of the Year 1908*, 80.

28 "Photo-Secession Notes," *Camera Work* 14 (April 1906): 47.

29 As was common at the time, no mention is made of Hill's collaborator, Robert Adamson, who was considered little more than a technical assistant. Hill's work had been praised by "painter-artists" (inferring that "photographer-artists" were simply another, equally valid, subset of artists), including the English neo-classical painter and sculptor Frederic Leighton, John Singer Sargent, and "the great Whistler himself."

30 In the wake of critical debate surrounding the Photo-Secession's inaugural exhibition at the Little Galleries, Stieglitz had reprinted the essay in order to re-address the "ancient conundrum, whether the medium of photography can serve to give expression to a temperament."

31 George Bernard SHAW, "The Unmechanicalness of Photography," *Camera Work* 14 (April 1906): 18-25; rptd from *The Amateur Photographer* (9 Oct. 1902). Carter slightly misquoted the text in the catalogue.

32 Carter to Stieglitz, 26 Nov. 1907, YCAL. This charge does not appear to have been made public - certainly not in exhibition reviews, nor in Carter's subsequent discussion of the exhibition in *Photograms of the Year 1908*. The "chicken-livered secretary" was lawyer-turned-watercolourist John Bethune Abbott, the first curator of the Art Gallery and the son of a former Canadian prime minister.

33 Hartmann discussed it in *Camera Work* 4 (October 1903), and *Camera Work* reprinted Maeterlinck's essay for the special Steichen Supplement in April 1906, and again in *Camera Work* 37 (January 1912). The essay was republished in the Paris-based *Cahiers d'aujourd'hui* (December 1912), as "Sur la photographie," and in Harold MORTIMER-LAMB, "Photography as a Means of Artistic Expression," *The Canadian Magazine* 39.1 (May 1912): 35-46. The catalogue of the Toronto Camera Club's 15th Salon (May 1918) also reprinted the essay.

34 A question may be posed as to why Maeterlinck's text, but not Shaw's equally incendiary remarks, were deleted. Shaw had already achieved a certain celebrity status, even amongst the ranks of the anglo-protestant elite that made up the AAM. Maeterlinck, on the other hand, would have been much less familiar, and was likely viewed as a purveyor of continental symbolist decadence - in short, someone quite alien to the average member of the Art Association. There was also the practical consideration that Maeterlinck's text was confined to one page and was the exclusive item on that page, faced by a blank page at the beginning of the catalogue, so that it would not be missed.

35 Even though the numbering only goes up to 277, there are actually 279 works listed, as two works were assigned half-numbers. It should be noted that perhaps as many as 75 works were photogravures printed on Japanese tissue, from *Camera Work*. Neither Carter nor Stieglitz considered these exquisite prints "reproductions," but Carter was well aware (as a letter to Stieglitz indicates) that this could be perceived by an unsophisticated viewer as a potentially weak link in the exhibition. For an excellent introduction to the aesthetics of photogravure, and a consideration of the question of the medium's simultaneous status as "print," "reproduction," and "original," see Estelle JUSSIM, "Technology or Aesthetics: Alfred Stieglitz and Photogravure," *History of Photography* 3.1 (January 1979): 81-92.

36 Sidney Carter, in MORTIMER-LAMB, "Pictorial Photography in Canada," *Photograms of the Year 1906*, 12.

37 Rena Neumann COEN, *Alexis Jean Fournier, the Last American Barbizon* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985). No print in the National Archives collection has been identified as Fournier, although there are several that bear a resemblance to contemporary photographs of him and warrant further study.

38 WARD, "Photograms of the Year 1907," *Photograms of the Year 1907*, 27. Carter's Self-

Portrait seems to have struck a chord, as it was shown at the London Salon in October 1907, was reproduced in *Photograms of the Year 1907*, and a print (now at the J. Paul Getty Museum) was acquired by at least one leading American Pictorialist and Photo-Secessionist, George H. Seeley.

39 Advance notices and reviews were found in an Art Association of Montreal scrapbook: A.A.M.: 1903-1929, Archives, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

40 Carter's attention to exhibition design is evident in comments which appeared in a letter written to Stieglitz several days after the opening. He reported covering the walls with "raw burlap which looks extremely well," and described the manner in which he presented photogravures from *Camera Work*, most of which were "mounted uniformly on 14 x 18 Japanese cream paper." Evidently the installation was far from leisurely, as the walls were not redecorated until the Tuesday preceding the Saturday afternoon opening. Carter added, "I had no one to help me either in this or any other detail." Carter to Stieglitz, 26 Nov. 1907, YCAL.

41 "Pictorial Photography Exhibition," *The Montreal Star*, 23 Nov. 1907, 5.

42 Seventeenth-century Dutch painting (and its revival, the Hague School) enjoyed a particular vogue amongst collectors in turn-of-the-century Montréal, yet the Rembrandt exhibition attracted just 1,102 visitors. *Art Association of Montreal: Forty-Sixth Report*, 6, 32.

43 Carter to Stieglitz, 6 Feb. 1907, YCAL. *The Toronto City Directory* for 1908 (for which information was gathered in 1907) lists Carter as an "artist" and gives his parents' address as his residence.

44 Carter to Mavor, 8 May 1907, JMP.

45 Carter to Stieglitz, 21 Jan. 1908, YCAL.

46 Carter to Stieglitz, 15 Jan. 1909, YCAL.

47 Elizabeth Collard describes the firm as a purveyor of new ideas about art: "Scott's was to Montreal what Liberty's was to London." Elizabeth COLLARD, "The Decorative Arts," *La fin d'une époque*, 16. Scott & Sons were the Canadian agents for Morris & Company.

48 Carter to Elizabeth Buehrmann, 2 July 1909, Elizabeth Buehrmann Papers, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library.

49 [A.J. Anderson], "The Exhibition of Pictorial Photographs by Colonial Workers at the 'A.P.' Little Gallery." *Amateur Photographer & Photographic News* (13 July 1909): 36. Carter and Mortimer-Lamb also exhibited at the "Second Exhibition of Colonial Photographs" in July 1910. The fact that Carter could be represented in an exhibition of colonial photography in London, while being considered a member of the American School (by both Europeans and North Americans) is emblematic of the peculiar position of photography in Canada at this time. The "permeable" border between Canada and the United States meant that, from a quite early stage of his development as a photographer, Carter's activities and allegiances as a Pictorialist were directed along a North-South axis.

50 This date comes from correspondence between Carter and Eric Brown, Director of the National Gallery, which begins in 1916 and gives Carter's studio address as 344 Dorchester Street West. Correspondence File 211-C, National Gallery of Canada Archives.

51 I am indebted to Ruth Jackson, the former Curator of Decorative Arts at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, for her memories in this regard. Carter also delivered a lecture entitled "The Art of the Orient" at the St. James Literary Society, of which he was a member, 15 Jan. 1914. "List of Papers and Debates Presented Before The St. James Literary Society 1898-99 to 1954-55" (MG 3009), McGill University Archives.

52 Carter's Arts and Crafts ideals were much in evidence; he was designing lamp shades for some Chinese bowls, "in keeping with their essential Chinese character." Robert AYRE, "Sidney Carter Moves," *The Gazette* (Montréal), 22 May 1937, 20.

53 The quote is taken from typescript notes written by Carter's daughter Betty McTavish, in

April 1979. "Sidney Carter, Photographer File," National Archives of Canada. I am indebted to Susan Avon for alerting me to remarks by Biéler and Holgate. The artist Campbell Tinning's reminiscences are contained in an interview conducted by Lilly Koltun, on 5 March 1979 (Acc. 1979-70, C2405, National Archives of Canada).

54 "Sidney Carter Dies at 76," *The Montreal Star*, 29 March 1956, 22; and "Sydney [*sic*] Carter," *The Gazette* (Montréal), 29 March 1956, 29.

55 See Lilly KOLTUN, ed., *Private Realms of Light: Amateur Photography in Canada, 1839-1940* (Markham, Ont.: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1984); Charles C. HILL, *John Vanderpant: Photographs* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1976); Victor L. RUSSELL, and Linda G. PRICE, *Arthur S. Goss, City Photographer: Works by Toronto's Official Photographer, 1911-1940* (Toronto: City of Toronto Archives, 1980); and Maia-Mari SUTNIK, *Photographs by Charles Macnamara and M.O. Hammond: Pictorial Expressions in Landscape and Portrait*, with essays by Janet Dewan, and Martin Hunter (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1989).

Résumé

DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE À L'ART

Sidney Carter et la montée du «pictorialisme»

À la fin du XIX^e siècle, une poignée de photographes avaient commencé à se battre pour faire admettre la photographie au rang des arts. Ce médium avait, disaient-ils, «ses propres canons en art, ses possibilités et sa pratique». Le combat pour l'opinion publique était déjà engagé à l'époque où le pictorialiste Sidney Carter (1880-1956) faisait grande impression avec l'exposition internationale de photographies qu'il avait montée à l'*Art Association of Montreal*, vers la fin de 1907. Cela devait être une salve de plus dans le long siège pour ouvrir une brèche dans la forteresse des galeries d'art et des musées, et une des premières manifestations du modernisme à Montréal. L'examen de cette exposition et de son contexte permet de voir quelles furent les conditions historiques, les institutions, et les rapports personnels qui ont rendu possibles la création et la promotion de cet art.

Le mouvement pictorialiste, né en Europe de l'Ouest peu de temps avant le tournant du siècle, s'étendit très vite en Amérique du Nord, pour atteindre éventuellement une grande partie du monde industrialisé. Au regard de sources aussi diverses que le préraphaélisme, le symbolisme, les arts et métiers et le japonisme, le pictorialisme peut être vu comme une manifestation de plus de l'esthétisme fin de siècle. Dans une démarche sans précédent (et pour certains, perverse et hérétique) le pictorialisme avait détourné les sources réalistes de la photographie, occultant sa capacité de transmettre des informations précises, au profit de la recherche d'effets et d'allusions littéraires. Pour la première fois, la photogra-

phie était reconnue sur le plan international comme moyen d'expression artistique consciente, aussi capable que les autres arts de susciter chez le spectateur sensible un large registre d'idées et d'émotions esthétiques.

Carter n'était pas un simple récepteur d'influences diverses, mais un participant actif dans la construction et la transmission du pictorialisme. C'est à l'extérieur du Canada qu'il connut son premier grand succès d'exposition, lorsque deux de ses épreuves furent acceptées au quatrième Salon de la photographie de Philadelphie, en 1901. Ce Salon marquait la première collaboration d'un important musée d'art à une exposition de photographie artistique en Amérique du Nord. Vers la même époque, Carter participait aux activités du *Toronto Camera Club*, le premier au Canada en raison de son importance, de ses liens internationaux et de son influence. Il y régnait une tension fondamentale entre ceux qui voulaient «faire avancer la cause» et l'espèce d'inertie conservatrice caractéristique de plusieurs clubs de gentlemen de cette période. L'exemple du Salon avait été suivi avec succès ailleurs. Aussi, avant longtemps, Carter et les éléments les plus progressistes du TCC firent pression pour avoir leur propre Salon.

Le premier Salon du *Toronto Camera Club*, en 1903, ouvrit la voie à une exposition d'épreuves prêtées par le groupe *Photo-Secession* récemment formé par Alfred Stieglitz. La sélection, petite mais impressionnante, faite par Stieglitz représentait le travail des plus grands pictorialistes américains, membres de *Photo-Secession*: Stieglitz, Edward Steichen, Clarence White, Gertrude Käsebier et Alvin Langdon Coburn. En 1903, il devint évident que Carter se trouvait dans une situation ambivalente, alors qu'il avait été élu président de *Photo-Secession*, le premier des deux Canadiens qui devaient recevoir cet honneur. Par ses photographies, ses écrits et les trois grandes institutions du mouvement pictorialiste - *Photo-Secession*, *Little Galleries* (plus tard «291») et *Camera Work* - Stieglitz galvanisait toute une génération de pictorialistes. Les contacts personnels que Carter entretenait avec Stieglitz, pendant au moins un quart de siècle, lui transmirent un idéal et lui facilitèrent l'accès à un réseau photographique beaucoup plus vaste. Carter participa aussi à l'exposition inaugurale de l'*Arts and Crafts Society of Canada* (Toronto, avril 1904). L'année suivante, il fut à l'origine du *Studio Club*, petit groupe d'élite formé de membres déçus du TCC. Ils exposèrent ensemble lors de la deuxième exposition de la Société en décembre 1905.

Lorsque la banque où Carter était employé fit faillite, en novembre 1906, il déménagea à Montréal, alors métropole économique et culturelle du Canada. Il y ouvrit un studio professionnel de photographe portraitiste, avec l'aide de Harold Mortimer-Lamb, ingénieur des mines, pictorialiste et bailleur de fonds de l'entreprise. L'entreprise qu'ils avaient imaginée était une galerie où seraient associés leur talent de photographe et leur amour des arts visuels. Ils croyaient aussi que des expositions rehausseraient grandement leur prestige. C'est ainsi que naquit la *Little Gallery*, au 16 de l'avenue McGill College, au coeur de Montréal.

Au printemps 1907, Carter proposa à l'*Art Association of Montreal* de tenir une exposition et mit en oeuvre un ambitieux projet pour promouvoir la cause du pictorialisme et, non par hasard, ses propres activités de photographe à Montréal. Il souhaitait démontrer que, entre les mains d'un artiste, la photographie pouvait donner des oeuvres d'une grande sensibilité, dignes de l'attention et du patronage de Montréalais éminents. L'exposition ouvrit le 23 novembre 1907, dans les galeries de l'*Art Association of Montreal*, le musée d'art le plus ancien et le plus prestigieux du dominion. Carter avait, à lui seul, sollicité l'appui de l'*Art Association*, réuni les épreuves, écrit le catalogue et fait l'accrochage.

Cette exposition présentait aux Montréalais un véritable répertoire du pictorialisme: des États-Unis, Stieglitz, Steichen, White, Käsebier et Coburn; d'Angleterre, A. Horsley Hinton et Frederick Evans; d'Autriche, Heinrich Kühn et les frères Hofmeister; et de France, Robert Demachy et Constant Puyo. Carter destinait son exposition non pas aux photographes, mais à un public plus large d'amateurs d'art. À l'appui de ses affirmations, le catalogue citait une des lumières de l'époque, George Bernard Shaw: «En vérité, ni une photographie ni un tableau ne sont nécessairement «artistiques»; quiconque connaît l'abc de la critique ne peut supposer que le terme beaux-arts désigne les moyens employés pour produire les oeuvres d'art plutôt que certaines qualités du produit.»

Dans la phrase la plus étrange de l'introduction, Carter remercie Stieglitz d'avoir autorisé l'utilisation d'un essai de l'auteur symboliste belge, Maurice Maeterlinck. Et pourtant, aucun exemplaire existant du catalogue ne contient cet essai. Ce n'est pas la seule omission insolite du catalogue: on n'y trouve aucune référence au *Photo-Club of Canada*, qui était, d'après la page titre, l'organisateur de l'exposition. Carter lui-même a donné la réponse à ces deux énigmes dans une lettre à Stieglitz: «Un mot d'explication concernant le *Photo-Club of Canada*. Il s'agit d'une pure invention pour servir d'excuse, à la suggestion du secrétaire de l'*Art Association*, un poltron. C'est le même individu qui a fait retirer du catalogue l'essai de Maeterlinck. Il l'a fait sans me consulter, devant les hauts cris des peintres membres de l'*Association*, parce qu'il n'avait rien à perdre en me contrariant.» Le texte de Maeterlinck a été souvent utilisé par les pictorialistes, trop heureux de tout appui venant de l'élite culturelle extérieure au milieu de la photographie. Ce qui les encourageait, et scandalisait les «peintres membres de l'*Association*», c'était que Maeterlinck voyait dans le pictorialisme les débuts d'une importante évolution des beaux-arts, évolution qui faisait appel aux nouvelles technologies afin de faire entendre «la voix moderne». Alors que la photographie conventionnelle n'allait pas au-delà de la simple transcription du monde visible, Maeterlinck voyait dans le pictorialisme un nouveau moyen d'expression créatrice.

Le catalogue énumérait 279 oeuvres de 56 exposants représentant sept pays. Un grand nombre de ces photographes étaient associés à des sociétés dissidentes. La plupart des épreuves de Carter étaient soit des portraits, soit des études de por-

traits utilisant le procédé au platine. La «main du peintre», évidente au début du pictorialisme, cédait le pas, particulièrement chez les membres de l'école américaine (à laquelle Carter était souvent identifié), à une esthétique plus spécifiquement photographique.

Des comptes rendus de l'époque indiquent que l'exposition fut exceptionnellement bien accueillie. Les affiches faisaient état de l'envergure internationale de l'exposition et du caractère «nouveau» et «non-conformiste» des oeuvres. Celles-ci se distinguaient davantage par leurs «résultats splendides» que par le procédé. Pour faire taire les doutes que pouvait avoir la bourgeoisie, concernant la valeur artistique des épreuves, on rapportait qu'un des exposants, Robert Demachy, avait récemment vendu une épreuve au *Metropolitan Museum* de New York pour une somme importante. Les commentaires élogieux se poursuivirent après l'ouverture: un titre proclamait que l'exposition était «la révélation de ce qu'on peut faire avec un appareil-photo». On discutait des influences japonaise et symboliste. La presse notait le grand nombre de visiteurs, supérieur à celui de plusieurs expositions de l'*Art Association*, y compris celle d'oeuvres de Rembrandt et de grands maîtres hollandais du XVII^e siècle. *The Montreal Star* déclarait: «Il s'agit d'une nouvelle orientation en art, à Montréal.»

Les portraits qu'avait faits Carter de personnages connus reçurent beaucoup d'attention. Ils représentaient, entre autres, George A. Reid, alors président de la *Royal Canadian Academy*, Byron Edmund Walker (1848-1924, fait chevalier en 1910), président de la Banque de commerce, et, de Montréal, le Dr W.H. et lady Julia Drummond et le Dr Francis J. Shepherd, doyen de la faculté de médecine de l'Université McGill et président de l'*Art Association*. Il y avait deux portraits de Rudyard Kipling, faits lors d'une visite récente à Montréal. Carter exposait aussi un auto-portrait, montrant au public montréalais l'image d'un jeune homme romantique aux longs cheveux — image admirablement rendue sur papier au platine (fig.1).

Malheureusement, l'exposition ne donna pas à la *Little Gallery* de résultats commerciaux importants; trop peu de membres de la bonne société montréalaise étaient prêts à patronner un jeune blanc-bec. Même le président de l'*Art Association*, le Dr Shepherd, continuait à préférer le *Notman Studio*, compétent mais devenu très conventionnel. Des complications dans la vie personnelle et professionnelle de Mortimer-Lamb rendirent bientôt leur association intenable et elle fut dissoute en 1907. Après avoir travaillé quelque temps pour le *Canadian Pacific Railway*, Carter fut engagé, en janvier 1909, par le principal marchand d'art de Montréal, William Scott & Sons. Ses activités photographiques ralentirent, bien qu'il ait continué d'exposer au Salon, à l'occasion.

Peu après l'exposition de l'*Art Association*, le pictorialisme, en tant que mouvement, connut son nadir et commença à se fragmenter. Il cessa d'être la chasse gardée de certains groupes ou «écoles». La photographie d'art se mua en un moyen

d'expression plus varié et plus nettement personnel. Alors que la photographie artistique et expérimentale étendait son champ d'action (presse populaire, publicité, portrait), la ferveur quasi messianique déployée par les pictorialistes dans leurs premiers combats commença à s'estomper; les obstacles, jadis formidables, qui s'opposaient à la reconnaissance de la photographie comme moyen légitime d'expression artistique et personnelle commençaient à s'écrouler.

En 1916, Carter dirigeait de nouveau sa propre galerie d'art qui comprenait un studio pour le portrait professionnel. Il est difficile d'évaluer ses portraits professionnels, car ils sont pour la plupart propriété privée. Les portraits connus proviennent probablement de commandes ou d'amis, comme dans le cas de James Wilson Morrice, ou de personnalités que Carter admirait et recherchait, tel John Singer Sargent.

En dehors du milieu de la photographie, Carter était une personnalité bien connue de la vie culturelle à Montréal. Membre fondateur du *Arts Club*, en 1912, il donnait et prêtait souvent à l'*Art Association of Montreal*. Il était un spécialiste des antiquités orientales et F. Cleveland Morgan, premier conservateur des arts décoratifs de l'*Art Association*, le consultait régulièrement. En tant que marchand d'art, Carter disposait d'un choix éclectique d'oeuvres qu'il vendait à un vaste réseau de collectionneurs privés et à d'importantes institutions publiques, telles la *National Gallery of Canada* et l'*Art Association of Montreal*.

Carter est décédé le 27 mars 1956. Les notices nécrologiques parlaient de son studio, qu'il a dirigé jusqu'en 1954, comme d'un «lieu de rencontre pour les artistes, les poètes, les collectionneurs et les amateurs d'art», mais peu de gens se rappelaient encore son renom passé en tant qu'un des plus célèbres pictorialistes du Canada.

Traduction: Élise Bonnette