

THE JOURNAL OF CANADIAN ART HISTORY
ANNALES D'HISTOIRE DE L'ART CANADIEN

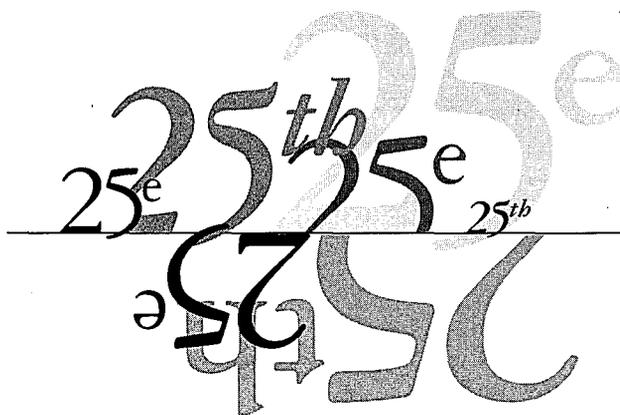
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THE JOURNAL OF CANADIAN ART HISTORY ANNALES D'HISTOIRE DE L'ART CANADIEN

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Studies in Canadian Art, Architecture and the Decorative Arts



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TABLE DES MATIÈRES / CONTENTS XXI/1, 2 2000

Sandra Paikowsky	6	Publisher's note / Note de l'éditeur
Denis Martin	10	LE PÈRE FRANÇOIS-XAVIER DUPLESSIS ET L'IMAGERIE DU CALVAIRE D'ARRAS EN NOUVELLE FRANCE (1738-1745)
	37	Summary
Jean Trudel	40	AUTOUR DU TABLEAU <i>Trois chefs montagnais et Peter McLeod</i> Peint par Théophile Hamel en 1848
	60	Summary
Dennis Reid	62	IDENTIFYING A LONG – (AND STILL) LOST EARLY PAUL KANE PAINTING, AND ATTRIBUTING A RELATED WORK TO ROBERT C. TODD
	72	Résumé
Ann Thomas	74	BETWEEN A HARD EDGE AND A SOFT CURVE Modernism in Canadian Photography
	93	Résumé
Joyce Zemans	96	SAMPSON-MATTHEWS AND THE NGC The Post-War Years
	137	Résumé
John O'Brian	140	ANTHEM LIP-SYNC
	150	Résumé
Diana Nemiroff	152	LATE STYLE IN THE WORK OF GERALD FERGUSON
	167	Résumé

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Once again it is with great pride and pleasure that we publish this second special issue of *The Journal of Canadian Art History/Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien*. The current volume continues our celebration of over twenty-five years of fostering and encouraging the publication of materials within the discipline of Canadian art history. This time we are presenting seven texts written by several members of our Advisory Board. Like most learned publications, *The Journal/Annales* has a large group of scholars from across Québec and Canada who are specialists in the variety of arenas that constitute current study of Canadian art history. Our board members are active researchers at universities and art museums and their interests describe the range of projects, from historical to contemporary, that defines our discipline.

The primary function of an Advisory Board is, as the term implies, to consult on the material which is submitted to *The Journal/Annales* for publication. Fortunately, our board members often go further than the usual expectations and provide us with in-depth commentary, raising new issues and offering our potential contributors new directions and new ideas to pursue. The Board has also taken on another important function — to encourage new scholars to submit their research material for publication. Thus, the work of younger art historians can benefit from the wide attention that our periodical attracts at home and abroad. We are most grateful for the Advisory Board's work in all of these endeavors.

For this second part of our 25th. Anniversary project, we invited our board of scholars to submit articles on any aspect of their current research. Our first special Anniversary issue of *The Journal/Annales* consisted of texts written by the eight members of the Editorial Board. This volume similarly describes the variety of approaches and methodologies which concern the Canadian art historical community at the beginning of the 21st. century. In subsequent issues of *The Journal/Annales* we will publish more texts by members of our Advisory Board alongside articles by both new and established historians of Canadian art. As in all of our issues, the articles in this volume are arranged chronologically according to the time-period of their content. This is the only area in which *The Journal/Annales* takes a linear approach to the study of Canadian art history. Rather, our twenty-five years of publication have proven that the study of our visual and material culture is a complex and multifaceted enquiry, with as many questions as answers.

Once again, *The Journal/Annales* celebrates the community which has devoted their research energies to Canadian art. On a personal note, I wish to

thank our copy editors, our translators, our designer and especially Brenda Dionne, our Editorial Assistant, who for many years has ensured our continued participation in the writing of Canadian art history.

Sandra Paikowsky
Publisher and Managing Editor

NOTE DE L'ÉDITRICE

Une fois encore c'est avec beaucoup de joie et de fierté que nous publions cette deuxième édition spéciale de *The Journal of Canadian Art History/Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien*. Nous poursuivons dans le présent volume notre célébration de plus de vingt-cinq années d'encouragement à la publication d'articles sur l'art canadien. Cette fois-ci nous présentons sept articles écrits par plusieurs membres de notre comité de lecture. *The Journal/Annales* ressemble à la plupart des publications savantes en ce qu'il compte, à travers le Québec et le Canada, un grand nombre de spécialistes dans les divers champs qui constituent l'étude actuelle de l'histoire de l'art canadien. Les membres du comité font de la recherche dans les universités et les musées d'art et leurs intérêts témoignent de l'étendue des projets, qu'ils soient historiques ou contemporains, qui définissent notre discipline.

La première fonction du comité de lecture est, comme son nom l'indique, d'étudier les articles soumis pour publication dans *The Journal/Annales*. Heureusement, les membres du comité vont au-delà de nos attentes et nous fournissent des commentaires approfondis, soulevant de nouvelles questions et présentant aux auteurs éventuels de nouvelles directions et de nouvelles idées à poursuivre. Le comité s'est aussi donné une autre fonction: encourager les nouveaux chercheurs à publier leur matériel de recherche. Ainsi, le travail des jeunes historiens de l'art peut bénéficier de l'attention que reçoit notre revue au pays et à l'étranger. Nous sommes très reconnaissants envers le comité pour tous ces efforts.

Pour cette deuxième partie de notre projet du 25^e anniversaire, nous avons demandé à notre comité de spécialistes de soumettre des articles sur l'un ou l'autre aspect de leurs recherches actuelles. Le volume précédent de *The Journal/Annales* était composé de textes écrits par les huit membres du comité de rédaction. Le présent numéro montre également la diversité d'approches et de méthodologies qui intéressent la communauté des historiens de l'art canadien au début du XXI^e siècle. Dans les numéros qui suivront, nous publierons d'autres textes de notre comité de lecture ainsi que des articles par des historiens de l'art canadien, qu'ils soient nouveaux dans le domaine ou bien établis. Comme pour tous nos numéros, les articles du présent volume sont présentés en ordre chronologique selon la période couverte par le contenu. C'est le seul cas où *The Journal/Annales* aborde l'étude de l'histoire de l'art canadien de manière linéaire. Nous avons plutôt démontré, au cours de nos vingt-cinq années de publication, que l'étude de notre culture visuelle et matérielle est une recherche complexe, aux nombreuses facettes et qui suscite autant de questions que de réponses.

Une fois encore, *The Journal/Annales* célèbre la communauté qui a consacré l'énergie de ses recherches à l'art canadien. Sur un ton plus personnel, je désire remercier nos rédacteurs, nos traducteurs, notre metteur en page et particulièrement Brenda Dionne, notre assistante à l'administration, grâce à qui nous pouvons, depuis tant d'années, continuer à écrire l'histoire de l'art canadien.

Sandra Paikowsky
Éditrice et directrice de rédaction



Nicolas-Jean-Baptiste de Poilly (Paris, 1707-1780), François Xavier Duplessis, Missionnaire de la Compag. de Jesus. Né à Québec en Canada, le 13 Janvier 1694.

LE PÈRE FRANÇOIS-XAVIER DUPLESSIS ET L'IMAGERIE DU CALVAIRE D'ARRAS EN NOUVELLE FRANCE (1738-1745)

François-Xavier Regnard Duplessis, né à Québec en janvier 1694 et décédé à Paris en décembre 1771 à l'âge de soixante dix-sept ans, fut sans doute le jésuite d'origine canadienne le plus célèbre de son temps¹. Après des études au collège des Jésuites de Québec, il part pour la France en octobre 1716, décidé à devenir membre de la célèbre Compagnie fondée par Ignace de Loyola, puis à revenir au Canada pour y oeuvrer comme missionnaire². Entré au noviciat des Jésuites à Paris en janvier 1717, il poursuit sa formation au collège de Rennes, en Bretagne, où il prononce ses vœux deux ans plus tard. De 1720 à 1727, François-Xavier Duplessis passe ensuite par divers collèges, dont ceux de La Flèche, de Blois et de Tours, pour se rendre enfin à Arras où il enseigne la philosophie. En 1729, il demande à ses supérieurs de l'envoyer au Canada, mais ceux-ci jugent préférable de le garder sur place. Arras est en effet à proximité des Flandres et de la Hollande, bastions des calvinistes et des luthériens dont il fallait contrer à tout prix l'influence, mission principalement confiée aux jésuites depuis le concile de Trente. Les prédications et les retraites prêchées par le père Duplessis le rendent rapidement populaire et lui valent notamment quelques pamphlets imprimés par les jansénistes à Amsterdam. En 1734, pour répondre à la demande des fidèles, le père Duplessis entreprend une série de grandes missions qui le conduiront à Douay, Amiens, Rouen, Valenciennes, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, et même dans les provinces allemandes. Sa carrière de prédicateur devait se poursuivre pendant une trentaine d'années. Il reviendra périodiquement dans la cité d'Arras, qu'il tenait particulièrement en affection.

C'est à l'occasion d'une retraite de Pâques prêchée par le père Duplessis pour la garnison d'Arras que se produisit, le 19 mars 1738, le miracle qui devait entraîner une production d'imagerie et une dévotion qui rayonnèrent jusqu'en Nouvelle France. Dès le 26 avril 1738, l'évêque d'Arras, François Baglion de La Salle, émit un mandement où est relatée de façon détaillée l'histoire du miracle³. Un article intitulé «Miracle à Arras en 1738», signé «A.D.» et publié dans les *Archives du Nord* dans la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle résume les faits survenus en mars 1738, tels que relatés dans le mandement de l'évêque :

La croix plantée sur le calvaire placé au-dessus de la porte séparant la Cité de la ville d'Arras, étant ruinée, le R.P. *Duplessis*, jésuite, la fit remplacer⁴. Elle fut bénie le 18 mars 1738, par l'abbé *Boisot*, vicaire-général d'Arras, dans l'église des Jésuites où elle resta deux jours à la suite d'une mission qui y fut prêchée.

Jusques là tout était naturel dans cet acte extérieur de dévotion très-commun dans nos contrées; mais le 19 mars, la fille *Marie-Isabelle Le Grand*, fruitière, âgée de 40 ans, affligée depuis 3 ans à 4 ans de plusieurs infirmités provenant d'une chute faite sur l'escalier de sa cave, se présenta à l'église des Jésuites. Elle avait vainement, pendant trois années, passé par les mains de tous les chirurgiens du pays et elle était restée avec la hanche démise, plusieurs vertèbres mouvantes et dérangées, le tibia écarté de l'os fémur, et les ligaments de la hanche fort relâchés: cette partie ne prenait plus de nourriture.

Abandonnée des hommes de l'art qui la déclaraient incurable, Marie Le Grand, aidée de sa soeur et de ses béquilles, se transporta près de la nouvelle croix, baisa les pieds du crucifix avec dévotion, et pria avec ferveur. Elle sentit pendant sa prière une révolution extraordinaire dans sa personne; quelqu'un placé près d'elle l'entendit dire à sa soeur: *Mon Dieu, je sens tous mes os et mes nerfs qui se retirent, et mon sang qui se trouble dans mes veines, tout mon corps se disloque*. La jambe malade s'allongea, les os de la hanche se remirent dans leur état naturel, et l'infirme se leva tout-à coup sans béquilles, se tint debout sur ses deux jambes et se mit à marcher sans être aidée ni soutenue de personne.

Ce fait fut constaté par des témoins; les chirurgiens qui avaient traité Marie Le Grand firent des déclarations uniformes sur son état incurable, selon eux, avant le 19 mars 1738; l'évêque d'Arras recueillit tous les dits, les consigna dans son mandement et déclara alors authentique le miracle arrivé le même jour en l'église des jésuites au pied de la croix. Le lendemain, 20 mars 1738, une procession solennelle eut lieu pour le transport de la croix; la fille Le Grand la suivit à pied et parfaitement rétablie. L'évêque permit par son mandement que ses béquilles fussent attachées à la croix et qu'en souvenir de cet événement la relation en fût gravée sur une pierre, tant à l'église des Jésuites qu'au calvaire même; enfin, il attacha des indulgences à ceux et à celles qui visiteraient dévotement l'église des Jésuites et la croix à l'occasion de ce miracle. Ce curieux mandement, qui relate les noms de tous les médecins d'Arras et ceux des ecclésiastiques appelés à parfaire l'information de cet événement qui fit grand bruit dans tous l'Artois, est contresigné par l'abbé *Dupuich*, l'un des vicaires-généraux de l'évêché d'Arras³.

Peu de temps devait se passer avant que ne se produise un second fait miraculeux attribué à la croix d'Arras, et qui fut suivi par nombre d'autres cas. Dans une lettre adressée en novembre 1738 à ses soeurs religieuses à l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec, les mères Marie-Andrée de Sainte-Hélène et Geneviève de l'Enfant Jésus, le père Duplessis relate les circonstances de ce second miracle survenu à Arras et qui allait décupler son ardeur et son zèle de missionnaire:

Si le premier miracle a contribué à autoriser les travaux de nos missions, le second dont M. l'évêque d'Arras m'a dit qu'il était parfaitement convaincu et qu'il a raconté à M. le Cardinal de Fleury avec dix ou douze des plus éclatants

me paraît bien propre à ranimer le zèle et la charité qu'un missionnaire aussi bien que des hospitalières doivent avoir pour des pauvres malades, c'est un homme de soixante et cinq ans qui avait été cordonnier paralytique depuis dix-huit ans qu'on appelait plus particulièrement que les autres le pauvre du père Duplessis parce que pendant huit ans que j'ai demeuré à Arras, je l'allais voir au moins deux fois par semaine et je lui procurais les secours dont il pouvait avoir besoin. Cet homme depuis 18 ans ne pouvait pas se donner plus de mouvement qu'un morceau de bois, j'ai aidé plusieurs fois à le mettre à terre pour raccommoder son lit. M. le curé de Ste-Croix dans la paroisse de qui il était lui apportait quatre fois l'année notre Seigneur pour le consoler de son affliction. Ce pauvre malade ayant demandé de quel côté était planté la croix, ne pouvant s'y faire porter il se tournait tous les jours de ce côté pour y faire sa prière; le neuvième jour au matin il se sent tout d'un coup guéri, il demande ses habits pour aller à la croix, on en emprunta car il n'en avait plus d'usage depuis dix-huit ans, il descend l'escalier d'un pas ferme sans aucun appui, il rencontre dans la rue son curé qui m'a dit lui-même qu'en le voyant il était tombé faible de surprise, il traverse toute la ville, monte le rempart sans bâton ni appui, et depuis ce temps-là, il jouit d'une parfaite santé⁶.

On peut comprendre qu'après la guérison de Marie-Isabelle Le Grand et celle de ce cordonnier — au terme d'une neuvaine un peu particulière — les miracles opérés par le calvaire d'Arras allaient gagner rapidement en popularité, d'autant plus qu'ils furent aussitôt traduits en gravure et diffusés à une grande échelle, et ce, dès les premiers mois qui suivirent les événements miraculeux. Dès lors, la renommée de prédicateur du père Duplessis atteignit la France entière, et la croix plantée sur les remparts d'Arras devint un lieu de pèlerinage très fréquenté. À compter de 1738, la croix et l'explication des mystères de la Passion allaient devenir le *leit-motiv* des missions et des retraites prêchées par le père Duplessis et donner lieu à de véritables mises en scène axées sur l'érection de calvaires nouveaux, de croix et la bénédiction de crucifix. Le récit des neuvaines de Rouen et de Gisors, en 1738, est particulièrement évocateur de ce contexte dévotionnel. À Rouen, écrira le père Duplessis à ses soeurs de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec, le missionnaire jésuite dut ainsi bénir plus de soixante dix mille crucifix, «...une forêt de crucifix élevée au dessus de la tête de tout le monde⁷». Le succès de la prédication de la Croix allait d'ailleurs amener le père Duplessis à prêcher en présence de la cour à Paris, en 1744. À compter de 1746, de plus en plus souvent touché par la maladie, le missionnaire continua toutefois ses missions à travers la France, pour finalement revenir à Paris où il mourut en 1771.

Dès novembre 1738, le père Duplessis avait fait parvenir les premières images du calvaire en Nouvelle-France (fig.1). De Chevreuse, il écrit à ses soeurs: «Je vous envoie cette année plusieurs images qui représentent le calvaire» et, à la fin de sa lettre, il ajoute: «Envoyez à nos bons amis et surtout à nos chers mission-

naires quelques images du calvaire d'Arras pour les engager à se souvenir de nous dans leurs prières car j'en ai plus besoin que jamais⁸». À compter de ce moment, et jusqu'en 1745, les envois d'images du calvaire d'Arras par le père Duplessis furent réguliers. Ces envois comptent d'ailleurs parmi les plus importants qu'on puisse retracer grâce à des documents écrits pendant le Régime français, parallèlement aux envois d'images sur la dévotion aux saints Anges qui nous sont connus par la correspondance entre Henri-Marie Boudon et l'abbé De Glandelet, entre 1696 et 1699⁹. Voici les extraits de la correspondance du père Duplessis qui en témoignent:

En avril 1740, il écrit:

Je vous envoie 150 images de la croix d'Arras, des livres de la dévotion au calvaire, j'en ai mis une partie à votre adresse et l'autre à l'adresse du P. Coquart qui vous les remettra et vous lui en ferez part. Je vous envoie ci-joint du Bois de la croix d'Arras. M. Nanpont en a fait enchâsser dans plusieurs croix que je vous envoie et sur lesquelles le nom est écrit pour mon frère et pour vous. (...) J'y joins aussi quelques petits éclats propres à mettre dans de petits reliquaires. (...) Si vous jugiez à propos de faire débiter une partie des images et livres du Calvaire que je vous envoie aux personnes qui voudraient en acheter et du produit en acheter du capillaire et l'envoyer pour les personnes qui ont fait les avances, ce serait une gracieuseté qui ne vous serait point à charge, ces images se vendent à Paris 6 sols la pièce, je les ai cependant eu à trois, les livres du Calvaire reliés en veau 25 sols, je les ai cependant eu à 20 et ceux qui sont en basane 15 et ceux qui sont en papier marbré 11. Les avis de pratiques pour la mission coutent 16 sols et les cantiques en papier cinq sols¹⁰.

En plus de reliques et de fragments de la croix miraculeuse propres à fabriquer des reliquaires variés, les images du calvaire d'Arras étaient ainsi accompagnées de cantiques spirituels probablement gravés comportant une bordure ornementale et une représentation de la croix miraculeuse. De plus, le père Duplessis ajoutait à ses envois deux ouvrages dont les titres nous sont connus: *La dévotion au calvaire* de l'abbé Lefebvre, parue dès 1738¹¹ et ornée de deux gravures sur bois, puis rééditée en 1739¹², et les *Avis et pratiques pour profiter de la mission et de la retraite et en converser le fruit...* du père Duplessis, dont l'édition de 1744¹³ allait d'ailleurs comporter en frontispice une gravure de Nicolas-Jean-Baptiste de Poilly (Paris, 1707-1780)¹⁴ (fig. 6). En 1741, les *Heures du Calvaire* de l'abbé Lefebvre, publiées à Douay et ornées en frontispice d'une gravure de Laurent Cars (voir, plus loin, notre fig. 10) s'ajouteront à ces publications dévotes expédiées à Québec pour stimuler la dévotion initiée par le jésuite d'origine canadienne.

En 1743, le père Duplessis écrit encore à ses sœurs:

J'ai mis entre les mains du P. Calpin, un crucifix magnifique dont on m'a offert cinquante écus. Il a été béni dans une bénédiction solennelle que j'ai fait par l'autorité de Mgr l'Archevêque le Vendredi St. Et il a servi à l'adoration de la Croix dans deux retraites que j'ai donné, où j'ai été obligé de le laisser plusieurs jours pour contenter la piété des fidèles; il doit vous l'envoyer de ma part avec des livres et des cantiques, et des images du Calvaire¹⁵.



fig.1 Nicolas-Jean-Baptiste de Poilly (Paris, 1707-1780), Représentation de la Croix miraculeuse plantée sur le rempart de la ville d'Arras le 19 mars 1738 / Par les soins du R.P. François Xavier Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jésus, et Missionnaire Apostolique, 1738, eau-forte et burin, 38 x 23 cm (feuille), Coll. Archives du monastère de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec. (Photo: Inventaire des biens culturels du Québec)

Enfin, deux ans plus tard, le 27 avril 1745, une dernière lettre fait mention d'images envoyées par le père Duplessis: «Vous trouverez dans la caisse du frère Ancelin des livres et des images¹⁶» dont on peut supposer qu'il s'agit d'estampes représentant le calvaire d'Arras et des ouvrages mentionnés plus haut.

Ces indications extraites de la correspondance du père Duplessis à ses soeurs sont d'autant plus importantes pour notre propos, qu'à la différence des images de la sainte Famille créées à la demande de M^{sr} de Laval et de celles des saints Anges envoyées par Henri-Marie Boudon et diffusées dans la colonie par l'abbé Charles De Glandelet à la toute fin du XVII^e siècle — images dont la diffusion nous est connue par les écrits mais que nous n'avons pu retracer jusqu'à maintenant¹⁷ — l'imagerie du calvaire d'Arras dont parle le père Duplessis dans ses lettres ont été conservées dans leur intégralité. Les Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, à Arras, possèdent en effet une collection très importante, la collection Barbier, qui rassemble tous les documents écrits et figurés relatifs à la dévotion au Calvaire et à son développement depuis 1738 jusqu'à la fin du XIX^e siècle¹⁸. Nous y avons retrouvé une trentaine d'estampes de grand et de petit format illustrant l'histoire du calvaire d'Arras, dont une dizaine furent gravées et éditées avant 1760. De plus, cette collection avait fait l'objet d'un inventaire très détaillé dès 1899 dans l'*Histoire du calvaire d'Arras* de l'abbé Henri Debout¹⁹, lequel mentionne également l'existence, au chapitre de l'iconographie du calvaire, de tableaux dérivés des gravures, de tapisseries, de médailles, d'images et de drapelets de pèlerinages, produits à partir de 1740 pour commémorer et diffuser les événements miraculeux survenus en 1738.

Avant de passer en revue les estampes représentant le calvaire d'Arras, dont nous connaissons la diffusion en Nouvelle-France grâce à la correspondance du père Duplessis, il convient de souligner ici un fait important: c'est que nous n'avons pu retracer dans les collections des communautés religieuses du Québec que deux gravures attestant cette diffusion. L'une est conservée dans le fonds d'images anciennes du monastère de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec (fig.1), et l'autre au monastère des Ursulines de la même ville (fig.2). Cette rareté vient encore confirmer à quel point la vulnérabilité des estampes utilisées fréquemment peut nous priver des témoins matériels de l'importante diffusion d'images dans la colonie, dont les documents font foi. Il s'agit de deux représentations différentes parmi les multiples gravures exécutées par Nicolas-Jean-Baptiste de Poilly (1707-1780)²⁰, ou éditées par lui peu de temps après les guérisons miraculeuses et l'érection de la croix sur les remparts de la ville d'Arras. La première estampe nous montre la croix plantée sur la porte de la cité, entourée de nombreux personnages harangüés par le père Duplessis, se tenant au pied du calvaire. Sous la porte et le long du mur d'enceinte, s'avance une procession précédée de l'évêque d'Arras, M^{sr} François Baglion de La Salle, de chanoines, d'enfants de chœur et de magistrats. À la gauche de cette porte d'autres personnages, dont un paralytique assis dans un fauteuil, une femme age-

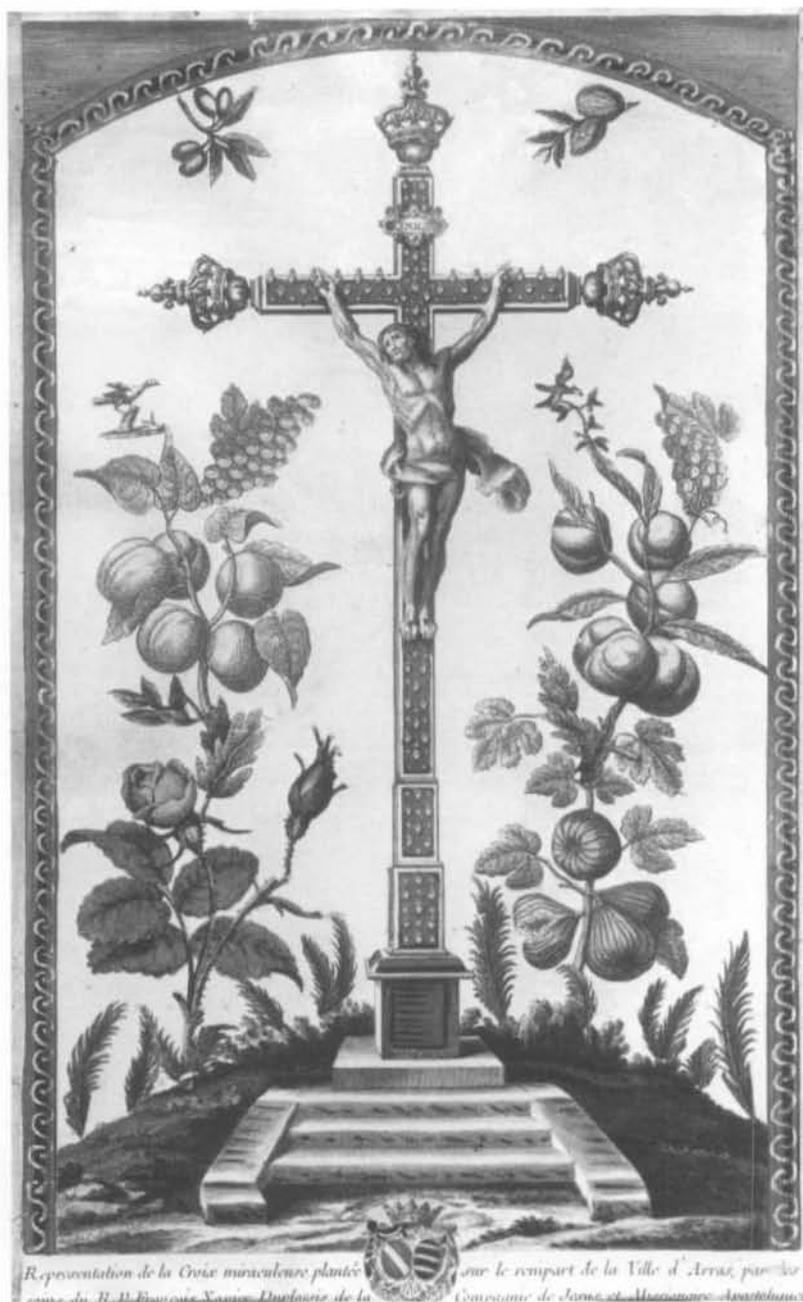


fig.2 Nicolas-Jean-Baptiste de Poilly (Paris, 1707-1780), Representation de la Croix miraculeuse plantée sur le rempart de la Ville d'Arras, par les soins / du R.P. François Xavier Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jésus, et Missionnaire Apostolique, 1738, gravure à l'eau-forte et au burin contrecollée sur toile et rehaussée à l'aquarelle et à l'huile avec des motifs de fruits, de fleurs et d'oiseaux collés et aquarellés, 37 x 24 cm (feuille rognée), Musée des Ursulines de Québec. (Photo: François Lachapelle)

noyée — probablement le cordonnier guéri et Marie-Isabelle Le Grand — et une sentinelle armée d'un mousquet, rappelant que la neuvaine miraculeuse avait été prêchée pour la garnison d'Arras, viennent compléter la scène²¹.

L'estampe conservée chez les Ursulines de Québec représente un second type de représentation du calvaire d'Arras gravé par De Poilly, qui tenait son échoppe rue Saint-Jacques à Paris à l'enseigne de *L'Espérance*²². Cette gravure à l'eau-forte et au burin marouflée sur toile, rehaussée à l'aquarelle avec des motifs de fruits, de fleurs et d'oiseaux²³ — qui nous rappellent ici les talents innés des Ursulines dans l'ornementation des parements d'autels, des reliquaires et de la broderie — est en fait la version «arrangée» de la gravure originale de De Poilly, «Dédié(e) à Madame la Duchesse d'Ayen», qui comportait autour de la croix du calvaire six formules imprimées des actes «de Foy», «d'Espérance», «d'Amour et de Remerciement», «d'Adoration», «de Contrition» et «de Zele» (fig.3)²⁴.

La guérison miraculeuse de Marie-Isabelle Le Grand et celle du cordonnier paralytique, en 1738, allaient donner lieu à une production diversifiée d'estampes, où le calvaire est représenté entouré par ces premiers protagonistes ou par d'autres malades venant chercher la guérison, des pèlerins, des soldats de la garnison d'Arras, et dans lesquelles le père Duplessis apparaît agenouillé devant la croix ou se tenant derrière elle dans l'attitude du prédicateur. Nicolas-Jean-Baptiste de Poilly grava ou édita la plupart de ces estampes (figs.4 à 6), titrées «Représentation de la Croix miraculeuse» ou «Modèle de la Croix Miraculeuse plantée sur le Rempart de la Ville d'Arras (...) par les soins du R.P. Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jésus, et Missionnaire Apostolique». Les «Représentations» montrent le Calvaire se découpant sur un paysage ou sur les édifices de la ville d'Arras, alors que les «Modèles» font sans doute référence aux autres calvaires érigés en divers lieux par le père Duplessis dans ses missions après 1738. Les croix elles-mêmes sont la plupart du temps ornées de multiples cœurs enflammés, symboles de l'amour divin, tels celui que tient saint Augustin, patron de l'ordre des Hospitalières, dans la plupart des représentations peintes ou gravées que nous en connaissons, aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles. La popularité grandissante des missions prêchées par le jésuite allait d'ailleurs commander une assez abondante production d'imagerie. Les gravures de De Poilly furent ainsi à la source d'autres représentations du Calvaire, comportant quelquefois des variantes et des ajouts importants de personnages, gravées et éditées celles-là chez Jacques Chereau²⁵ (fig.7) et chez Laurent Cars²⁶ à Paris (figs.8-11), chez Daumont²⁷, rue Saint-Martin à Paris, chez Basset²⁸, sans compter les estampes anonymes conservées aux Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais. À l'instar des gravures de De Poilly, et contemporaines des prédications du père Duplessis, il est vraisemblable que ces diverses estampes firent également partie des envois du Jésuite en Nouvelle-France. Toutes les estampes mettent en scène Marie-Isabelle le Grand, le paralytique guéri, les soldats de la garnison d'Arras, d'autres malades venus vénérer la croix dans l'attente d'une guérison, et le



fig.3 Nicolas-Jean-Baptiste de Poilly (Paris, 1707-1780), Representation de la Croix miraculeuse plantée sur le rempart de la Ville d'Arras, par les soins du R.P. François Xavier Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jésus, et Missionnaire Apostolique / Dedié à Madame la Duchesse d'Ayen / Par son tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur N.J.B. De Poilly, 1738, eau-forte et burin, 38 x 22 cm (feuille), Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, Arras (France), Collection Barbier, Carton 483, n° 3. (Photo: Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais)



MODELE DE LA CROIX MIRACULEUSE
 Plante sur le Rempart de la Ville d'Arras le 19 Mars 1738 par les soins du R. P. Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jesus & Missionnaire Apostolique

fig.4 Nicolas-Jean-Baptiste de Poilly (Paris, 1707-1780), *Modele de la Croix miraculeuse / Plantée sur le Rempart de la Ville d'Arras le 19 mars 1738 par les soins du R.P. / Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jesus, & Missionnaire, 1738*, eau-forte et burin, 34 x 21 cm (au coup de planche); 34 x 22 cm (feuille), Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, Arras (France), Collection Barbier, Carton 483, n° 4. (Photo: Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais)



MODELE DE LA CROIX MIRACULEUSE
 Plante sur le Rempart de la Ville d'Arras le 19 Mars 1738 par les soins du R. P. Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jesus & Missionnaire Apostolique: A Paris chez J. B. de la Motte aux 27. Marchands de la place

fig.5 Nicolas-Jean-Baptiste de Poilly, édit. (Paris, 1707-1780), *Modele de la Croix miraculeuse / Plantée sur le Rempart de la Ville d'Arras le 19 mars 1738 par le R. / P. F. Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jesus, et / Missionnaire Apostolique, 1738*, eau forte et burin, 16 x 9 cm (au coup de planche); 17 x 10 cm (feuille), Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, Arras (France), Collection Barbier, Carton 483, n° 7. (Photo: Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais)



fig.6 Nicolas-Jean-Baptiste de Poilly, édit. (Paris, 1707-1780), *Représentation de la Croix miraculeuse / Plantée sur le rempart de la Ville d'Arras, par le R.P. F. Xavier / Duplessis et des autres qu'il a Erigée dans le cours de / ses Missions en France, en Flandre, et en Lorraine, 1744, eau-forte et burin, 16 x 9 cm (au coup de planche); 16 x 9 cm (feuille), Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, Arras (France), Collection Barbier, Carton 483, n° 9. (Photo: Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais)*



fig.7 Jacques Chereau, édit. (Blois, 1688-Paris, 1776), *Représentation de la Croix miraculeuse / Plantée sur le Rempart de la Ville d'Arras à la clôture d'une mission faite par le Pere / Duplessis Jesuite, / pour la Garnison de cette ville, pendant le Carême de l'année 1738, vers 1745, eau-forte et burin, 30 x 20 cm (au coup de planche); 32 x 22 cm (feuille), Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, Arras (France), Collection Barbier, Carton 483, n° 10. (Photo: Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais)*



fig.8 Laurent Cars, édit. (Lyon, 1699-Paris, 1771), **Representation de la Croix miraculeuse plantée sur le rempart de la Ville d'Arras a la clôture d'une mission / faite par le Pere Duplessis Jesuite, pour la Garnison de cette ville, pendant le Carême de l'année 1738, vers 1745, eau-forte et burin, 30 x 20 cm (au coup de planche); 34 x 20 cm (feuille), Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, Arras (France), Collection Barbier, Carton 483, n° 13. (Photo: Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais)**



fig.9 Laurent Cars (Lyon, 1699-Paris, 1771), **Veritable Représentation de la Croix / Miraculeuse d'Arras, 1741, eau-forte, 14 x 8 cm (image); 15 x 9 cm (feuille), Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, Arras (France), Collection Barbier, Carton 483, n° 12 (Photo: Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais)**

père Duplessis, se tenant près de la croix miraculeuse, parmi les notables ou se mêlant aux malades et pèlerins. Fait intéressant, tous les Christ en croix ou *corpus* représentés dans l'iconographie du calvaire d'Arras ont la tête relevée: c'est le fils de Dieu encore vivant, le Christ thaumaturge souffrant, prêt à supporter les souffrances du monde, à remédier aux maux de ceux venus le vénérer. Ce trait distingue l'iconographie du calvaire du XVIII^e siècle de celle des siècles précédents montrant aux fidèles un Dieu agonisant ou mort et non prêt à intercéder, par les maux endurés, en faveur des croyants²⁹. Il s'agit toujours d'un Christ de compassion, d'un Christ guérisseur.

Par ailleurs, dans les multiples gravures consacrées au calvaire d'Arras, les compositions varient peu, si ce n'est par le nombre d'acteurs présents sur les lieux ou l'arrière-plan figurant la ville d'Arras, avec des bâtiments qui diffèrent quelquefois. Dans le domaine de l'édition d'estampes du XVIII^e siècle, les copies, les emprunts et les contrefaçons étaient fréquents, et l'originalité des estampes en souffrait parfois, sans toutefois démentir le besoin de diffuser sur une grande échelle les événements marquants de la vie spirituelle et sociale de l'époque. La gravure originale de Nicolas-Jean-Baptiste de Poilly (fig.1) demeure toutefois la plus réaliste et la plus détaillée sur les événements survenus en 1738. Un tableau, peint sur toile par Nicolas Jacquemond en 1743 en fut même tiré, destiné à la sacristie de la cathédrale d'Arras, et une autre copie en 1744, alors que la dévotion au calvaire atteignait son apogée³⁰. La collection Barbier conservée aux Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais à Arras nous permet donc de reconstituer avec un maximum de fidélité — circonstance tout à fait exceptionnelle pour l'ensemble de la période que nous étudions — un des moments forts de l'importation d'estampes sous le Régime français.

Comme nous l'avons vu, l'histoire du calvaire et la dévotion furent donc connues très tôt en Nouvelle-France, où les sœurs du père Duplessis contribuèrent à les diffuser par le moyen des estampes et des ouvrages de piété que celui-ci leur fit parvenir. Une lettre de mère Geneviève de l'Enfant-Jésus à l'apothicaire Féret, de Dieppe, datée du 30 octobre 1738, fait état de la popularité naissante de cette dévotion chez les religieuses de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec:

...v(ous) tacherez a n(ous) avoir un christ dhivoir des plus grands qui se fasse qui panche la tete a droit(e), n(ous) ne voulons et ne pouvons y mêtre plus de 12 ll, il n'est pas necessaire quil soit si recherché pourvû quil soit dévot, cest p(our) metre sur une croix assez grande qui préside sur une chasse de reliques qui fait le principal dune de nos plus devotte chapelle dédié au Calvaire qui est dans notre maison et dont n(ous) avons soin ma sœur et moy. (...) ont ma beaucoup demandez de ces petits christ a metre au col et au chapelet...³¹.

En 1753, les sœurs Duplessis devaient d'ailleurs faire acte de reconnaissance envers la duchesse d'Ayen, qui avait fait exécuter par Nicolas-Jean-Baptiste de

Poilly, en 1738 une des représentations gravées du Calvaire d'Arras (fig.3). Mère Geneviève de l'Enfant-Jésus lui écrivit en effet:

Votre piété s'étend jusque dans les pays étrangers et même dans ce nouveau monde par les images dévotes du crucifix que vous avez fait imprimer. Cela nous a procuré l'honneur de vous connaître et de savoir plus particulièrement les bontés que vous avez eues pour le Père Duplessis. Permettez s'il vous plaît M^{de} à deux uniques sœurs qu'il a religieuses dans le Canada de vous témoigner leur reconnaissance de l'affection dont vous l'honorez et de leur édification de remarquer dans une personne de votre qualité un amour tendre pour N.S.³².

On peut supposer que la dévotion au calvaire d'Arras, diffusée aussi bien par l'image que par l'écrit, connut une certaine popularité dans la colonie, parallèlement à la dévotion à la Croix, soutenue celle-là par la présence d'innombrables images, crucifix de bois — avec ou sans *corpus* — de cuivre, d'étain, d'os ou autres matériaux³³. Leur énumération ici serait vaine, tant la présence de Christ en croix est constante dans les inventaires après décès des particuliers. Avant même que la mission du père Duplessis en accélère la diffusion, cette dévotion était d'ailleurs connue en Nouvelle-France, comme l'atteste un volume intitulé justement *La Dévotion au Calvaire*, mentionné en 1734 dans l'inventaire après décès d'une bourgeoise de Québec, Marie-Catherine Jorian³⁴.

Peu de documents témoignent cependant de la popularité des *Avis et Pratiques* sur les missions du calvaire que le père Duplessis fit publier à Paris en 1744, et qui comportaient en frontispice une gravure de Nicolas-Jean-Baptiste de Poilly représentant le père Duplessis dans l'attitude du prédicateur au pied du Calvaire d'Arras, en compagnie d'Isabelle Le Grand qui lui tend ses béquilles (fig.6). Au dire même du père Duplessis, les 5 000 exemplaires de la première édition de l'ouvrage s'écoulèrent si rapidement, qu'en avril 1744 il ne put en faire parvenir que vingt-quatre exemplaires à Québec³⁵. Dans une lettre adressée de Paris à ses sœurs, le père Duplessis avoue même que «la Reine et un grand nombre de seigneurs et de dames de la cour l'ont voulu avoir, ce qui en a fait faire un débit si considérable que de cinq mille qui ont été imprimés au commencement de cette année, il n'en reste plus, et j'ay eu de la peine à avoir ceux que je vous adresse³⁶». En 1747, malgré tout, l'inventaire de la bibliothèque de la communauté des Frères Charon, à Montréal, comporte une «pratique de la devotion au Calvaire couvert de papier bleu³⁷». En 1758, de même, l'inventaire après décès de Joseph Nouchet, conseiller du roi au Conseil Supérieur et receveur des domaines du roi, nous révèle la présence des «Avis et pratiques de la mission du père Duplessis jésuite en 1 volume³⁸».

La renommée du père Duplessis en France explique sans doute la rareté des portraits du célèbre prédicateur dans les collections des communautés religieuses de Québec — fait étonnant, mais qui n'est pas sans lien avec les conditions de conservation des images au XVIII^e siècle — notamment de celui que grava De Poilly en 1744 à la demande de la duchesse d'Ayen³⁹, et dont un exemplaire est conservé

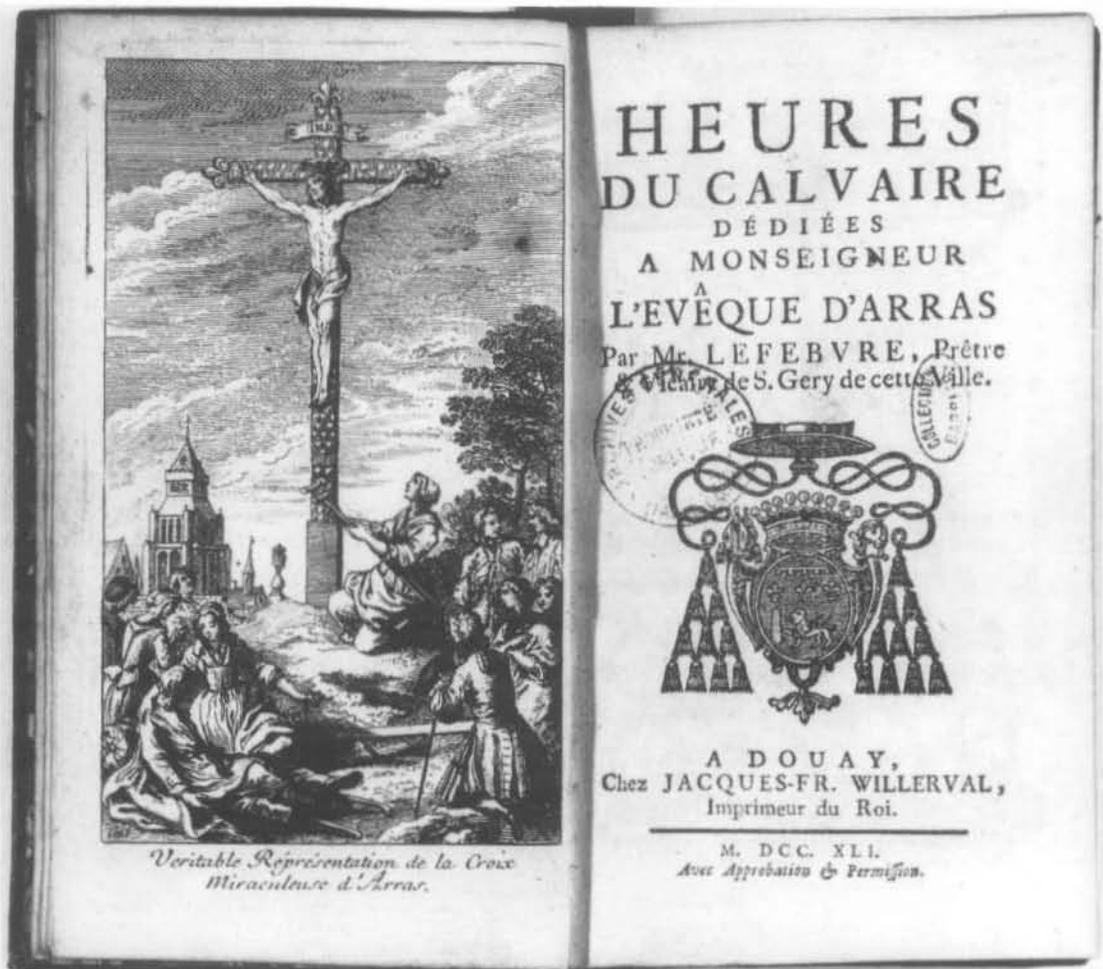


fig.10 Laurent Cars (Lyon, 1699-Paris, 1771), *Veritable Représentation de la Croix / Miraculeuse d'Arras*, 1741, eau-forte, en page frontispice des *Heures du Calvaire dédiées à Monseigneur l'Evêque d'Arras*, Par M. Lefebvre, Prêtre, A Douay, Chez Jacques-Fr. Willerwal, M.DCC.XLI., 14 x 8 cm (image); 17 x 10 cm (feuille), Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, Arras (France), Bibliothèque, Collection Barbier, A. 481. (Photo: Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais)



Représentation de la Croix miraculeuse plantée sur le rempart de la Ville d'Arras à la clôture d'une mission faite par le Pere Duplessis Jesuite pour la Garnison de cette ville, pendant le Carême de l'année 1738, vers 1745, eau-forte et burin, 22 x 18 cm (au trait carré, sans la légende); 25 x 19 cm (feuille, marges irrégulières), Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, Arras (France), Collection Barbier, Carton 483, n° 11.

*O Croix, Miraculeuse, ou cette âme fidelle,
Vient chercher le remède à son infirmité, | Accablé sous le poids de mon iniquité
Je vien, comme elle à vous guerir, comme elle*

fig.11 Laurent Cars, édit. (Lyon, 1699-Paris, 1771), Representation de la Croix miraculeuse plantée sur le rempart de la Ville d'Arras à la clôture d'une mission / faite par le Pere Duplessis Jesuite, pour la Garnison de cette ville, pendant le Carême de l'année 1738, vers 1745, eau-forte et burin, 22 x 18 cm (au trait carré, sans la légende); 25 x 19 cm (feuille, marges irrégulières), Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, Arras (France), Collection Barbier, Carton 483, n° 11. (Photo: Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais)

au Musée du Québec (fig.12). Car, selon le biographe du père Duplessis, Joseph Edmond Roy, des milliers de copies de ce portrait «... furent répandues dans toute la France⁴⁰». Cette belle estampe, finement gravée, nous montre le père Duplessis en buste, de trois-quarts, dans une bordure ovale; sous la tablette supportant cet encadrement, on peut lire les vers suivants:

Quel est l'Apôtre que je vois?
C'est Du Plessis le Héraut de la Croix.
Des Saints Martyrs il a le zèle,
Il trouve dans la Croix son espoir, ses douceurs,
Il nous apprend à ne point rougir d'elle,
Il la plante en tous lieux, et souvent dans les cœurs.

Un second portrait du père Duplessis nous est également connu, qui est conservé, celui-là, aux archives du monastère de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec (fig.13). Gravé vers 1750 pour la «Suite de Desrochers⁴¹» et vraisemblablement dérivé de l'estampe de De Poilly, il représente le missionnaire tenant de plus dans sa main droite l'instrument de sa prédication; sous le portrait, le graveur a ajouté ce verset de la première Épître de saint Paul aux Corinthiens: «Je suis envoyé pour annoncer l'excellence et la vertu de la Croix, afin que vous lui rendiez les honneurs qui lui sont dus».

Pendant les dernières années du Régime français, la dévotion au Calvaire allait se développer de façon caractéristique, et ce sans nul doute en proportion aux envois de livres et d'images effectués par le père Duplessis. Dès 1740-1742, un missionnaire sulpicien, M. Hamon Le Guen, avait fait ériger sur une des hauteurs avoisinant le village des Deux-Montagnes — aujourd'hui Oka — un calvaire constitué de quatre oratoires et de trois chapelles⁴². Même certains «oratoires» privés de particuliers furent probablement affectés dans leur composition par cette dévotion fulgurante: les exemples seraient trop nombreux à citer ici, mais notons tout de même au passage, en 1745, dans l'inventaire de Jean-Baptiste Lefebvre, charpentier de navire à Québec, la présence de cette «petite fiole de verre soufflé dans laquelle est un petit Christ avec les attributs de la passion de Notre-Seigneur en façon d'ivoire⁴³». En 1741, de même, les pauvres de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec firent ériger une croix de chemin près du moulin de Saint-Augustin qui appartenait aux hospitalières. Cette croix de chemin est l'un des plus anciens calvaires de la région de Québec et est entrée dans l'imagerie «du terroir» grâce à la belle eau-forte réalisée en 1916 par Henry Ivan Nielson (fig.14). En 1747, en effet, on devait y ajouter un corpus en bois dont l'installation a été relatée par mère Geneviève de l'Enfant-Jésus, toujours active à répandre la dévotion que son frère animait de façon spectaculaire en France; elle écrivit dans le *Livre de recettes et dépenses de l'Hôtel-Dieu*:



fig.12 Nicolas-Jean-Baptiste de Poilly (Paris, 1707-1780), François Xavier Duplessis, Missionnaire de la Compag. de Jesus. Né à Québec en Canada, le 13 Janvier 1694, 1744, eau-forte et burin, 27 x 21 cm (feuille), Coll. Musée du Québec (56.332). (Photo: Musée du Québec)



fig.13 Étienne-Jahandier Desrochers, édit. (Lyon, 1668 - Paris, 1741), ou Gilles-Edme Petit, édit. (Paris, vers 1694 -1760), François Xavier du Plessis, / Missionnaire de la Compagnie de Jesus, / né à Québec en Canada le 13. Janvier 1694., vers 1738-1740, ou vers 1750, gravure à l'eau-forte et au burin contrecollée sur toile, 15 x 10 cm (feuille, marges coupées), Coll. Archives du monastère de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec. (Photo: Inventaire des biens culturels du Québec)



fig.14 Henry Ivan Nielson (Québec, 1865-1931), Le Calvaire de Saint-Augustin, près de Québec, 1916, eau-forte et pointe sèche, 35 x 28 cm (au coup de planche); 43 x 32 cm (feuille), Coll. Musée du Québec (34.379). (Photo: Musée du Québec)

Ce fut aussi pour notre consolation que le 14^e septembre jour de la feste de l'Exaltation de la Ste Croix de cette année 1747 le Christ fut placé dans le petit calvaire au bout de la Cote du moulin de St Augustin sur le domaine des Pauvres, qui se trouvent heureux d'avoir Jesus Christ pour Pere et pour Seigneur, sa providence ayant voulu que leur hotel dieu fut fondé sous les auspices de son précieux Sang et dédié à la Croix. Depuis sept ans [en 1741] ils avoient fait leur possible pour luy donner par cet errection une marque de confiance. (...) Ainsi les pauvres de cet hospital en ont fourni seulement les matériaux avec la figure du Christ, qui attire la confiance et la piété des passants étant exposé sur un chemin qui se croise et par lequel ont passe de tout côté. Un nombre considerable d'habitants assistèrent a la cérémonie de l'élévation de la Croix qui se fit lapres mydi de cette feste, Monsieur Desnoyers assisté de Mr le Curé de la pointe auz tremble y fit une exhortation touchante qui tira les larmes des yeux de toute cette assemblée qui sortirent de ce saint lieu plain de componction, comme ceux de Jerusalem revinrent du Calvaire ou ils avoient vû expirer Jesus Christ, en frappant leur poitrine, on ne peut voir cette représentation quon ne soit touché de devotion, et les pelerains y viennent meme d'assez loin⁴⁴.

Mis au courant par ses sœurs de la progression de la dévotion au calvaire, le père Duplessis leur écrira en février 1749: «Je suis charmé qu'on commence à planter des calvaires en Canada. Cela fait faire aux passants bien des actes d'amour de Dieu⁴⁵». La même année, le voyageur suédois Pehr Kalm devait d'ailleurs confirmer cette popularité des calvaires et croix de chemins en Nouvelle-France, et du fait même l'importance et l'ampleur de la dévotion à la Croix dont le père Duplessis fut un des plus fervents propagateurs. Kalm a en effet noté dans son journal de voyage:

Durant tout mon voyage à travers le Canada, j'ai rencontré des croix dressées ici et là sur la grand-route. Elles ont une hauteur de deux à trois toises et sont d'une largeur en proportion; bien des gens disent qu'elles marquent la limite entre les paroisses, mais il y a plus de croix que de frontières; du côté qui fait face au chemin, on a découpé un profond renforcement où l'on a placé soit Notre-Seigneur en Croix, soit la Vierge Marie qui tient dans ses bras Notre Sauveur enfant; on a placé une vitre devant la cavité pour que le vent et la pluie ne puissent rien détériorer. Tout Français qui passe devant un calvaire fait le signe de la Croix et se découvre. (...) En certains endroits, on a ajouté tous les instruments qui, d'après ce que l'on croit, ont dû être utilisés pour crucifier Notre Sauveur; parfois même on a placé au sommet le coq de Pierre⁴⁶.

La diffusion de la dévotion au calvaire d'Arras en Nouvelle-France ne constitue qu'un des aspects des efforts déployés par les jésuites pour encourager et supporter la foi dans la nouvelle colonie. Comme l'a démontré dès 1975 François-Marc Gagnon dans *La Conversion par l'image. Un aspect de la mission des Jésuites auprès des*

Indiens du Canada au XVII^e siècle, l'imagerie peinte ou gravée fut un des instruments privilégiés des missionnaires dans leurs tentatives d'«acculturation» des peuplades autochtones, et ce dès les débuts de l'établissement des Français⁴⁷.

Les envois d'images profitèrent aussi bien au maintien de la piété dans les communautés religieuses, dans les églises et chapelles que chez les particuliers. Nous avons parlé plus haut de dévotions majeures entretenues par l'imagerie, telles la dévotion à la sainte Famille et aux saints Anges, connues par les documents écrits mais dont les attestations visuelles ont depuis longtemps disparu. Il en va de même pour les images de confréries et l'imagerie profane. Il s'agit là d'un patrimoine qu'il faudra un jour reconstituer, par le biais d'une exposition mettant à profit les riches collections des communautés religieuses, notamment, et celles conservées outre-mer⁴⁸. Or, nous connaissons un autre cas bien documenté par les écrits et les images qui, dans le sillage du mouvement amorcé par la Contre-Réforme, constitue presque un «témoignage-miroir» de la diffusion de la dévotion au calvaire d'Arras. Il s'agit de la dévotion à saint François Régis, qui prit fin presque simultanément avec le début de la dévotion au calvaire, soit en 1737, par l'installation d'une statue dédiée à ce saint dans une niche du monastère des Augustines de l'Hôpital Général de Québec. Les débuts de cette dévotion remontaient déjà à 1675, alors qu'une estampe représentant le père jésuite Jean-François Régis (1597-1640) — qui avait voulu dès les débuts de son apostolat devenir un missionnaire au Canada — opéra une guérison miraculeuse sur une malade de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec. Jean-François Régis ne put jamais venir en Nouvelle-France et demeura un «missionnaire de désir», déployant ses efforts apostoliques dans le Vivarais, région du Massif Central de la France. Cependant, sa renommée de saint thaumaturge en fit un des jésuites envers lesquels la dévotion se développa jusqu'aux confins de la Nouvelle-France, des missions du Saguenay, jusqu'à celles du Mississippi, de la Louisiane et de l'Arkansas, notamment grâce au zèle du père Pierre-Michel Laure (1688-1738). Comme ce sera le cas pour le calvaire d'Arras diffusé à partir de France par un missionnaire d'origine québécoise, la dévotion à l'«apôtre du Vivarais» (qui ne put jamais se faire «martyr» en terre amérindienne) se diffusa principalement par le moyen d'images et de diverses reliques lui ayant appartenu⁴⁹. Entre 1675 et 1727, le «crédit miraculeux» dont jouissait le père Régis en Nouvelle-France — par des guérisons de toutes natures — peut se comparer à celui dont le père Duplessis et sa dévotion au calvaire d'Arras eurent des deux côtés de l'Atlantique, de 1738 à 1745. Il y a là un parallèle qui non seulement démontre les effets de la «conversion par l'image» dans l'esprit post-tridentin, mais vient aussi confirmer le rôle capital de l'estampe et de sa diffusion aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles.

À ces époques révolues — et qui pourtant nous semblent parfois étrangement proches — l'estampe et l'imagerie constituent, par définition, pourrait-on dire, l'art des bien nantis et des bourgeois, qui comptent parmi eux quelques ama-

teurs et collectionneurs éclairés, mais plus encore l'art des pauvres, le patrimoine des pauvres. Les coûts donnés par le père Duplessis pour les images du calvaire d'Arras en sont la preuve. Ces objets d'art de peu de valeur sur le plan financier mais de grande importance au niveau dévotionnel ont, de par leur présentation à nu sur les murs des demeures — cloués ou suspendus à des «gorges» ou rouleaux les maintenant tendus — noircis et endommagés par la fumée, l'humidité, les insectes, la moisissure, la manipulation, disparu dans une très large part. C'est pourquoi il convient de sauvegarder les rares témoins d'un décor intérieur et de pratiques qui ont désormais une valeur intrinsèque et qui trouveraient une place de choix dans les collections des musées. Ces images, témoins d'un temps où l'estampe tenait une place prééminente dans la vie quotidienne, contribueront, si l'on y prend garde, à reconstituer correctement l'environnement visuel et les valeurs spirituelles d'une époque et de pans de notre histoire qui, à force de s'éloigner, risqueraient de tomber dans l'oubli.

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Notes

1 Cet article tire largement parti de notre recherche de doctorat sur l'imagerie sous le Régime français, dans laquelle une partie traitait du calvaire d'Arras. Nous y avons ajouté des modifications et des découvertes faites depuis lors, gardant l'essentiel du texte et le bonifiant lorsque cela était nécessaire (voir: Denis MARTIN, *L'estampe importée en Nouvelle-France*, thèse de doctorat, Québec, Université Laval, Avril 1990, tome 1 (texte), p.268-280.

2 Les éléments biographiques sur le père Duplessis sont tirés de la notice de Joseph Edmond ROY dans son édition des *Lettres du P.F.-X. Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Lévis, Mercier & Cie, 1892, p.xxx et suiv.

3 *Mandement de l'évêque d'Arras au sujet d'un miracle opéré par la vertu de la croix dans l'église des R.R. P.P. Jésuites d'Arras le 19 mars 1738, à la clôture d'une mission faite par le R. P. Duplessis de la compagnie de Jésus*. Le père Duplessis fit parvenir dès 1738 ce mandement à ses sœurs religieuses à l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec (voir à ce sujet: ROY (édit.), *Lettres du P.F.-X. Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Lettre XLIX, p.196 et p.191, n. 1.

4 Aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles — le terme *calvaire* fit son apparition dans le français moderne en 1704 — un calvaire désigne «... le mont où le Christ fut crucifié. Par métonymie, il

désigne aussi toute représentation plastique de la passion et de la crucifixion du Christ (av. 1778), ainsi qu'une croix dressée sur une plate-forme ou à un carrefour.» (voir: Alain REY, *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*, Paris, Dictionnaires Le Robert, 1998, tome 1, p.594). — Le calvaire ou la croix d'Arras étant érigée au-dessus d'une des portes de la ville, il remplissait donc ces deux fonctions. Les croix plantées par la suite par le père Duplessis furent pour la plupart de simples croix de chemins, comme le laisse supposer l'imagerie, et non des calvaires composites, véritables tableaux de la crucifixion et du mont Golgotha, avec le Christ supplicié entre les deux larrons, la Vierge, Marie-Madeleine et saint Jean l'Évangéliste, ou des croix comportant tous les symboles de la Passion. Nous reviendrons sur ce sujet un peu plus loin dans cet article à la faveur de l'analyse de l'imagerie proprement dite du calvaire d'Arras.

- 5 A.D., «Miracle à Arras en 1738», *Archives du Nord* (s.d.), p.445-446.
- 6 Lettre du P.F.-X. Duplessis à ses sœurs, À Chevreuse, le 11^{ème} Novembre 1738, dans ROY, *Lettres du P.F.-X. Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Lettre XLIX, p.197-198.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p.201.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p.196, 205.
- 9 Au sujet de ces envois d'imagerie, voir: MARTIN, *L'estampe importée en Nouvelle-France*, p.250-268.
- 10 Lettre du P.F.-X. Duplessis à ses sœurs, Paris, 25 avril 1740, dans ROY, *Lettres du P.F.-X. Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Lettre LI, p.216-217.
- 11 *La Dévotion au Calvaire, avec des Réflexions, Prières et Cantiques sur la Croix*, Par M. le Febvre, Prêtre de ce Diocèse, À Arras, Chez U.C. Duchamp, 1738, 72p. Les deux gravures sur bois apparaissent sur la page de titre de l'ouvrage (*Le Christ et les larrons en croix*: 3,5 x 4,5 cm) et la page 4 (*Le Christ avec saint Jean et la Vierge*: 8 x 5,5 cm). Comme le soulignaient en 1973 John R. PORTER et Léopold DÉSY, dans *Calvaires et croix de chemin du Québec*, l'ouvrage de Le Febvre «... jette une lumière additionnelle sur la question en ce sens qu'il rattache au thème du calvaire la plupart des vertus, des dévotions, des sentiments, des méditations et des souffrances du chrétien. On imagine facilement les échos qu'ont pu avoir ces livres et images à tous les niveaux de l'Église québécoise. Relativement aux calvaires, le père Duplessis aurait donc joué un rôle majeur, encourageant leur érection, facilitant l'extension des dévotions qui s'y liaient et diffusant des représentations qui eurent sûrement une incidence sur les types iconographiques.» (Montréal, Cahiers du Québec/Hurtubise HMH, 1973, p.50).
- 12 *La dévotion / au calvaire par M. Lefebvre / prêtre et vicaire / de Saint Géri, / de la ville d'Arras / nouvelle édition, revue corrigée et augmentée par l'auteur*, À Douay, chez Jacques F. Willewal, imprimeur, libraire au S. Esprit, MDCCXXXIX (1739). Voir: ROY, *Lettres du P.F.-X. Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jésus*, p.216, n. 1.
- 13 «Il y précise tout un éventail de cérémonies et de rites rattachés à la croix et au calvaire: solennités, bénédictions, translations, lieux d'érection, litanies et neuvaines.» (PORTER et DÉSY, *Calvaires et croix de chemin du Québec*, p.50).
- 14 Il s'agit ici des *Avis / et / pratiques / pour profiter / de la mission et de la retraite / et en conserver le fruit, / à l'usage des Missions / et des retraites / du père Duplessis, de la compagnie de / Jésus / première partie: contenant les méditations et les prières*, À Paris, chez Hyppolite Louis Guérin, MDCCXLIV (voir: ROY, *Lettres du P.F.-X. Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jésus*, p.243, n. 1).
- 15 Lettre du P. Duplessis à ses sœurs, Paris, 17 avril 1743, dans ROY, *Lettres du P.F.-X. Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Lettre LVI, p.237.
- 16 Lettre du P. Duplessis à ses sœurs, Paris, 27 avril 1745, dans ROY, *Lettres du P.F.-X. Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Lettre LXI, p.247.
- 17 Voir: MARTIN, *L'estampe importée en Nouvelle-France*, p.225-37, et p.250 et suiv.

- 18 Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais, Arras, Carton 483, *Collection Barbier*: portefeuille in-folio comportant 104 pièces (série Z). Les estampes y sont répertoriées du numéro 1 au numéro 30.
- 19 Henri DEBOUT, *Histoire du Calvaire d'Arras*, Arras, Imprimerie de la Société du Pas-de-Calais, 1899, p.107-130: «Iconographie du Calvaire». Les estampes sont répertoriées entre les pp.111 et 120.
- 20 Voir la notice sur De Poilly dans: Maxime PRÉAUD, Pierre CASELLE, Marianne GRIVEL, Corinne LE BITOUZÉ, *Dictionnaire des éditeurs d'estampes à Paris sous l'Ancien Régime*, Paris, Promodis, Éditions du Cercle de la Librairie, 1987, p.266.
- 21 Cette estampe est décrite par l'abbé Debout (*op cit.*, p.112-113, n° II).
- 22 Voir PRÉAUD, *et al.*, *Dictionnaire des éditeurs d'estampes à Paris sous l'Ancien Régime*, p.266.
- 23 Voir la notice consacrée à cette œuvre par John R. PORTER dans: *Le Grand Héritage. L'église catholique et les arts au Québec* (cat. d'exposition, en collaboration), Québec, Musée du Québec, 1984, p.178, cat. n° 149 (reprod.).
- 24 DEBOUT, *Histoire du Calvaire d'Arras*, p.116-117, n° X.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p.115, n° VII.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p.116, n° VIII, IX. Les représentations du calvaire gravées par Laurent Cars sont répertoriées par Marcel ROUX dans *Inventaire du Fonds Français. Graveurs du XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, 1934, t. III (Bizemont-Cars), p.487-488, n° 104-105.
- 27 *Représentation de la Croix miraculeuse plantée sur le rempart de la Ville d'Arras le 19 Mars 1738 par les soins du R.P. François Xavier Duplessis*, A Paris, chez Daumont rue St Martin pres St Julien, eau-forte et burin, vers 1750-1760, 49 x 36,5 cm (feuille), 45 x 35,4 cm (au trait carré). Cette estampe est conservée aux Archives nationales du Canada à Ottawa (Historical Events, Box # 234). Sur Jean-François Daumont (actif vers 1740-1775), mercier, éditeur et marchand d'estampes à l'enseigne de *L'Aigle d'Or*, voir PRÉAUD, *et al.*, *Dictionnaire des éditeurs d'estampes à Paris sous l'Ancien Régime*, p.98.
- 28 DEBOUT, *Histoire du Calvaire d'Arras*, p.114, n° V.
- 29 Voir au sujet de ces différences dans l'iconographie du Christ en croix, du XVI^e au XVIII^e siècle: Émile MÂLE, *L'Art religieux après le Concile de Trente. Étude sur l'iconographie de la fin du XVI^e siècle, du XVII^e, du XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, Librairie Armand Colin, 1932, p.267 et suiv.; p.277-278, Mâle écrit, sur le Christ en croix du XVII^e siècle, précédant le Christ intercesseur du XVIII^e siècle comme celui d'Arras: «Le Christ sur la croix a deux attitudes, car il est représenté tantôt vivant et tantôt mort. Vivant, il rejette toujours la tête en arrière, lève les yeux au ciel et exhale un soupir de sa bouche entr'ouverte. (...) C'est le Christ des artistes du XVII^e siècle. Il y a dans cet austère christianisme quelque chose de la pensée de M. de Bérulle: ce qui touche dans l'Évangile, ce sont moins les faits eux-mêmes que les «états intérieurs» du Christ, auxquels chaque chrétien peut s'associer. Les artistes respiraient ce christianisme dans l'air. C'est la patience du Christ sur la croix qu'ils ont exprimé».
- 30 DEBOUT, *Histoire du Calvaire d'Arras*, p.108, n° II. Voir aussi: Emmanuel BÉNÉZIT, *Dictionnaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs*, Paris, Éditions Gründ, 1999, tome 7, p.436. L'artiste en réalisa encore une autre version en 1744, d'après la gravure de De Poilly, pour la Communauté des Dames Chariottes, à Arras (voir: DEBOUT, *Histoire du Calvaire d'Arras*, p.109, n° III; reproduit dans C. Le GENTIL, *Le Calvaire d'Arras*, Arras, (s. éd.), 1882, p.20).
- 31 Lettre de Mère Geneviève de l'Enfant-Jésus à M. Feret, Dieppe, Québec, 30 octobre 1738, dans «Lettres de Mère Marie Marie-Andrée de Sainte Hélène, supérieure des Hospitalières de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec», *Nova Francia*, vol. IV, n° 6 (Novembre-Décembre 1929), p.371.

32 Brouillon d'une lettre de la mère de l'Enfant-Jésus à la duchesse d'Ayen, en marge d'une lettre adressée par le père Duplessis à ses sœurs, de Paris, le 25 février 1753, dans: ROY, *Lettres du P.F.-X. Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Lettre LXXXII, p.285, n. 1.

33 Voir ci-dessous, note 38.

34 Archives nationales du Québec à Québec (dorénavant ANQQ), Greffe de Claude Barolet, Inventaire de Marie-Catherine Jorian, épouse de Joseph Laurent Simiot, bourgeois, 19 janvier 1734 (n° 292).

35 Lettre du père Duplessis à ses sœurs, Paris, 22 avril 1744, citée dans ROY, *Lettres du P.F.-X. Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Lettre LIX, p.243; voir aussi le commentaire de Roy à ce sujet, p.lxiv. En octobre 1744, très probablement, Mère Marie-Andrée de Sainte-Hélène écrira à M. Feret, à Dieppe, au sujet de ce livre: «Je ne sçay si mon frere a été a Dieppe il ne n(ous) en mande pas la moitié de ses bonnes œuvres, tous ceux que n(ous) avons vu de ce pais n(ous) en ont dit des merveilles il fait comme à Rouen ses années passées, et les Evesques ne luy donne pas de repit chacun le voulant avoir p(our) animer leur Diocèse, il y a des livres de la Mission qui se vendent chez hyppolyte Louis Guerin rue St Jacques vis a vis les Mathurins a St Thomas Daquin vous veriez par pl(usieurs) marchant qui se trouve combien ce cher frere est estimé». (Lettre de Mère Duplessis de Sainte-Hélène à Monsieur feret maitre Apoticaire A Dieppe, 30 octobre 174(4?), dans «Lettres de Mère Marie-Andrée Duplessis de Sainte-Hélène, supérieure des Hospitalières de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec», *Nova Francia*, vol. II, n° 2 (1927), p.37.

36 Lettre du père Duplessis à ses sœurs, Paris, 22 avril 1744, citée dans ROY, *Lettres du P.F.-X. Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Lettre LIX, p.243.

37 Inventaire cité dans Fernand LEFEBVRE, «La bibliothèque des Frères Charon», *Bulletin des recherches historiques*, vol. 64, n° 3 (Juillet-Août-Septembre 1958), p.73.

38 ANQQ, Greffe de A.J. Saillant, Inventaire de Joseph Nouchet, 10 février 1758 (n° 871). À la fin de cette période somme toute tardive de la Contre-Réforme et de l'activité des jésuites dans ce mouvement, on trouve encore des témoignages de l'importance de la dévotion au calvaire dans leurs missions, comme cette *Dévotion du Calvaire a l'usage des Missions des R.R.P. Jésuites* (35p.), éditée à Caen en 1761 chez Pierre Chalopin, dont nous avons retracé un exemplaire aux Archives du Monastère des Religieuses Hospitalières Augustines de Bayeux en France. Les augustines de Bayeux étaient liées de très près aux religieuses hospitalières du même ordre de Québec, étant l'une de leurs communautés «d'origine».

39 Le comté d'Ayen, chef-lieu du département actuel de la Corrèze, fut érigé en duché en 1737, en faveur de Louis de Noailles, le titre de *duc d'Ayen* étant réservé au fils aîné du duc de Noailles. Que la duchesse d'Ayen, aux confins du Limousin dans l'ouest du Massif Central de la France, se soit constituée protectrice du père Duplessis, montre bien l'étendue de la renommée du missionnaire jésuite et de la propagation en France de la dévotion au calvaire d'Arras.

40 ROY, *Lettres du P.F.-X. Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jésus*, p.lxiv.

41 Étienne-Jahandier Desrochers (né en 1688 à Lyon et mort à Paris en 1741) est surtout connu pour sa suite nombreuse de portraits gravés en taille-douce, intritulée «Recueil de Portraits» annoncée dès mai 1726 dans le *Mercur de France*. Après la mort de Desrochers, la suite si populaire des portraits de personnages célèbres fut continuée par Gilles-Edme Petit (Paris, vers 1694-1760), qui fut l'éditeur, sinon le graveur du portrait du père Duplessis. Petit tenait boutique rue Saint-Jacques à l'enseigne de la «Couronne d'épines» (sur Desrochers voir: Marcel ROUX, *Inventaire du fonds français. Graveurs du XVIII^e siècle*, tome septième, DENY - DU DUY DELAGE, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, 1951, p.131, 134-135. Le portrait de «François-Xavier du Plessis» édité chez Petit est mentionné aux pages 171-172, cat. n° 179). Sur Gilles-Edme Petit, voir: PRÉAUD, et al., *Dictionnaire des éditeurs d'estampes à Paris sous l'Ancien Régime*, p.255-256. On retrouve le portrait du père Duplessis édité par Petit de la «Suite de Desrochers» dans la collection des Archives nationales du Canada à Ottawa (Engraved Portraits, «P.Q.», boxes 260-261).

- 42 Voir le chapitre consacré à «La croix de chemin» par PORTER, dans *Le Grand Héritage*, p.279.
- 43 ANQQ, Greffe de Christophe Hilarion Dulaurent, Inventaire de Jean-Baptiste Lefebvre, charpentier de navire, 14 décembre 1745 (n° 622).
- 44 Archives du Monastère de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec, Livre de recettes et dépenses de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec (1732-1775), cité par PORTER dans sa notice sur le calvaire de Saint-Augustin, dans *Le Grand Héritage*, p.286, cat. n° 248.
- 45 Lettre du P. Duplessis à ses sœurs, Paris, 9 février 1749 dans ROY, *Lettres du P.F.-X. Duplessis de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Lettre LXVIII, p.268.
- 46 *Voyage de Pebr Kalm au Canada en 1749* (traduction annotée du journal de route par Jacques Rousseau et Guy Béthune avec le concours de Pierre Morisset), Montréal, Pierre Tisseyre, (1977), p.430 (folio 842).
- 47 Montréal, Les éditions Bellarmin, 1975, 141p.
- 48 Voir l'article que nous avons consacré à ce sujet en 1988: Denis MARTIN, «L'exploitation des sources écrites dans la reconstitution de l'univers visuel de la Nouvelle-France», dans *Recherches actuelles et mémoires collectives* (sous la dir. de John R. PORTER), *Actes du Célat*, Québec, Université Laval, n° 1 (mars 1988), p.15-38.
- 49 Voir à ce sujet: Denis MARTIN, «Notes sur l'iconographie de Saint-François Régis en Nouvelle-France» dans *Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien*, vol. IX, n° 1 (1986), p.1-26.

Summary

PÈRE FRANÇOIS-XAVIER DUPLESSIS AND PRINTS OF THE ARRAS CALVARY IN NEW FRANCE (1738-1745)

François-Xavier Duplessis was certainly the most celebrated Canadian-born Jesuit of his day. Born in Quebec City on January 13, 1694, he died in Paris in December 1771 at the age of seventy-seven. In October of 1716, after studying at the Collège des Jésuites de Québec, he left for France to become a member of the renowned Society of Jesus founded by Ignatius of Loyola. Duplessis fully intended to return to Canada to work as a missionary but that was not to be.

From 1720 to 1727, Duplessis spent time at various seminaries at La Flèche, Blois, Tours and finally Arras where he taught philosophy. In 1729, ten years after

taking his vows, he asked his superiors to send him back to Canada. However, they thought it better that he remain in northern Europe. Arras is near Flanders and Holland and, as the area was a stronghold of Calvinists and Lutherans, the Jesuits believed it was imperative to control the Protestant influence. Père Duplessis' sermons and retreats quickly made him highly popular and he was most notably recognized in several pamphlets printed by Jansenists in Amsterdam. His career as a preacher continued for about thirty years. He was particularly attached to the city of Arras and returned there periodically.

On March 19, 1738, a miracle took place during an Easter retreat when Père Duplessis was preaching to the Arras garrison. This led to a religious devotion that reached as far as New France. It also initiated the widespread dissemination of religious prints recording the event. On April 26, 1738, the Bishop of Arras, François de La Salle issued a pastoral giving a detailed account of the miracle: the healing of a crippled woman, Marie-Isabelle Le Grand who was a 40 year-old fruit-seller. Not long after, another miraculous occurrence was also attributed to the Arras Cross — the healing of a paralytic shoemaker. These events were followed by a number of other remarkable incidents. It is easily understandable that following these healings, the miracles brought about by the Arras Calvary quickly become enormously popular. No doubt their fame was increased by images depicting the miraculous events and the Arras Cross on the city's ramparts which were immediately reproduced as engravings and circulated in great numbers. From this time on, Père Duplessis' fame as a preacher became more widely known throughout France and the Cross on the ramparts of Arras became a much-frequented shrine. Beginning in 1738, the Calvary and the explanation of the Mystery of the Passion would become the leitmotif of the missions and retreats at which Père Duplessis preached. This renewed devotion to the Passion would also lead to life-like restagings of the raising of Calvaries, crosses and crucifixes.

In November 1738, Père Duplessis sent the first images of the Arras cross to New France. Writing from Chevreuse to the sisters of the Hôtel-Dieu de Québec, he advised them that: "This year, I am sending you several images that represent the Calvary." At the end of his letter, he added: "Send a few images of the Arras Calvary to our good friends and to our dear missionaries so they will remember us in their prayers for I need them more now than ever." Père Duplessis would continue to regularly send shipments of the Arras prints (as many as 150 prints in 1740) until 1745. These shipments were among the most significant materials that we are able to trace among the documents written during the French Regime.

In a search of Québec's religious communities, we have been able to locate only two of the Arras engravings which relate to Père Duplessis' circulation of prints in New France. The works are of two different images from among the many engravings made or published by Nicolas-Jean-Baptiste de Poilly (1707-1780) shortly after the miraculous healings and the raising of the Cross on the ramparts

of the city of Arras. Despite the few extant prints in Québec, we can assume that the Arras Calvary devotion was successfully disseminated, both as visual object and as text, because of the zeal of Père Duplessis's nuns and their popularity in the colony of New France. At the same time, the devotion to the Cross was sustained by the presence of innumerable crucifixes, with or without the figure of Christ, which were principally carved in wood but also made from copper, pewter, bone or other materials. During the last years of the French Regime, this devotion to the Calvary would continue to increase largely as the result of Père Duplessis' earlier shipments of books and images. The importance of this religious cult is also substantiated by the raising of many calvaries and roadside crosses. Their number was remarked upon by the Swedish traveler Pehr Kalm during his visit to New France in 1749.

The important Barbier Collection in the Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais in Arras has assembled all the written and visual documents relating to the Calvary devotion and its development from 1738 until the end of the nineteenth century. This collection contains more than thirty prints, in both large and small format, which illustrate the history of the Arras Calvary. Over one third of the images were engraved and published before 1760. The inventory of the collection, in its discussion of the iconography of the Calvary, also cites the existence of paintings derived from the engravings as well as tapestries, medals and small pendants from pilgrimages. These were produced from 1740 onwards to commemorate and disseminate the religious meaning of the miraculous events that had occurred in Arras in 1738.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, prints and engravings were by definition the art of the well-to-do and the middle class, among whom were a few art lovers and enlightened collectors. But prints were also the art of the poor; and today they can also be seen to represent the visual patrimony of the poor. This is clearly deduced from the nominal cost of the prints as stated in Père Duplessis' letters concerning his shipments of images of the Calvary of Arras. These art objects, which were primarily regarded for their devotional importance, were displayed unframed on the walls of domestic buildings and unfortunately have largely disappeared because of the destructive results of smoke, dampness, insects, and mildew as well as mishandling. There is now an immediate need to preserve the few extant examples of these decorative objects which, by accident or through lack of knowledge, are rarely found in museum collections. Such prints are significant evidence of a past era and through conservation and study, these images will enable us to correctly reconstruct the visual environment of a chapter in our history, which is fast falling from sight and could easily fade into oblivion.

Translation: Janet Logan



fig.1 Théophile Hamel, Trois chefs montagnais et Peter McLeod, 1848, huile sur toile, 46 x 36 cm, collection particulière.

AUTOUR DU TABLEAU

Trois chefs montagnais et Peter McLeod

Peint par Théophile Hamel en 1848¹

La nation montagnaise est aujourd'hui répartie en une douzaine de communautés du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean jusqu'en Haute-Côte-Nord et forme une population d'environ 14 000 individus². La communauté de Mashteuiatsh (anciennement Pointe-Bleue), la plus peuplée d'entre elles — avec près de 2 000 résidents et 2 500 non résidents — est située depuis 1856 dans une réserve sur le bord du lac Saint-Jean, près de Roberval, après avoir été située sur des parcelles de terre le long des rivières Péribonka et Métabetchouane après l'institution officielle du régime des réserves en 1851.

Pour respecter le vocabulaire de l'époque, nous utiliserons le mot «Montagnais» pour désigner ceux qui se nomment «Innus» ou plus précisément «Ilnus» comme se désignent eux-mêmes dans leur langue les Montagnais du Lac-Saint-Jean ou Ilnuatsh du Pekuakami. Depuis 1998, l'exposition permanente du Musée amérindien de Mashteuiatsh retrace dans ses grandes lignes l'histoire et les traditions de cette nation au mode de vie de chasseurs-cueilleurs³.

L'œuvre qui nous intéresse est un petit tableau de Théophile Hamel (1817-1870) peint à Montréal en 1848 (fig.1). Conservé en Écosse par la succession de James Bruce, 8^e comte d'Elgin et 12^e comte de Kincardine, jusqu'à sa mise en vente le 4 novembre 1987 chez Sotheby's à Londres, ce tableau est aujourd'hui dans une collection particulière non localisée⁴. Il a fait partie de deux expositions à la Galerie nationale du Canada soit *Pages d'histoire du Canada*, organisée par Roy Strong à l'occasion du centenaire de la Confédération en 1967, et *Deux peintres de Québec. Antoine Plamondon, Théophile Hamel*, organisée en 1970 par Robert H. Hubbard⁵.

En 1967, le tableau était intitulé *Lord Durham et les Chefs indiens* et daté vers 1847-1854⁶, tandis qu'en 1970 il était inscrit au catalogue sous le titre de *Lord Durham avec trois chefs indiens* et daté de 1838⁷. L'identification du personnage de droite en tant que Lord Durham (1792-1840), gouverneur en chef des colonies de l'Amérique du Nord, provient à la fois d'une tradition familiale erronée — la seconde épouse de Lord Elgin étant la fille de Lord Durham⁸ — et d'un oubli total des circonstances entourant la création du tableau.

C'est à Raymond Vézina, en 1975 et 1976, qu'il revient d'avoir corrigé ce titre en identifiant le personnage de droite comme étant Peter McLeod (1807-1852)⁹, de lui avoir donné comme titre *Trois chefs indiens et Peter McLeod*, d'avoir daté

le tableau de 1848 et d'en avoir trouvé la signification — la présentation d'une requête à Lord Elgin — en le rapprochant d'un article publié le 18 mars 1848 dans le *Journal de Québec*¹⁰. Vézina s'appuyait aussi sur un article intitulé «Une délégation de Montagnais auprès de Lord Elgin» publié en 1968 dans la revue *Saguenayensia* par M^{sr} Victor Tremblay qui, malheureusement, ne donnait pas ses sources¹¹.

En réalité, le titre exact du tableau devrait être *Trois chefs montagnais et Peter McLeod*. Les circonstances historiques entourant la création de ce tableau méritent un examen attentif.

À partir de 1844 — l'Acte d'Union des deux Canadas était entré en vigueur en 1841 — le Parlement se transporta à Montréal, qui avait été choisie pour être la capitale permanente du gouvernement de l'Union¹². Le gouvernement y loua le marché Sainte-Anne qui servit d'Hôtel du Parlement jusqu'à ce qu'il soit incendié le 25 avril 1849 dans des circonstances dramatiques.

Lord Elgin (1811-1863) — James Bruce, second fils du célèbre «sauveteur» des marbres du Parthénon — était arrivé au Canada en janvier 1847 à titre de gouverneur général. Il allait demeurer à ce poste jusqu'à la fin de 1854.

En 1848, l'assemblée législative siégeait donc à Montréal et le député de Saguenay était Marc-Pascal de Sales Laterrière (1792-1872)¹³, qui prit l'initiative de faire publier dans *La Minerve* du 13 mars 1848 à la fois le texte de la requête des Montagnais, le compte-rendu de leur rencontre avec Lord Elgin le 11 mars, ainsi que ses propres commentaires à l'appui de cette requête. C'est sans doute grâce à lui que les Montagnais obtinrent le privilège de rencontrer Lord Elgin. Les membres de la députation nous sont connus par l'article de *La Minerve*:

Une députation de trois chefs Sauvages, de la tribu des Montagnais, occupant le territoire du Saguenay, comme¹⁴ autrefois, sous le nom de Postes du Roi, accompagnée de leurs interprètes, MM. Peter McLeod, Thos. Simard, McLaren, et l'hon. de Sales La Terrière, membre du parlement provincial pour ce comté, s'est rendue hier chez le gouverneur-général, lord Elgin, et lui a présenté le mémorial suivant:¹⁵

Les trois chefs montagnais se nommaient Tumas (Thomas) Mesituapamuskan, Jusep (Joseph) Kakanukus et Pasil (Basile) Thishenapen. La requête avait été rédigée à Chicoutimi le 7 février 1848 et portait 106 signatures¹⁶. Il faut comprendre ici que le Domaine du Roi ou les Postes du Roi formaient au Saguenay un territoire de la Couronne qui était loué à divers exploitants, tant sous le Régime français qu'anglais, pour le commerce de la fourrure et qu'il était réservé aux Montagnais qui échangeaient le produit de leur chasse contre des marchandises¹⁷.

En 1831, la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson avait acheté les droits du Domaine du Roi, mais, à partir du début des années 1840, elle doit faire face à la concurrence du marchand de bois William Price (1789-1867)¹⁸, fournisseur de l'Amirauté britannique, qui, entre 1838 et 1842, encourage et soutient une société

dite des «Vingt-et-Un», formée d'habitants de La Malbaie, à s'installer en squatters le long du Saguenay et à y construire des scieries. C'est le début d'un mouvement de colonisation qui allait finir par dévaster l'essentiel des territoires de chasse des Montagnais.

Les commentaires de Marc-Pascal de Sales Laterrière, qui, dans *La Minerve*, tente d'établir les droits des Montagnais sur leur territoire, sont éloquentes là-dessus:

A l'appui d'une réclamation, fondée sur le droit sacré de la propriété, et pourquoi ce droit ne serait-il pas sacré pour des Sauvages comme pour ceux qui les dépossèdent, et de plus les laissent mourir de faim? Je dois vous dire que le territoire sur les rives du Saguenay ainsi que sur les rives de plusieurs de ses rivières tributaires, de Tadoussac sur le fleuve St. Laurent, en descendant jusqu'à la Baie de Lavale, a été depuis sept ou huit ans ouvert à l'agriculture, à l'exploitation des bois d'exportation, au détriment, à la ruine pour ainsi dire absolue de la tribu des Sauvages Montagnais qui n'ont pour vivre que la chasse et la pêche sur ce territoire dont on vient de les déposséder pour ainsi dire.

Que cette tribu depuis la conquête n'a jamais été comptée ni protégée par le gouvernement; mais au contraire le gouvernement a toujours perçu un revenu très considérable de la location des Postes du Roi pour le droit exclusif de traiter avec eux; lequel revenu supputé jusqu'à ce jour, formerait une somme de cent mille livres, versée dans les coffres publics dont ils n'ont jamais touché un sol, mais au contraire ont été traités par leurs maîtres sans entrailles comme des esclaves que leur affermaient la couronne, et conséquemment obligés de vendre à ces extortionnaires leurs pelleteries à vil prix. N'auraient-ils pas le droit, en équité, de réclamer de la couronne une parcelle de l'intérêt de cette somme en forme d'annuité, ou au moins les six cents livres que paie aujourd'hui la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson au gouvernement pour ce privilège?

La Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, dont les intérêts avec les Sauvages Montagnais sont bien diminués, depuis que ce territoire a été ouvert à l'agriculture et au commerce des bois, ne les traite plus, même avec ce semblant d'égards, comme elle les traitait ci-devant: de sorte que ces familles, au nombre de trois cent sur le territoire du Saguenay et d'environ quatre cent dans l'étendue des Postes du Roi, sur le fleuve St. Laurent, sont maintenant exposées à toutes espèces de privations, à mourir de faim même! Ces hivers derniers, sans l'asile et la nourriture que leur a donné M. Peter McLeod à Chicoutimi, un très grand nombre de ces pauvres malheureux seraient morts de faim et de misère.

[...]

Les émigrants de l'empire, qui crèvent de faim chez eux, arrivent ici par 25, 50, 80 mille tous les ans, nous apportent toutes espèces de maladies; la peste même en permanence: Coute que coute, il faut pourtant les secourir! ce sont des hommes.

Mais les Sauvages du Saguenay, Psha! ils sont voués à la destruction qu'opérera bien vite la marche de la civilisation que rien ne peut arrêter à présent dans cette nouvelle section de la province, à moins donc que notre nouveau cabinet (si un sentiment de philanthropie, de justice existe quelque part) ne les prenne sous sa protection¹⁹.

En plus de Laterrière, la délégation comprenait trois «interprètes». Le premier, Thomas Simard (1796-1862)²⁰, avait travaillé au début du XIX^e siècle pour les locataires des Postes du Roi avant de devenir navigateur. Il avait mené en sous-main pour William Price, son ami, les démarches de la société dite des «Vingt-et-Un» qui avaient résulté en l'établissement de scieries sur ces territoires, et ainsi contribué au mouvement d'exploitation et de colonisation des territoires de chasse des Montagnais.

Le second, Peter McLeod (1807-1852)²¹, était un personnage légendaire du Saguenay²². Entrepreneur forestier, il était en quelque sorte associé par contrat à William Price depuis 1842 pour l'exploitation des forêts du Saguenay. Considéré comme le fondateur de Chicoutimi, où il était né d'un père d'origine écossaise et d'une mère montagnaise, il était réputé pour son physique avantageux et considéré par les Montagnais, qui l'appelaient *Milaupannish* (aube du matin, l'aurore), «comme un frère affectionné et un ami puissant»²³.

Du troisième interprète, John McLaren, nous savons peu de choses sinon qu'il était né en 1812 et fils de Peter McLaren, trafiquant de fourrure d'origine écossaise²⁴. Marié à Mathilde Simard de Chicoutimi, il aurait été le chef de bureau de Peter McLeod et il habitait Port-au-Persil. Il a laissé un récit détaillé de l'expédition à Montréal des chefs montagnais, récit publié dans *La Presse* du 3 mars 1897 à l'occasion d'une réunion de son clan et cité par M^{sr} Victor Tremblay.

Les dépenses du voyage ont été payées en partie par les résidents de Chicoutimi, les employés de Kenogami & Point Concern Co. Les Sauvages sont arrivés chez moi après un voyage en raquettes à travers forêts et montagnes sans autre guides que leur sagacité et leur habitude des bois. De chez moi, à Port au Persil, nous nous sommes rendus en voiture à Québec, où nous avons pris place dans les stages ou omnibus à quatre places qui faisaient alors le service entre Québec et Montréal, service atroce s'il en fût. Cependant, en 48 heures, grâce à de nombreux relais, qui nous procuraient souvent des chevaux frais, après avoir cahoté de façon à nous briser le corps, nous sommes arrivés à Montréal.

En attendant notre admission auprès de Son Excellence, je me suis mis en frais de faire voir aux chefs sauvages les merveilles de la civilisation. Les grandes cabanes - maisons -, les églises, les monuments, les édifices, les ont beaucoup moins frappés que les nombreuses voitures sur la glace qui leur faisaient, à distance, l'effet d'un troupeau de caribous sur un lac.

Je n'oublierai jamais leur épatement lorsque, arrivés au marché Bonsecours, ils aperçurent l'énorme quantité de viande étalée sur la devanture des boutiques. On était au marché de Pâques, et dans ce temps-là un boucher qui n'aurait pas couvert son étal de monceaux de roses, fleurs et pavillons, se serait cru déshonoré. L'exclamation «Maskatas!» leur est souvent échappée, ce qui est le comble de l'épatement pour eux. Il leur semblait impossible que tout cela pu être dévoré. Aussi, quand je leur ai dit que cela ne suffirait pas pour plus de deux jours, ils ont cru que je moquais tout bonnement d'eux²⁵.

Après avoir assisté à une séance de la Chambre d'assemblée, qu'ils trouvèrent fort ennuyeuse et à laquelle ils ne comprirent rien, les trois chefs montagnais et leurs interprètes furent reçus par Lord Elgin et sa suite dans le salon du gouverneur au Parlement et lui présentèrent leur requête qui fut lue en langue montagnaise par l'un des chefs et traduite en français par McLaren.

La venue des chefs montagnais à Montréal avait suscité l'intérêt général et fit l'objet de la description suivante publiée en 1862 par Samuel J. Kelso, représentant à Chicoutimi de la Scottish Amicable Life Assurance Society:

We were informed by gentlemen who had the honor of being present, that their interview with His Excellency was a scene never to be forgotten. There stood the Earl surrounded by his handsome and brilliant staff, the very essence of polished, courtly grace, and on the other side stood «Milaupanuish», one of nature's noblemen, and unquestionably the handsomest man present, while the three bronzed gaudily attired chiefs stood stolidly by his side, with much self-possession, as if they had all their lives dwelt in palaces. It is unnecessary to say that His Excellency dismissed the chiefs with handsome presents, promising to send their tribe a yearly present from that date, a promise which has been faithfully kept²⁶.

Le texte de la requête des chefs montagnais était le suivant:

A NOTRE PLUS GRAND BOURGEOIS,
NOTRE PÈRE

NOUS LES SOUSSIGNÉS, VRAIS SAUVAGES,

Il y a déjà quatre hivers passés, nous avons demandé pour qu'on fut pris en pitié mais nous avons encore rien entendu parler que l'on faisait quelque chose pour que notre misère fut arrêtée.

Mais peut-être que nous aurions obtenu ce que nous avons demandé de notre bon père, si sa vie eut été prolongée. — (a) (a) Députation des mêmes à lord Metcalfe en 1843 ou 1844.

Oh! mais si tu savais comme nous sommes misérables, notre bon père, et dans quelle pauvreté nous sommes! tu nous prendrais assurément en pitié et tu verserais des larmes, tu nous accorderais tout de suite ce que nous allons te demander, tu ne dirais pas vraiment mes sauvages me demandent un peu trop.

Tâche donc d'écouter notre prière, nous te prions notre bon père et donne nous le peu que nous allons te citer des besoins de subsistance pour nous et nos enfans.

Conçois donc que c'est pénible de voir des étrangers s'emparer de nos terres, de voir les blancs couper le bois et y mettre le feu et détruire notre chasse qui était notre seule subsistance, — et pour nous rendre encore plus misérables, on voit les traces des sauvages étrangers qui détruisent le peu de chasse qui reste après l'incendie de nos forêt, tout nous semble réunis pour nous faire mourir de faim.

Rien ne nous étonne plus notre père que de voir nos terres prises et occupées que nous croyions être notre propriété la plus sacrée.

Ce que tous nos anciens pères ont toujours pensé comme une chose certaine [et que nous pensons aussi nous], c'est qu'il n'y a que Dieu seul qui y est plus maître que nous, comment veux-tu qu'on ne soit point étonné d'un si grand changement.

On veut t'en dire encore un peu, comprends nous bien, on ne te blâme pas pour cela, parce que tu ne connais pas combien on souffre de faim, — et que tu as le cœur assez bon pour nous prendre en pitié.- Mais on ne peut rien avoir

pour notre usage et subsistance sans payer pour avec de l'argent, c'est ce que nous n'avons pas, vu que notre pays est trop pauvre, comme on te l'a déjà dit. — On ne peut pas te l'expliquer, mais crois nous, nous pleurons souvent notre malheureux sort.

Quand on voit l'hiver venir, on tremble de peur de nous voir sans vêtements et voilà bien des hivers tristes que nous passons de même — heureusement la providence a gardé pour nous de rencontrer des bourgeois de Billots qui nous ont sauvé la vie par l'aide qu'ils nous ont donnée.

On n'est pas capable de dire par le moyen d'écriture tout ce que l'on endure, mais on t'envoie trois de nos frères aînés nos chefs qui te diront tout ce que tu voudras savoir de l'état de notre misère.

On te prie, notre bon père, de les écouter et d'accorder ce que l'on te demande.

Voilà donc: nous allons commencer à te dire ce que tu dois nous donner.

1o Qu'on nous donne un morceau de terre au Lac St. Jean des deux bords de la rivière Péribonka et un autre morceau à l'entrée de la grande décharge du Lac, là où on s'assemble tous les printemps pour tendre nos filets, vivre au poisson et faire nos canots.

2o Qu'on nous donne l'argent payé par les bourgeois des postes de traites et l'argent de nos terres et nos bois.

3o Quand les bourgeois traiteurs auront fini d'être maîtres des postes, qu'on en soit maîtres à notre tour, avec toutes les bâtisses et les chapelles qui nous appartiennent déjà.

Voilà comment ils appellent le poste de Tadoussac avec ses pêches à saumon, le poste de Chicoutimi et celui du lac St. Jean, parce que ce sont des places où on rencontre nos missionnaires tous les étés.

4o Qu'on nous donne aussi à nous autres des présents tous les étés, comme on entend dire que tu donnes aux autres sauvages.

5o Que tu fasses empêcher les autres sauvages étrangers de chasser sur nos terres pour que les animaux augmentent.

6o Qu'on nous donne des choses pour travailler à la terre et des graines pour semer.

70 Que tu nommes un honnête homme et nous en nommerons un autre, ils s'arrangeront ensemble pour séparer entre nous tout ce que tu nous donneras.

80 Que personne ne puisse nous ôter ce que tu nous donneras, mais qu'il reste pour nous et nos enfans pour toujours et toujours.

L'argent qu'on te demande est pour acheter des provisions, vêtemens pour nous et nos enfans, amunitions, fusils, haches, pièges, fil à rêts, couvertes, couteaux, cuir de caribou pour faire nos souliers et raquettes, pour racommodage de nos chapelles et pour plusieurs autres choses qui nous manquent.

On attend avec grande hâte le retour de nos chefs et d'entendre dire que tu es assez bon pour nous accorder ce qu'il nous faut.

Nous prions Dieu tous les jours que tu vives longtems et que nos raisons te touchent le cœur.

Crois donc, c'est pénible, après avoir hiverné dans les terres et enduré le froid, la faim et toutes les misères — et que arrivés au lieu ordinaire et assemblés le printemps, on voit des familles de manque. Et mon père, on demande sont-ils morts de maladie? on tourne le dos en pleurant — c'est fini, on comprend, ils sont morts de faim.

Si tu ne nous accordes pas ce que nous te demandons, voilà que nous allons disparaître comme la neige disparaît le printemps du soleil.

ON TE SALUE, NOTRE BON PÈRE²⁷.

La suite de la rencontre telle que rapportée par McLaren vaut la peine d'être citée:

Lord Elgin. — Je dois avant tout vous faire mes compliments du choix fait par votre tribu de vos personnes pour venir me présenter sa requête. Vous êtes de beaux spécimens de votre race au point de vue physique et je ne doute pas que votre intelligence égale votre physique. Je me ferai un devoir de présenter votre pétition à Sa Majesté Notre Reine et de recommander à mon gouvernement de faire droit à vos demandes.

Après avoir prononcé ces paroles, Lord Elgin fit mine de s'en aller, mais il s'arrêta à la voix de Tumas, qui cria d'une voix de stentor: «Esqua! Esqua! Apistis», c'est-à-dire: Arrête! Arrête! je veux encore parler.

Lord Elgin à l'interprète: «Que veut-il?»

L'interprète: «Il désire parler à Lord Elgin».

Lord Elgin: «Bien».

Tumas: Tu vas t'en aller comme cela sans nous donner quelque chose pour nous aider à retourner dans nos familles! Nous sommes venus ici par charité et il faut que nous retournions vite. Qui va nous aider si tu ne nous donnes rien? Donne-nous aussi quelque chose pour montrer à notre tribu que tu nous as écoutés. On t'a donné un «livre» de nos demandes, donne-nous en un de tes promesses. J'ai tout dit.

Lord Elgin: Je vais donner ordre de faire frapper une médaille pour chacun de vous et de vous faire donner des fusils et des pavillons *Union* que vous conserverez en souvenir de votre voyage ici.

Tumas: «Crois-tu qu'avec cela on pourra traverser la forêt et chasser pour vivre?»

Lord Elgin se retira sans répondre²⁸.

Quant au tableau de Théophile Hamel, c'est le texte de Marc-Pascal de Sales Laterrière publié dans *La Minerve* du 13 mars 1848 qui nous en informe:

J'invite vos lecteurs d'une nature privilégiée qui doutent que ces êtres, à faces humaines, ne sont point de leurs frères, de se porter à l'atelier de notre habile artiste, M. Hamel, où ils verront le tableau de ces trois chefs, présentant à Son Excellence, lord Elgin, le mémorial de leurs frères Sauvages.

Cette peinture est un acte de record, toute une histoire dont M. Hamel a bien voulu, dans son enthousiasme artistique, gratifier son pays pour humilier, humaniser l'homme superbe en lui faisant voir d'où il tire son origine.

Le tableau est aussi mentionné en ces termes dans un article du journal *L'Avenir* du 18 mars 1848:

Notre habile artiste, M. Hamel, travaille actuellement un tableau représentant ces trois chefs présentant leur pétition à Son Excellence. Comme tous les tableaux de ce monsieur, ce sera un chef-d'œuvre et le sujet est palpitant d'intérêt. M. H. aura mérité beaucoup en perpétuant, au moyen de son pinceau, un fait historique remarquable de ces premiers habitants du pays, qui diminuent à mesure que le défrichement des terres les éloigne ou que la civilisation les engloutit dans sa marche rapide.

Samuel Kelso en parle également dans sa publication de 1862:

... and also, at the Earl's special desire, the party sat for their likenesses in a group, which was finished in the highest style of art. This picture, we have no doubt, His Excellency retains to this hour as a memento of this very interesting and, we should add, historical occurrence²⁹.

Le tableau a donc été commandé par Lord Elgin à Théophile Hamel afin de pouvoir garder souvenir de cette rencontre. Il porte bien la signature de Hamel au bas à droite, sur le texte de la pétition écrite en montagnais, et bien que sous la signature on ne puisse lire distinctement que les trois premiers chiffres de la date, il ne fait aucun doute qu'il s'agisse de 1848.

Théophile Hamel, qui avait été apprenti d'Antoine Plamondon pendant six ans, avait fait un séjour en Italie de 1843 à 1846. De retour à Québec cette année-là, il y ouvrit un atelier à l'automne³⁰, mais s'installa bien vite à Montréal à l'automne 1847, s'annonçant en décembre dans les journaux comme peintre d'histoire et de portrait et invitant le public à visiter son atelier rue Notre-Dame tous les jours de neuf heures du matin à quatre heures de l'après-midi, ce qui explique le texte de Laterrière invitant le public à voir le tableau³¹.

En s'installant à Montréal, Hamel visait à se créer une clientèle parmi les hommes d'affaires et les hommes politiques qui gravitaient autour du siège du gouvernement. Lorsque Lord Elgin lui commanda le tableau de sa rencontre avec les chefs montagnais, son atelier de Montréal était ouvert depuis à peine quatre mois.

Le tableau est un quadruple portrait de personnages vus de trois quarts dans un décor à peine esquissé qui pourrait être celui du salon de Lord Elgin. Celui-ci n'y est pas représenté, mais sa présence se fait sentir puisqu'il tient la place du spectateur. L'un des chefs, vraisemblablement Tumas Mesituapamuskan qui présenta le document³², occupe le centre de la composition, tenant de sa main gauche la requête écrite en langue montagnaise. Il faut dire ici que les Montagnais, évangélisés et alphabétisés à l'origine par les missionnaires jésuites, n'avaient pas cessé d'être profondément catholiques et que les Oblats qui arrivèrent sur le territoire du Saguenay en 1844 découvrirent à leur grande surprise qu'ils savaient toujours lire et écrire dans leur propre langue.

À gauche du tableau, un peu en retrait, se tiennent les deux autres chefs, dont l'un est vu de face et l'autre de trois quarts, les yeux baissés. Les chefs sont vêtus de façon élégante et portent de chauds manteaux d'hiver, probablement taillés dans le tissu que leur vendait la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson. Ils sont coiffés de bonnets rouges et noirs, les bonnets montagnais traditionnels typiques à cette nation. Ils portent une médaille de la reine Victoria retenue par un long ruban passé au cou, cadeau que leur fit Lord Elgin après leur rencontre³³.

À droite du tableau, en retrait, se tient Peter McLeod, vêtu richement et élégamment à l'européenne. Il ne porte pas de médaille, mais ce qui pourrait être un bijou de traite suspendu au cou par une chaîne. La présence de McLeod se jus-

tifie tout probablement du fait qu'il était par sa mère, d'origine montagnaise et par son père, d'origine écossaise, un métis représentant par cette alliance l'union de l'ancien et du nouveau monde.

Pour le peintre Hamel, cette commande était de première importance, car elle le mettait en contact avec un client potentiel prestigieux. Elle eut d'ailleurs des suites pour sa carrière de portraitiste. En 1849, il exécutait un portrait à mi-corps de Lord Elgin (fig.2) en vue d'en faire une lithographie exécutée à New York l'année suivante (fig.3).

En 1852, il entreprit de faire pour le Séminaire de Québec un grand portrait en pied de Lord Elgin. Il en fit d'abord une petite version, qui nous est toujours conservée au Musée de l'Amérique française à Québec³⁴, puis une grande version qui, exposée dans une des salles du Conseil législatif en 1854, fut détruite dans l'incendie du Parlement de Québec.

En 1854, année du départ de Lord Elgin, Hamel, s'inspirant de la petite version conservée à son atelier, peignit une autre grande version du tableau, que Lord Elgin rapporta avec lui en Angleterre et qui revint au pays lorsqu'il en fit un don personnel à Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine. Ce tableau se trouve aujourd'hui au Musée du Château Ramezay (fig.4)³⁵.

Pour Hamel, la commande du tableau des chefs montagnais eut donc une grande importance, en ce sens qu'elle lui attira d'autres commandes et qu'elle établit publiquement que le gouverneur général du pays était un de ses clients. Pour Lord Elgin, cette commande lui permettait de conserver un souvenir de cette rencontre bien particulière et de rapporter en Angleterre une œuvre représentant des Amérindiens qui sans doute s'attira beaucoup de commentaires.

Les séquelles de la présentation de la requête furent aussi positifs pour les Montagnais, s'il faut en croire M^{gr} Victor Tremblay:

Leur demande de secours, appuyée par un mémoire présenté par Peter McLeod père et fils et par Mgr Flavien Turgeon, coadjuteur de l'archevêque de Québec, finit par être entendue. Le 4 novembre 1848 (en conformité avec la tradition des lenteurs administratives), le comité d'État chargé d'étudier le problème recommanda une allocation de 450 livres sterling (environ 2,200 dollars) pour le secours aux Indiens Montagnais, à confier à l'évêque de Sidyme (Mgr Turgeon) pour redistribution, et, le 15, la signature du gouverneur sanctionnait l'attribution d'un autre secours de 210 livres (environ 1,000 dollars) recommandé par un mémoire de Thomas Simard et quelques autres citoyens du Saguenay³⁶.

Grâce à l'initiative du député Laterrière de faire publier à Montréal dans le journal *La Minerve*, le 13 mars 1848, le long texte qui incluait la pétition des chefs montagnais et ses propres commentaires, texte qu'il avait rédigé le 12 mars à l'Hôtel Donegana où il résidait³⁷, la rencontre du 11 mars fut largement publicisée. L'article de *La Minerve* fut repris à Montréal par le journal *L'Avenir*, le 18 mars, et



fig.2 Théophile Hamel, James Bruce, 8e Comte d'Elgin et 12e Comte de Kincardine, 1849, huile sur toile, 32 x 27 cm, Musée du Château Ramezay, Montréal. (Photo: Musée du Château Ramezay)



fig.3 Francis d'Avignon d'après Théophile Hamel James Bruce, 8e Comte d'Elgin et 12e Comte de Kincardine, 1849-1850, lithographie, 23 x 23 cm, Archives nationales du Québec, Québec. (Photo: Archives nationales du Québec)



fig.4 Théophile Hamel, James Bruce, 8e Comte d'Elgin et 12e Comte de Kincardine, 1854, huile sur toile, 77 x 49 cm, Musée du Château Ramezay, Montréal. (Photo: Musée du Château Ramezay)

le même jour à Québec par le *Journal de Québec*. Il fut aussi publié intégralement à Québec le 27 mars, avec un peu de retard, mais cette fois en première page, par le journal *Le Canadien*, ce qui nous amène à ajouter ici une note de bas de page qui découle de ce qui précède et qui concerne un autre tableau, le *Paysage au monument à Wolfe* (fig.5) de Joseph Légaré (1795-1855).

On a beaucoup écrit sur ce tableau depuis l'interprétation que nous en avons fait en 1978³⁸, interprétation basée sur une de ses sources iconographiques, *Mercurus endormant Argus*, gravure d'après une œuvre de Salvator Rosa conservée au Musée de l'Amérique française, où l'on voit Mercure jouant de la flûte pour endormir Argus, le berger, afin de pouvoir lui voler la vache Io dont il a la garde.

En ajoutant des éléments nouveaux dans son tableau, Légaré le transforme en une allégorie dont on pourrait donner diverses interprétations, la plus plausible étant liée au sujet mythologique de la gravure. Si l'on prend pour acquis que Légaré ait remplacé la vache Io par le canot d'écorce, le berger Argus par l'Indien et Mercure par le monument à Wolfe, son tableau constituerait une allégorie à ses idées politiques après les Insurrections de 1837-1838³⁹.

Le canot d'écorce étant lié à l'exploitation économique du pays, l'Amérindien rendant les armes symbolisant les Canadiens français et la statue de Wolfe étant l'image de la bureaucratie anglophone, le sens du tableau se comprend clairement. La scène se situe en forêt, une des principales sources de richesse exploitée à l'époque.

Nous maintenons toujours aujourd'hui cette interprétation, même après la découverte par Didier Prioul d'une source iconographique secondaire en 1991, *Vulcain présentant à Vénus des armes pour Énée*, gravure conservée au Musée de l'Amérique française⁴⁰. Légaré a été chercher dans cette gravure non pas l'ensemble de l'œuvre, mais uniquement un modèle pour le positionnement de l'Amérindien.

On sait que Joseph Légaré a peint plusieurs de ses œuvres, non pas suite à une commande précise, mais suite à un événement de la vie quotidienne à Québec ou à sa lecture d'une source littéraire. Or, si le *Paysage au monument à Wolfe* n'est pas daté, on a pris l'habitude de le situer vers 1840. La seule certitude quant à la date provient de l'annonce d'une loterie de tableaux appartenant à Légaré publiée dans le journal *Le Canadien* du 2 octobre 1848, où le lot numéro 7, *Monument du général Wolfe*, est évalué à 7 livres.

Connaissant d'une part les liens entre Joseph Légaré et le journal *Le Canadien*⁴¹, et d'autre part la fréquence des événements quotidiens qui déclenchaient la source d'inspiration des sujets de ses tableaux, nous croyons que c'est donc tout probablement cet article qui servit à déclencher l'inspiration de Légaré pour son tableau *Paysage au monument à Wolfe* que nous proposons maintenant de dater de 1848.

La source littéraire vient ici éclairer les sources iconographiques et permet de répondre plus adéquatement à la question que se posait François-Marc Gagnon



fig. 5 Joseph Légaré, *Paysage au monument à Wolfe*, 1848, huile sur toile, 131 x 175 cm, Musée du Québec, Québec, 55.109. (Photo: Patrick Altman)

dans une publication de 1997⁴² qui reprenait une nouvelle fois l'interprétation du tableau: «*quand* se situe au juste l'action qu'il [Joseph Légaré] met en scène dans son tableau?». ».

Si elle est juste, notre hypothèse permet deux niveaux de lecture du tableau. Un premier — et nouveau — niveau qui fait allusion à la présentation de la requête des Montagnais dépossédés de leur territoire de chasse en forêt et mourant de faim et un second qui repose sur l'association du sort des Amérindiens à celui des Canadiens français, tel qu'on le faisait à l'époque.

Les preuves sont ici circonstanciées et le danger c'est de prêter à Légaré des intentions qui n'étaient pas les siennes, mais il y a trop de concordances dans cette interprétation pour qu'elle ne provienne que des intentions de l'historien de l'art.

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Notes

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- 1 L'auteur remercie de leur collaboration The Right Honorable the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine de Broomhall, Écosse, Susan Kerr, conservatrice à la Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Colombe Dallaire des Archives nationales du Québec à Chicoutimi et Louise Siméon du Musée amérindien de Mashteuiatsh.
- 2 *Les Amérindiens et les Inuits du Québec. Onze nations contemporaines*, Québec, Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, Gouvernement du Québec, 1997, p.8.
- 3 Doris PAUL et Jean TRUDEL, «Pekuakamiulnuatsh. Les Montagnais du Lac-Saint-Jean», *Muse*, vol.XVII, n° 4, février 2000, p.32-35.
- 4 Dennis REID, *Krieghoff. Images du Canada*, Toronto, Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario, 1999, p.270, note 57.
- 5 C'est à l'occasion de cette dernière exposition que nous avons pu examiner ce tableau.
- 6 Roy STRONG, *Pages d'histoire du Canada*, Ottawa, Galerie nationale du Canada, 1967, n° 148, p.212, rep. p.213.
- 7 R.H. HUBBARD, *Deux peintres de Québec, Antoine Plamondon (1802-1895), Théophile Hamel (1817-1870)*, Ottawa, Galerie nationale du Canada, 1970, n° 43, p.89-90, rep. p.147.
- 8 W.L. MORTON, «BRUCE, JAMES, 8e comte d'Elgin et 12e comte de KINCARDINE», *DBC*, vol.IX de 1861 à 1870, Québec, PUL, 1977, p.97-102.
- 9 Raymond VÉZINA, *Théophile Hamel, Peintre national (1817-1870)*, Tome I, Montréal, Éditions Élysée, 1975, p.149-151, rep. n° 81, p.152.
- 10 Raymond VÉZINA, *Catalogue des œuvres de Théophile Hamel, Tome II*, Montréal, Éditions Élysée, 1976, n° 380, p.57 et «Théophile Hamel premier peintre du Saguenay», *Saguenayensia*, vol.17, n° 1, janvier-février 1975, p.6-7.
- 11 Victor TREMBLAY, «Une délégation des Montagnais auprès de Lord Elgin», *Saguenayensia*, vol.10, n° 2, mars-avril 1968, p.38-40.
- 12 Michel DESGAGNÉS, *Les édifices parlementaires depuis 1792*, Québec, Les Publications du Québec, 1992, deuxième édition, p.23-27.
- 13 Jean-Pierre GAGNON, «LATERRIÈRE, MARC-PASCAL DE SALES», *DBC*, vol.X, de 1871 à 1880, PUL, 1972, p.472-473.
- 14 Lire connu.
- 15 *La Minerve*, 13 mars 1848.
- 16 TREMBLAY, «Une délégation des Montagnais auprès de Lord Elgin», p.40. La source de M^{re} Tremblay est un article de *La Presse* du 3 mars 1897 intitulé «De Chicoutimi à Montréal. Voyage accidenté d'un vieil écossais et de ses compagnons en 1848».
- 17 Camil GIRARD et Normand PERRON, *Histoire du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean*, Québec, Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1995, p.83-111.
- 18 Louise DECHENE, «PRICE, William», *DBC*, vol.IX de 1861 à 1870, Québec, PUL, 1977, p.704-709.
- 19 *La Minerve*, 13 mars 1848.

- 20 J.P. SIMARD, «Biographie de Thomas Simard», *Saguenayensia*, vol.20, n° 1, janvier-février 1978, p.4-6.
- 21 Gaston GAGNON, «McLeod, Peter», *DBC*, vol.VIII de 1851 à 1860, Québec, PUL, 1985, p.633-636.
- 22 Damase POTVIN, *Peter McLeod. Grand récit canadien inédit*, Québec, Potvin, 1937, 207 p.
- 23 TREMBLAY, «Une délégation des Montagnais auprès de Lord Elgin», p.38.
- 24 Jean-Paul SIMARD, «McLAREN, NEIL», *DBC*, vol.VII de 1836 à 1850, PUL, 1988, p.615-616.
- 25 *La Presse*, 3 mars 1897 et TREMBLAY, «Une délégation des Montagnais auprès de Lord Elgin», p.38-39. Il n'a pas été possible de retracer le manuscrit original de ce récit.
- 26 Samuel J. KELSO, *Notes on The Saguenay for Tourists and Others*, Québec, Printed at the Office of the «Morning Chronicle», 1862, p.21-22.
- 27 *La Minerve*, 13 mars 1848.
- 28 *La Presse*, 3 mars 1897. McLaren ajoute que les chefs reçurent les cadeaux promis, et qu'un des chefs se tua accidentellement avec son fusil.
- 29 Samuel J. KELSO, *Notes on The Saguenay for Tourists and Others*, Québec, Printed at the Office of the «Morning Chronicle», 1862, p.22.
- 30 Raymond VÉZINA, «HAMEL, THÉOPHILE», *DBC*, vol.IX de 1861 à 1870, Québec, PUL, 1977, p.395-401.
- 31 *La Minerve*, 30 décembre 1847. L'annonce a été rédigée le 14 décembre.
- 32 *La Presse*, 3 mars 1897.
- 33 En ce qui concerne les médailles données aux amérindiens, voir Melvill Allan JAMIESON, *Medals awarded to North American Indian Chiefs 1714-1922*, Londres, Spink & Sons, 1936.
- 34 HUBBARD, *Deux peintres de Québec*, n° 72, p.103, rep. p.163.
- 35 John R. PORTER, notice de catalogue «James Bruce, 8e Comte d'Elgin et 12e Comte de Kincardine, 1854», dans Mario BÉLAND, dir., *La peinture au Québec 1820-1850*, Québec, Musée du Québec-Les Publications du Québec, 1991, p.322-324.
- 36 TREMBLAY, «Une délégation des Montagnais auprès de Lord Elgin», p.40.
- 37 *La Minerve*, 13 mars 1848.
- 38 Voir Jean TRUDEL, «Paysage au monument à Wolfe», dans John R. PORTER (avec la collaboration de Nicole CLOUTIER et Jean TRUDEL), *Joseph Légaré (1795-1855)*, Ottawa, Galerie nationale du Canada, 1978, p.64-65.
- 39 *Ibid.*
- 40 Didier PRIOUL, «Paysage au monument à Wolfe», dans BÉLAND, *La peinture au Québec 1820-1850*, p.363-365.
- 41 Didier PRIOUL, «Le Canadien», dans BÉLAND, *La peinture au Québec 1820-1850*, p.360-361.
- 42 François-Marc GAGNON, «Le dernier des Hurons. L'image de l'autre comme image de soi», dans Laurence Bertrand DORLÉAC, Laurent GERVEREAU, Serge GUILBAULT et Gérard MONNIER, dir., *Où va l'histoire de l'art contemporain?*, Paris, l'imagel'École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, 1997, p.184-186.

THREE MONTAGNAIS CHIEFS AND PETER McLEOD

Painted by Théophile Hamel in 1848

On March 11, 1848 Lord Elgin, the Governor-General of Canada received a delegation of Montagnais chiefs and their interpreters from Lac-Saint-Jean in Québec. The meeting in Montréal was arranged on the initiative of Marc-Pascal de Sales Laterrière, the Member of Parliament from their region of the Saguenay. The three chiefs, Tumas (Thomas) Mesituapamuskan, Jusep (Joseph) Kakanukus and Pasil (Basil) presented a petition with one hundred and six signatures. Accompanying the chiefs were their interpreters. Peter McLeod, who had a Montagnais mother and a Scottish father, was considered the “founder” of Chicoutimi. His employee John McLaren along with Thomas Simard were also present. One of the chiefs read the petition in their own language, explaining the tragic situation of the Montagnais people on the crown lands of Lac-Saint-Jean and asked Lord Elgin for his help in eight specific matters. The petition concluded with the following: “If you do not give us what we ask, we will disappear like the snow that melts in the spring sun.” By the end of 1848, the petition had produced positive results for the Montagnais people.

As a means of commemorating this important meeting, Lord Elgin commissioned Théophile Hamel to paint a portrait of the Montagnais chiefs and the legendary Peter McLeod with their petition. Hamel had been working in Montréal since the autumn of 1847 and the painting was produced in his studio on Notre-Dame Street. Lord Elgin (James Bruce) took the painting back to Scotland with him in late 1854, where it remained with his heirs until it was put up for sale at Sotheby's in London on November 4, 1987. At that point, all trace of the picture was lost but it is possibly now in a private collection.

Prior to this, the painting was seen here in National Gallery of Canada exhibitions including *A Pageant of Canada* in 1967 and *Two Painters of Quebec: Antoine Plamondon and Théophile Hamel* in 1970. However, at that time, the figure on the right was identified as Lord Durham. The correct identification of Peter McLeod was made in 1975. Because McLeod was a Metis, he also represented the concept of union between the old and the new worlds. Tumas (Thomas) Mesituapamuskan is shown in the center holding the petition and wearing a medal of Queen Victoria given to him by Elgin after their meeting. The other two chiefs, also wearing traditional Montagnais caps, are shown at his left. Hamel would paint a number of portraits of Lord Elgin and his association with

the Governor-General was an important asset for attracting prospective clients. For Elgin, the portrait was both a reminder of his success with the Montagnais and a picture of Canadian native people for a British audience.

To ensure that the concerns of the March 11, 1848 meeting would remain in the public eye, Marc-Pascal de Sales Laterrière published the Montagnais petition along with his own comments on their territorial rights. The text first appeared in the Montréal newspaper *La Minerve* on March 13. Due to its public interest, the article was reprinted in *L'Avenir* on March 18 in Montréal and in *Le Journal de Québec* on the same day in Québec City. In addition to discussing the plight of the Montagnais people, the newspapers also made mention of the Hamel portrait of the delegation. Shortly after, on March 27, the text was published again in Québec City on the front page of *Le Canadien* and it is known that this article was read with particular interest by the painter Joseph Légaré.

The iconographic sources for Légaré's painting, *Paysage au monument Wolfe* are well known, especially its relationship to an engraving after Salvator Rosa. The *Paysage* was also listed as part of a group of Légaré paintings for sale in October 1848. Nevertheless, the exact date of the painting and the occasion of its creation remain uncertain. After studying Hamel's painting of *Three Montagnais Chiefs and Peter McLeod*, I now believe that the *Landscape with Wolfe Monument* was produced in 1848 and that the article published in *Le Canadien*, which presented the Montagnais' petition and their pleas in the face of famine, was the literary source for Légaré's own imagery.

Translation: Janet Logan



fig.1 Attributed to Paul Kane, *The Surveyor - John Henry Lefroy*, c.1853, oil on canvas, 56 x 77 cm, Glenbow Museum, Calgary. (Photo: Glenbow Museum, 55.31.3)

IDENTIFYING A LONG- (AND STILL) LOST EARLY PAUL KANE PAINTING, AND ATTRIBUTING A RELATED WORK TO ROBERT C. TODD

Some thirteen years ago, while working on *When Winter was King*, a small loan exhibition and related publication for the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies in Banff, I was able to relate an unattributed canvas in the collection of the Glenbow Museum, Calgary, to a Paul Kane painting exhibited first in Toronto in 1847 (fig.1).¹ Known then as *The Fur Trader*, the painting had been acquired by the Glenbow Foundation from the Laing Gallery, Toronto in 1955. Suspecting it might be a Kane, Douglas Leechman, Director of Western Canadiana at the Glenbow, wrote the following year to Kenneth Kidd at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto to see if he would offer an opinion.² After viewing a photograph of the painting, Kidd cautiously affirmed in 1957 that it probably was by Kane.³ Eleanor Ediger of the Art Division at the Glenbow then approached Clifford Wilson of *The Beaver* in Winnipeg, who responded by return mail that he thought the principal figure in the painting was John Henry Lefroy whose collection of letters, edited by George Stanley of the Royal Military College, Kingston, had been published recently in a volume entitled *In Search of the Magnetic North*. The frontispiece of that book, an 1853 George Theodore Berthon portrait of Lefroy, suggested the identification.⁴ Ediger then wrote to Stanley, who, while admitting there was some resemblance between the figure in the painting and Berthon's portrait, would not support the identification because he recalled no reference in Lefroy's papers to such a work by Kane.⁵ Investigation was put aside for three-and-a-half years until Moncrieff Williamson, then Director of the Art Department at the Glenbow, approached J. Russell Harper at the National Gallery of Canada with his theory that the painting was a portrait by Cornelius Krieghoff of his close friend, John Budden.⁶ The painting was subsequently sent to Ottawa for examination. According to Harper, the "Conservation people" (likely only Mervyn Ruggles, who had a special interest in Krieghoff), were almost prepared to accept the attribution, although the noted Krieghoff expert, Marius Barbeau, who had taken the opportunity to view the painting, was "very skeptical."⁷ It was returned to the Glenbow without confirming Krieghoff authorship, although his name remained most closely associated with the picture for the next twenty-five years.

In 1987 I was able to identify the Glenbow painting with a Paul Kane exhibited in the spring 1847 exhibition of the Toronto Society of Artists, catalogue number 29, *Scene in the North-West - Portrait*. I believed that two reviews of that exhibition confirmed the identification. One, in the *British Colonist* (10 April 1847), is brief: "A Scene in the North-West' representing Captain Lefroy, of the Royal Engineers, and his assistant, in a snow scene, is very generally and deservedly admired." Another later notice in the *Toronto Herald* (22 April 1847), is more generous. Among all the paintings in the exhibition, "the first which claims attention, and in fact bears away the palm of excellence, is a 'Scene in the North-west' or a Canadian winter scene, by Mr. Kane, our townsman, which reflects the highest credit on his talent and genius; the figure in the foreground is finely conceived, and beautifully finished, and the dogs and sleigh by his side are also inimitable, and the aerial perspective of the piece give it the appearance of reality." Lefroy, a career soldier in the Royal Artillery with an interest in science, had arrived in Toronto in October 1842 to take up the superintendancy of the observatory established there as part of a British government network to study terrestrial magnetism. The following spring he left Lachine, Lower Canada, on an eighteen-month journey along the Hudsons Bay Company routes into the Northwest as far as Fort Good Hope on the Mackenzie River, taking magnetic readings at over 300 sites along the way. Wintering over at Fort Chipewyan at the west end of Lake Athabaska he took observations every hour from mid-October 1843 to the end of February, and every two minutes during periods of high magnetic disturbances, resulting in calculations that established the site of the magnetic north. Returning to Toronto in the winter of 1844, Lefroy over the following years became a prominent figure in the scientific, artistic and social life of the city. In 1846 he married Emily, daughter of John Beverley Robinson, Chief Justice of Upper Canada, in a dual wedding with George Allan who took Emily's sister Louisa as his wife. The two grooms commissioned Berthon to paint the famous *The Three Robinson Sisters* (now displayed in The Grange at the Art Gallery of Ontario) as a surprise gift for their new inlaws. Lefroy helped found the Canadian (later Royal Canadian) Institute in 1849, serving as first vice-president 1851-52, and president 1852-53. He returned to England when the Toronto observatory was transferred to the Canadian government in April 1853.⁸ Lefroy's sojourn in the Northwest doubtless contributed to Kane's desire to undertake a similar journey. In fact Lefroy supported the artist's petition to travel in the Hudsons Bay Company precincts with two letters to Sir George Simpson, Governor of the company in the winter of 1845-46.⁹ This is precisely when Kane was undertaking *Scene in the North-West - Portrait*.

When I shared my discovery with Gilbert Gignac of what was then the Documentary Art and Photography Division of the Public Archives of Canada,



fig.2 Paul Kane, Scene in the Northwest - Portrait, 1846-47, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, location unknown. (Photo: National Archives of Canada, c-007112)



fig. 3 Marell & Polyblank, Piccadilly, London, John Henry Lefroy, 1861, albumen print photograph, *carte de visite*, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Dale and Ryckman Family Collection (1996-201). (Photo: National Archives of Canada, PA-203034)

his jaw dropped. He then showed me a photograph of a finer version of exactly the same image — a painting at that time in the hands of Lefroy descendants in Britain (fig.2). I was sworn to secrecy, as the Archives was in the midst of negotiating its purchase. When I published the Glenbow painting in *When Winter Was King*, I described it as a “later replica” that “may or may not be” by Kane, while noting that “the original picture was likely painted in the winter of 1845-46, before Kane visited the west, and it was exhibited first in April 1847 while Kane was travelling on his epic journey to the Pacific coast and back.” Without revealing knowledge of the painting then in Britain, I speculated: “Perhaps the replica was made when Lefroy returned to England with the original about 1855.”¹⁰ The Archives was unable to acquire the original version, and its current whereabouts is unknown.

Comparing photographs of the two paintings we can see that they are remarkably similar. The only substantial differences are the absence in the Glenbow painting of what appears in the British version to be a hat sitting on top of the toboggan load just in front of Lefroy, and of an axe tucked into the upper binding behind him. Small containers in the front of the toboggan are interpreted differently in the Glenbow version, and the actual portrait of Lefroy is much more convincing in the original, if we compare it with the Berthon painting of 1853 (executed some seven years later) or a photograph of 1861 (fig.3). The Glenbow portrait is so different from these documented images of Lefroy as to seem to be another person. The original version is much more finely handled overall than the Glenbow, with greater attention to detail, a more accomplished command of form, and more convincing portrayal of atmosphere. The Glenbow version is generalized and flat by comparison. If we believe it was made when Lefroy was about to take the original back to England in 1853, then that was just at the point of Kane’s last big push to complete his famous project of one hundred canvases acquired by George Allan in 1856. These works are now in the Royal Ontario Museum and represent the main bulk of Kane’s studio production. It is believed he painted very little afterwards. It also has been suggested that Harriet Clench, who Kane married in 1853, and who was also a painter, assisted him in the studio.¹¹ Comparing the Glenbow version with the one known oil from her hand, a canvas of 1849 in the Art Gallery of Ontario, strongly suggests that she made the copy of Lefroy’s commission.¹²

That Kane’s portrayal of Lefroy in the North-west had currency well into the 1850s is also suggested by a remarkable painting that surfaced at a Montréal auction in 1984 (fig.4).¹³ *Northwestern Portrait, c.1855*, is not yet another version because it differs in so many ways from the Kane, but because of the similarity of certain details — the breed, general positioning and harnessing of the dogs, the rigging of the toboggan and its load, in the details of the leggings and garters of the principal figure, of the gun case, and of the wigwam, to point out



fig. 4 Attributed to Robert Clow Todd, *Northwestern Portrait*, c.1855, oil on panel, 33 x 38 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, gift from the Volunteer Committee Fund in celebration of its 50th Anniversary, 1996 (96/175). (Photo: Art Gallery of Ontario)

just the most obvious — there can be no question but that the two works are closely related. The exceptionally fine finish of this discovery, which is painted with an unusual mixture of oil- and water-based pigments on a well-prepared wooden panel, seems unique in nineteenth-century Canadian painting.¹⁴ I know of no other instance of this particular mixed-media technique, although the robust, classically “sculptural” modeling, close attention to detail, and refined, smooth finish of the sharply silhouetted figures deliberately positioned within a carefully rendered atmospheric space, immediately reminded me of the work of Robert Clow Todd. It is as though the artist had used Kane’s concept as an authentic “setting” into which to drop a patron’s portrait, much as Todd had done earlier in his well-known Quebec City paintings where he positioned “portraits” of each patron’s precisely described sleigh into the stock setting of the frozen St. Lawrence in front of the Montmorency ice cone. Comparing the head of the large figure to the two known signed portraits by Todd, the oil on panel of *Narcisse Belleau* in the Musée du Québec, and the canvas of *Thomas Hamilton Oliver* currently on the Montréal art market, has convinced me that it is his work.¹⁵ The small Belleau dates to about 1835, so is at least twenty years earlier than the *Northwestern Portrait*. As well, the direction of the light is primarily from the right while principally from the left in the later work — but similarities abound. The technique, although more polished in the later work, is essentially the same: an adaptation of the miniaturist’s preparation of the ground that give a glow to the flesh, an acute sense of the sculptural form of the head, fine attention to detail, a similar conception of the structure of the area of the eyes, of the relationship of the brow to the nose, and of the shape of the lips. The visible ear is cursory in both. While the clothing in the later version is more detailed and highly finished, both examples display a vigorous plasticity. A comparison with the *Thomas Hamilton Oliver* portrait (dated 1840) is even more telling. The extraordinary visual interest in the sitter’s dark business clothes approaches the élan of the costume of the later figure. Again, there are striking similarities in the way the facial features are described, and the hands, somewhat crude in both cases, just roughly blocked out but with long, strong fingers, are also understood as three-dimensional forms in space. Todd, who had lived in Quebec City from 1833, settled in Toronto the summer of 1853, so he would not have had a chance to see the original version of Kane’s painting.¹⁶ Although he lived in the city until his death there in May 1866, advertising himself first as an artist (teaching drawing and painting), then as a banner, herald, sign and ornamental painter, no other work of Todd’s Toronto years is known.¹⁷

In recognition of its obvious relationship to Kane’s canvas, the painting is now called *Northwestern Portrait* and dated to c. 1855, however, we cannot be certain that it is by Todd. Nor can we be certain it is a direct response to what I have proposed is Harriet Clench’s copy of Kane’s composition. They may both

depend on a still-unknown third image. That this is Todd's only known Toronto painting remains an exciting conjecture nonetheless, and one that will inhabit my imagination until further information is found.

DENNIS REID

Chief Curator

Art Gallery of Ontario

Notes

1 Edward CAVELL and Dennis REID, *When Winter was King: The Image of Winter in 19th Century Canada* (Banff, Alberta: Altitude Publishing and The Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, 1988). The exhibition opened at The Whyte Museum in January 1988, subsequently touring to the London Regional Art Gallery, Art Gallery of Windsor, and the McCord Museum, Montréal, where it closed October 1988.

2 Douglas Leechman to Kenneth Kidd, 4 June 1956, copy in registration files, Glenbow Museum, Calgary. All the following correspondence is in the same location.

3 Kidd to Eleanor Ediger, 19 June 1957.

4 Ediger to Clifford Wilson, 11 July 1957. Wilson to Ediger, 15 July 1957. See John Henry LEFROY, *In Search of the Magnetic North; A Soldier-Surveyor's Letters from the North-West 1843-1844*, ed. George F.G. Stanley (Toronto: Macmillan, 1955). The Berthon portrait was commissioned by the Royal Canadian Institute and is still in that collection.

5 Ediger to George Stanley, 16 Aug. 1957; Stanley to Ediger, 6 Sept. 1957.

6 Moncrieff Williamson to J. Russell Harper, 24 Jan. 1961.

7 Harper to Williamson, 8 Mar. 1961.

8 For Lefroy see Carol M. WHITFIELD and Richard A. JARRELL, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* XI (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982): 508-10.

9 The letters are cited in J. Russell HARPER, *Paul Kane's Frontier* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 16-17.

10 CAVELL and REID, *When Winter was King*, 54.

11 Maria TIPPETT, *By a Lady; Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women* (Toronto: Viking, 1992), 9.

12 Repr. in TIPPETT, *By a Lady*, 10.

13 Pinney's Auctions, Montréal, 10 May 1984, lot S56, *Trapper and Dogs at an Indian Encampment*, where it was acquired by Michel Doyon. I first saw it with Doyon in 1993, and my understanding of the piece benefited from many conversations with him prior to his tragic death early in 1997. The painting is now titled *Northwestern Portrait, c.1855*.

14 The work is painted in oils, but with a water soluble toning layer that has been selectively removed to create design, particularly the smoke effects in the sky. The unusual glow overall probably is the result of an opaque red underpainting, similar to the "carnation" layer miniaturists traditionally used to underlay depictions of flesh. I am grateful to Sandra Webster-Cook, Conservator, Art Gallery of Ontario, for these observations.

15 For the *Belleau* see Mario BÉLAND, ed., *Painting in Quebec 1820-1850; New Views, New Perspectives* (Quebec: Musée du Québec, 1992), 481, repr. The *Oliver* can be seen only in a poor, cropped repr. in Eileen REID MARCIL, *The Charley-Man; A History of Wooden Shipbuilding at Quebec 1763-1893* (Kingston, Ont.: Quarry Press, 1995), 73.

16 The date of his move is bracketed by two documents: the baptismal record of his son, Joseph Charles, at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, Quebec City, 17 April 1853; the record of the death of his son, Robert Alexander, 2 October 1853, St. James Cathedral, Toronto, Cemetery Booklet of Death Notices, burial #2620, 4 October 1853. I am grateful to Mary Peate of Westlake Village, California for directing me to this information.

17 He refers to himself as an artist only at the beginning. The earliest advertising notice is in the *Globe*, 26 November 1853. Todd died 7 May 1866, recorded at St. James Cathedral, Toronto, Cemetery Booklet of Death Notices, burial #7547, 9 May 1866.

L'IDENTIFICATION D'UN TABLEAU PERDU (ET NON RETROUVÉ) DE PAUL KANE ET L'ATTRIBUTION À ROBERT C. TODD D'UNE ŒUVRE QUI LUI EST APPARENTÉE

Le présent article traite de la recherche que j'ai faite en 1987 sur un tableau non attribué dont le titre était alors *The Fur Trader* et qui se trouvait au musée Glenbow à Calgary. L'œuvre a été d'abord attribuée à Paul Kane puis, pendant plus de vingt-cinq ans, à Cornelius Krieghoff sans preuves solides. On peut maintenant dire que le tableau est fortement apparenté à une œuvre de Paul Kane, *Scene in the North West - Portrait*, qui fut montrée pour la première fois lors de l'exposition de la Toronto Society of Artists en avril 1847. Ce portrait du capitaine John Henry Lefroy du Royal Engineers rappelle son long périple dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest en 1843-1844, au cours duquel il a pris une série considérable de relevés qui lui ont permis de fixer l'emplacement du nord magnétique. Il devint par la suite un membre important de la bonne société de Toronto, épousa la fille de John Beverley Robinson, juge en chef du Haut Canada en 1846, et encouragea le principal portraitiste de la ville, George Theodore Berthon. Lefroy participa à la fondation du Canadian (plus tard Royal Canadian) Institute en 1849, et en fut le premier vice-président en 1851-1852, et le président 1852-1853. Il retourna en Angleterre en avril 1853. Plus tôt, Lefroy avait écrit à Sir George Simpson, gouverneur de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, pour appuyer la demande de Paul Kane de voyager dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest durant l'hiver de 1845-1846. C'est justement à ce moment que fut exécuté *Scene in the North-West - Portrait*.

Le portrait de Lefroy qui avait été exposé à Toronto en 1847 était encore, en 1987, entre les mains de ses descendants en Angleterre, mais on a depuis perdu sa trace. En comparaison, la version de Glenbow, traitée de manière conventionnelle et sans relief, a probablement été réalisée au moment où Lefroy quittait Toronto, en 1853, emportant l'original. C'était probablement, du moins en partie, l'œuvre de la nouvelle épouse de Kane, Harriet Clench, qui était elle-même peintre et qui travaillait avec Kane dans son studio. Il est aussi possible que le tableau de Glenbow soit une copie faite entièrement par Clench.

En 1984, un tableau qui s'apparentait beaucoup au portrait de Kane fit son apparition à Montréal dans une vente aux enchères. Bien qu'exécuté sur un

support plus petit, en bois, et selon une technique ordinairement associée à la peinture de miniatures, le personnage est placé dans le même cadre que le tableau de Kane. Il représente cependant un sujet différent, non identifié. Le tableau, qui se trouve maintenant dans la Art Gallery of Ontario, est connu sous le nom de *Northwestern Portrait* et daté vers 1855 pour souligner sa ressemblance avec l'œuvre de Kane. Le tableau de la Art Gallery of Ontario est attribué au peintre Robert Clow Todd, venu de Québec à Toronto à l'été de 1853. Cette attribution est suggérée par des comparaisons avec les portraits signés par Todd, en particulier celui de *Thomas Hamilton Olivier*, 1840. Si cette attribution est effectivement avérée, *Northwestern Portrait* serait la seule œuvre connue de Todd datant de sa période torontoise.

Traduction: Élise Bonnette



fig.2 Harold Mortimer-Lamb, Portrait - Lady Drummond, c.1907, platinum print, 25 x 19 cm, National Gallery of Canada. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada, 32247)

BETWEEN A HARD EDGE AND A SOFT CURVE

Modernism in Canadian Photography

This initial investigation into Modernism in Canadian photography begins with the first Toronto Camera Club *Salon* in 1903, and ends with the last *Canadian International Salon* that was held at the National Gallery of Canada in 1939. This also marks the year in which the National Film Board of Canada was established.

Although Modernist photography was not systematically institutionalized through the formation of societies and clubs in either Europe or North America, it was an international trend like Pictorialism. However, in Europe, the United States, Russia and Mexico, Modernist photography did not follow a simple evolutionary path, but was rather the result of diverse influences affecting specific sets of cultural circumstances. In Europe, for example, experimental, avant-garde movements such as Cubism, Futurism, Surrealism, and Constructivism helped to shape the form of Modernist photography. In the United States, it was the Pictorialism of the Photo-Secessionists that provided both a well-established formal vocabulary and a critical framework from which departures were made into the language of Modernism. In New York, the American photographer Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946) started the Photo-Secession and tirelessly promoted photography as a medium of artistic expression, equal to painting, sculpture and the graphic arts, and he established important publishing and exhibition outlets for American and international photographers. In Russia and Mexico, other factors enabled Modernist photography to flourish in both these countries. A climate of cultural receptivity to new forms of artistic expression resulted from the social and political revolutions that both countries underwent in the late teens and 1920s. This was enhanced by the presence of either an indigenous avant-garde as in Russia, or the importation of a Modernist aesthetic by visiting photographers, such as the American Edward Weston (1886-1958) in the case of Mexico. Modernist photography in the United States shared a desire to demonstrate synchronicity with the present by exploring new ideas, subjects, and techniques and to define itself against the romantic, soft-focus aesthetic of Pictorialism, which by the 1920s had degenerated into mannerism. Sharp, crisp lines and smooth, uniform surfaces would eventually predominate over the aesthetic of soft edges and muted tones. This common language of Modernist photography evolved out of the instantaneity that new photographic technologies offered, an appreciation of the abstract values of light and dynamic form, and a wealth of new iconography that included

soaring skyscrapers, busy city streets, mesmerizing repetition of mass produced objects, and industrial machinery, among other images.

The question that this study raises is the relationship of Canadian photography of the 1920s and 30s to these other Modernist photographic practices. Was it closer to the American model of a direct movement out of Pictorialism or an example of the more experimental European model? Did Canadian Modernist photography exhibit any particular defining characteristics? And were there Canadian photographers whose work could be described as Modernist, and who were primarily interested in "refurbish[ing] the language of their art?"¹

Although the politics of nationalism would strongly influence the direction that Canadian photography took during the period from 1912 to 1939, it was the continuing presence of the Pictorialist movement that would determine its character. The conduit for the dissemination of Pictorialism in Canada was the camera club.² The tradition of camera clubs here was strong, going back to the 1880s and 1890s when they were first established in eastern Canada before spreading across the west. Such clubs brought together individuals who had a common interest in photography, either as a pastime or as a profession, and provided a network for sharing technical expertise and reinforcing the Pictorial aesthetic that borrowed heavily from the picturesque in nineteenth-century academic painting. Typical subjects included idyllic rural scenes, exotic, quaint villages and harbours, sentimental portraits of women and children, and the female nude.³ Undoubtedly, Canadian camera clubs like their counterparts in other nations, were often more dedicated to the establishment and observation of rules than to looking afresh at the world and its visual representation.

Were it not for two landmark events in the history of early twentieth-century photography in Canada that moved Canadian photography away from a provincial arena into the international context of the Pictorialist movement, the quiet rhythms of camera club meetings and contests might never have been interrupted. The first took place in 1903 when the Pictorialist photographer Sidney Carter (1880-1956) and the more adventurous members of the Toronto Camera Club, sought to create an environment where photography would be thoughtfully critiqued and exhibited in Canada. It organized its first *Salon* in which thirty prints from the Loan Collection of the Photo-Secession in New York were shown alongside work by club members.⁴ However, the conservative members within the club who preferred to maintain their traditional approach to print-making and methods of presentation, objected to the extreme manifestation of painterly effects in the work of the Photo-Secessionists. The second disruption occurred at the Art Association of Montreal in November of 1907, when Sidney Carter assembled a large international Pictorialist exhibition that included such luminaries in the field as David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson, both of whom had furthered the cause of photography as art.⁵ The two exhibitions were met with a certain degree



fig.1 Sidney Carter, *Evening or Sunset on Black Creek*, 1901, gum bichromate print, 15 x 9 cm, National Archives of Canada. (Photo: National Archives of Canada, PA 112002)

of resistance from different sectors of the community. In the case of the first Toronto Camera Club *Salon*, it was the conservative photographers who resented the introduction of a new aesthetic. In the case of the Montréal exhibition, it was local artists who took umbrage at Maurice Maeterlinck's reference in the catalogue to photography as an art form and persuaded the Secretary of the Association, John Bethune Abbott, to keep the offending pages from view.⁶

In addition to being the organizational and critical linch-pins of the Pictorialist movement in Canada, Sidney Carter and Harold Mortimer-Lamb (1872-1970) were both accomplished photographers. Strongly influenced by the work of the American Secessionists, they introduced a new vocabulary of form and new techniques to the Canadian photographic community. Their work not only received international recognition, but it brought an awareness of the importance of photography as an art form to Canada. The ability to translate the detailed forms of nature into broad atmospheric silhouettes is evident in Carter's *Evening or Sunset on Black Creek* (fig.1); while in Mortimer-Lamb's photographs, the introduction of theatrical presence into the portrait genre, as in *Portrait - Lady Drummond* (fig.2), provided an alternative to the more descriptive likenesses of earlier studio photography. Although both Carter and Mortimer-Lamb continued to exhibit and publish their photographs internationally up to 1920, their involvement with photography waned as the Pictorialist movement itself became less vital and more formulaic. Although still acting as the Canadian correspondent for the British annual, *Photograms of the Year*, by 1912 Mortimer-Lamb had turned his interest increasingly towards painting.⁷ By 1917, Sidney Carter had distanced himself from both national and international photographic associations.⁸ In 1928 he admitted, "I ... am doing less each year and with few regrets."⁹

The year 1910 became critical for the evolution of American Pictorialist and Modernist photography when the *International Exhibition of Pictorial Photography* was mounted at the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York. This was the largest exhibition of photographs (almost 600 prints, including two by Carter and one by Canadian Pictorialist J.P. Hodgins) ever to have been assembled.¹⁰ It was the exhibition that signalled "the victory in the battle for recognition of photography as an art form."¹¹ The occasion also marked both Stieglitz's denunciation of camera clubs with their rigid practices and the gradual moving away of a certain segment of the Pictorialist movement from the soft-focus aesthetic to what was called at the time "straight photography."

More significant than the schism within the Pictorialist movement was the fact that Alvin Langdon Coburn and Paul Strand, the mainstays of Stieglitz's exhibitions and publications, were among those American photographers who were searching for a new vocabulary of form. By opening his galleries at '291' to painting, drawing and sculpture by internationally acclaimed artists, and by championing modern art, Stieglitz almost single-handedly gave photographers licence to

look beyond the boundaries of their own medium in their desire for a radically different visual language.¹² Coburn's own interest in Vorticism led him to question the naturalist bias of current photographic representation. He asked:

Why should not its subtle rapidity be utilized to study movement? Why not repeated successive exposures of an object in motion on the same plate? Why should not perspective be studied from angles hitherto neglected or unobserved? Why, I ask you earnestly, need we go on making commonplace little exposures that may be sorted into groups of landscapes, portraits and figure studies? Think of the joy of doing some-thing which it would be impossible to classify, or to tell which was top and which was the bottom!....I do not think we have begun even to realize the possibilities of the camera.¹³

By 1917 Coburn had made his first singular photographic abstractions, calling them Vortographs, which were images made of an assemblage of kaleidoscopic mirrors, he constructed for the purpose. In the same year Paul Strand published a group of photographs in the last issue of *Camera Work* which showed how effectively photography could describe abstract form. His ability to render the abstract and geometric essence of commonplace objects can be seen in *Rock, Point Lorne, Nova Scotia* (fig.3), an image Strand made during his first visit to Canada in 1920.¹⁴ At this time in Europe, one of the initial signs of radical experimentation in photography was the creation of the first self-consciously artistic photograms by the painter Christian Schad in Germany in 1918. The making of these images dispensed entirely with elaborate photographic techniques and equipment, as it required only the simple exposure and development of a sheet of photographic paper upon which scraps of paper and translucent materials had been placed.

Stieglitz's undermining of the supremacy of Pictorialist photography in the United States through his support of modern art and his questioning of the Pictorialist aesthetic, as well as the European experiments with new photographic techniques, had little or no effect on photography in Canada where the Pictorialist aesthetic was kept alive through the network of camera clubs.¹⁵ One major force that did influence photographers during the period 1910-1920 was Pictorialism. Through the annual reports of Mortimer-Lamb and other Canadian correspondents in the pages of *Photograms of the Year*, we learn that the excitement that Carter and Mortimer-Lamb had earlier infused into the Canadian photography scene was dissipating. In 1914 the latter observed that: "Once the claims of photography for recognition as a medium of artistic expression excited fierce controversy. The subject now is rarely debated; it has perhaps ceased to excite general interest." Perhaps wanting to put a more positive slant on this apathetic state of affairs, Mortimer-Lamb went on to announce, in somewhat equivocal terms, that "photographers have won a sort of standing which places them nearly on a plane with amateur painters."¹⁶ However, a "sort of standing on a plane with amateur painters" was not a promising position for more adventurous photographers to enjoy in Canada.

While international camera club exhibitions were still taking place in major Canadian cities, they had neither changed their content nor been successful in taking photography out of its ghettoized status. In addition to noting a lack of seriousness by most Canadian photographers (whom he perceived as mere hobbyists), Mortimer-Lamb attributed the dearth of outstanding photographers to a number of social and cultural deficiencies in Canada: the shortage of members of a leisured class, the small number of serious photographers, the lack of a market for Pictorial photographs, and the absence of representation of photography in public art galleries and museums. On this last point he presciently wrote that: "The educative effect of such a movement, if successfully prosecuted, would be widespread. It would place pictorial photography on an altogether better footing, and it would unquestionably stimulate photographic endeavour."¹⁷ Informing his observations was the knowledge that the Albright Knox Gallery had recently purchased a number of Pictorialist works from its landmark exhibition in 1910.

As if the handicaps of working in vast countries with small populations, and a lack of institutionalized support for photography were not bad enough, Canadian photographers, like their Australian counterparts, referred to as "colonials" by critics from the "mother country," were often addressed in rather patronizing tones of voice. In 1914, the editor F.J. Mortimer, reviewing the years Pictorialist work for *Photograms of the Year* wrote: "It is pleasing also to record that the leading workers [photographers] in the Colonies are progressing steadily towards higher ideals, and this year's Colonial Exhibition held at The A.P. Little Gallery indicated in no uncertain manner that a new generation of eager and clever workers is coming to the front, particularly in Australia and Canada."¹⁸ As satisfying as it would be to ascribe the drive for an independent style of photography to this kind of commentary, it would be historically inaccurate. Rather it was both Pictorialism and the Group of Seven's nationalist message that triggered a desire among the more vocal Canadian photographers (many of whom were living in Toronto when the Group had their first exhibition in 1920 at the Art Gallery of Toronto), to produce a typically Canadian school of photography that would capture the character of the land.

As early as 1913, Harold Mortimer-Lamb commented that: "Most of the pictorial work one sees — and this also applies to Canadian painting — could have been done anywhere; in Holland or France, or England. ...yet to some man some day inspiration will come, and he will give expression to the spirit of our northern solitudes."¹⁹ He then went on to discuss the vast and varied character of the Canadian landscape, a theme to which writers on the topic of a Canadian school of photography would frequently return. In 1920 Arthur Goss wrote, "I believe it will be along the lines adopted by a group of Canadian painters to paint our scenery in a Canadian way, that photographers must progress ... [to produce] something worthwhile and characteristic of our climate and our country."²⁰



fig.3 Paul Strand, *Rock, Port Lorne, Nova Scotia*, 1919, gelatin silver print, 24 x 20 cm, National Gallery of Canada. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada, 33309)

But the will to retain the Pictorialist style and at the same time to capture the specificity and essence of Canada in a literal way almost always meant adopting nature as a subject, thereby setting up an inherent contradiction. With its insistence upon gestural effects and its propensity for creating atmospheric mood through the reduction of form to silhouette, Pictorialism was by definition, a style that subordinated the specific to the general. Joseph T. Keiley's claim — that with the 1898 *Philadelphia Salon* a truly American school of Pictorial photography had been created — is supportable only if it is predicated upon the origins of the photographers and not upon the content or style of the photographs.²¹ It should be added that the Modernist style would not have provided Canadian photographers with a solution to the problem of this struggle with national identity. Modernist photographers simplified the forms of nature by reducing them to abstract patterns and thus subordinated the particular to the universal, just as the



fig.4 John Kirkland Hodges, *Idle Moments*, 1926, Gelatin silver print, 21 x 29 cm, National Archives of Canada. (Photo: National Archives of Canada, PA 125728)

Pictorialists had done. The impossibility of trying to realize in a soft-focussed, generic style what was distinctively Canadian about our landscape reduced Canadian photographers and writers on the subject to bitter complainers about the impossible bigness of the land compared to the smallness of the photographic paper as well as the unphotogenic quality of snow.²² To make matters worse a comparison of the Canadian landscape with Great Britain only deepened the sense of the untenableness of their mission. English scenery, claimed one of the photographers, was not only more adaptable to the average sheet of photographic paper because of its smaller scale, but also more full of "pretty bits" when compared to the vast and uncontainable Canadian landscape.²³

Nevertheless, it is likely that it was a later variant of Pictorialism, rather than the Vortographs of Coburn, the abstractions of Strand or the photograms of Schad, that eventually motivated Canadian photographers to introduce a sharper focus to their images. This other style within the Pictorialist movement evolved out of a slow and somewhat decorative adaptation to the growing use of sharp-focus

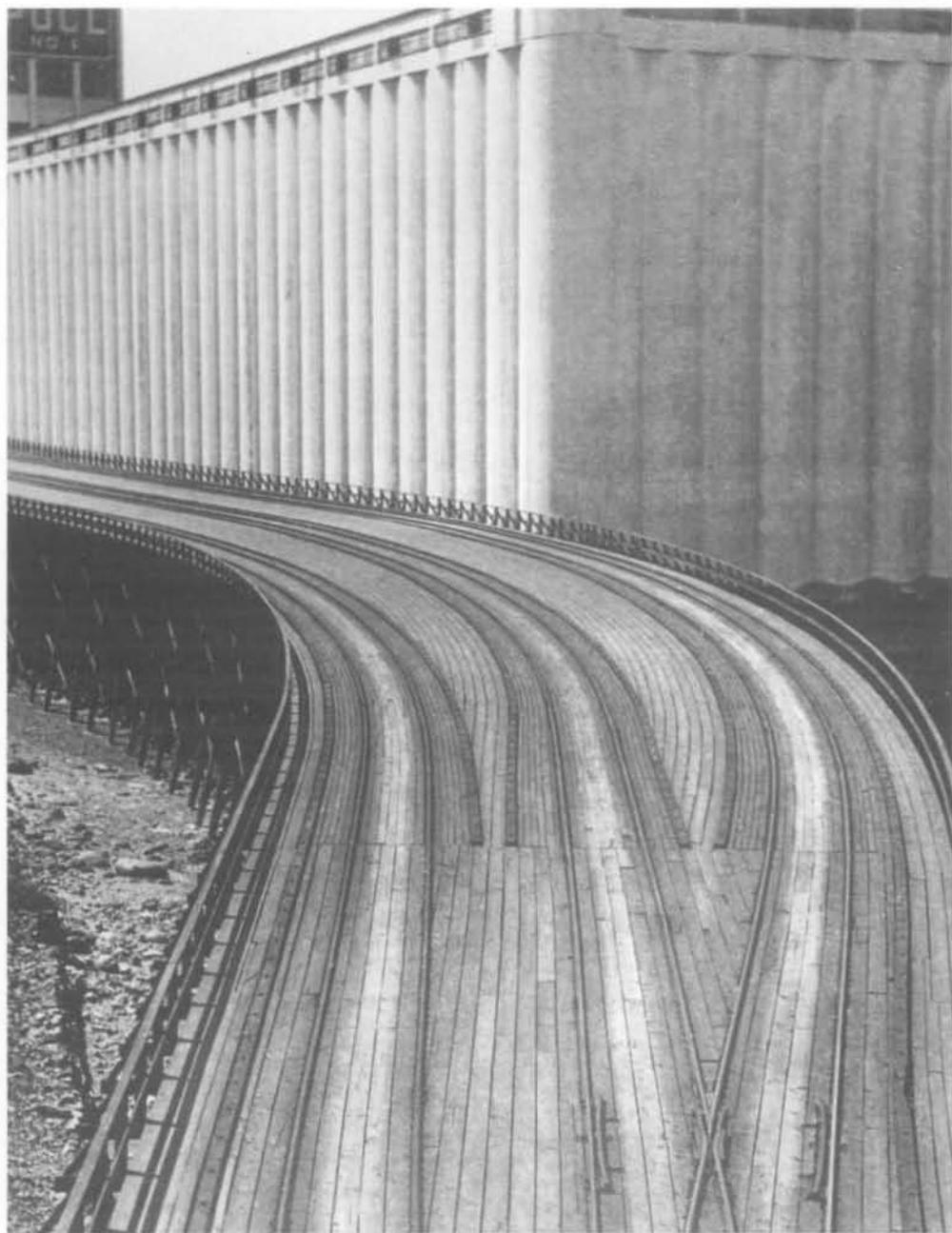


fig. 5 Johan Helders, *Pool No. 1*, c. 1925, Gelatin silver print, 43 x 34 cm, Vancouver Public Library. (Photo: Vancouver Public Library, 54767)

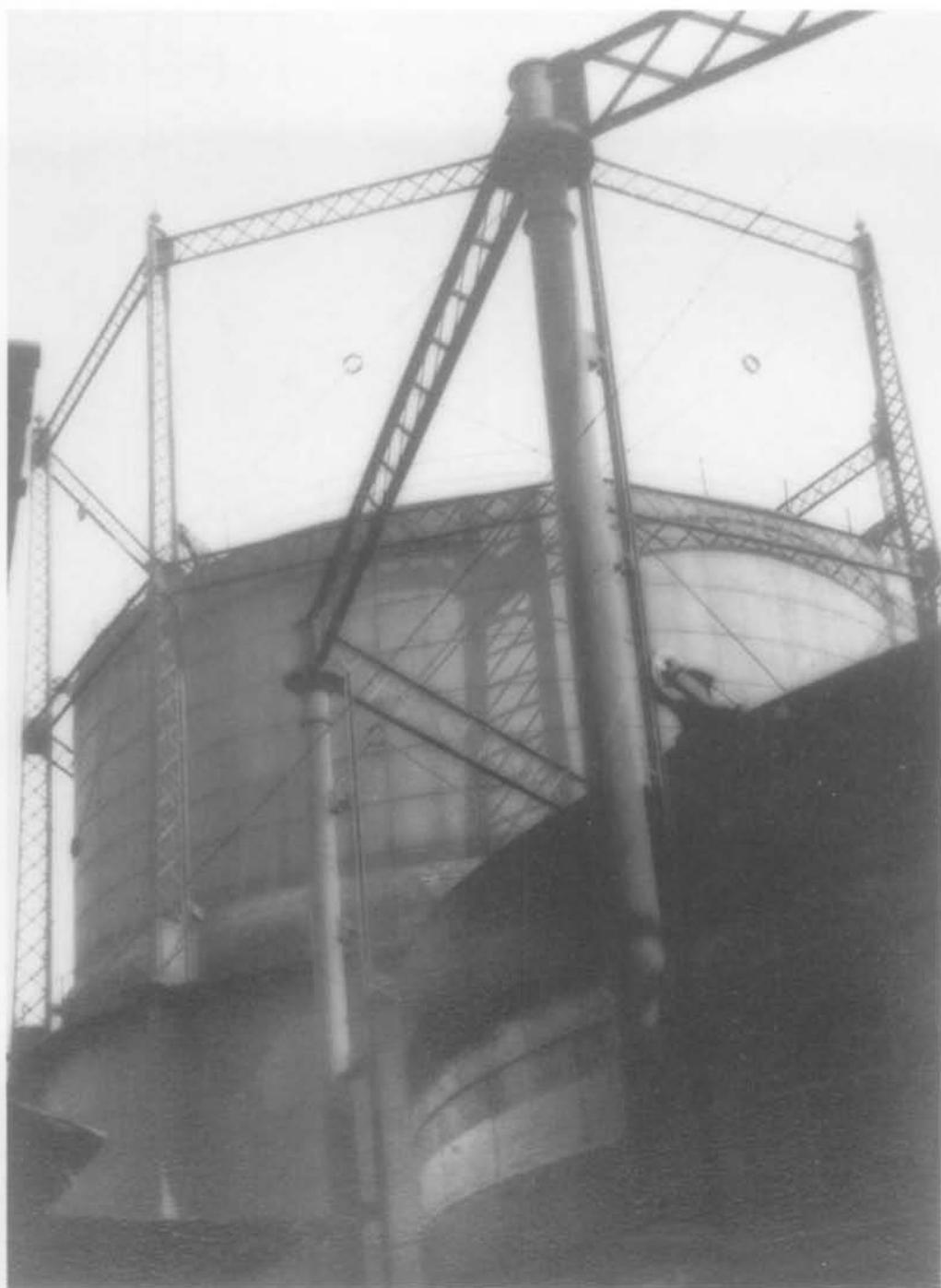


fig. 6 Brodie Whitelaw, *Gas Tanks*, c.1928, gelatin silver, 17 x 13 cm, National Archives of Canada. (Photo: National Archives of Canada, PA 126638)

photography in advertising. What is certain is that the shift towards "compositions with an emphasis on clarity and design" did not represent a conversion to the Modernist desire to challenge the past and be in synchrony with the modern environment.²⁴ The appropriation of straight photography as an extension of Pictorialism was summed up by the Editor of *Photograms of the Year* in 1922 when he wrote, "This tendency [straight photography] has continued to develop, and during the present year the exhibitions have given a still greater indication that more straight photography, or what purports to the eye to be straight photography, has been made use of for pictorial purposes."²⁵

Although John Kirkland Hodges' (1888-1916) *Idle Moments* (fig.4) illustrates this shift by showing an awareness of a new formal language in its adoption of a slightly angled view, by both its inclusion of the rear view of the subjects and its emphasis on geometric forms, its title betrays a continuing attachment to the anecdotal and picturesque aspects of the camera club aesthetic. This was not an isolated example. When photographers like Johan Helders (1888-1956), in his dynamic arrangement of curving and vertical forms of *Pool No.1* (fig.5) or Brodie Whitelaw (b.1910) in *Gas Tanks* (fig.6), began to favour subject matter with geometric forms and sharp contrasts of light and shade, the austerity of the Modernist aesthetic was softened by printing the images on warmer, textured papers. As Andrew Rodger has noted, these photographers could never quite bring themselves to make a radical departure from the past.²⁶ Their restraint is well illustrated by comparing the starkness of American Pictorialist photographer Paul Outerbridge's (1896-1958) *Ide Collar* (fig.7) with Canadian Bruce Metcalfe's (1890/1891-1962) *Collars* (fig.8), which retains a playful, curving movement in contrast to the severity of the American's image.

One of the foremost practitioners of this hybrid style of Pictorialism and Modernist photography was John Vanderpant (1884-1939).²⁷ As one writer has pointed out, Vanderpant did not start to introduce geometric forms and more abstract compositions until 1929, and even then, "the persistent soft focus, the use of tonal paper, and significant retouching at the time of printing, mark him as an artist that always had one foot firmly anchored in the early precepts of Pictorialism, as did his use from time to time, even as late as 1935, of poetic titles."²⁸ An example of such a title along with his most extreme expression of the Modernist aesthetic can be seen in *Creations of Man* (fig.9).²⁹

This ambiguity of intention and hybridity of Pictorialist and Modernist styles was not confined to Canadian photographers who worked exclusively within the Canadian milieu, but also marks the images of others who maintained affiliations with the Pictorialist movement. In spite of the strongly Modernist aspects of her later work, Margaret Watkins (1884-1969) is one such photographer.³⁰ As late as 1920 she was an influential member of the Pictorial Photographers of America and its Vice-President in 1926. Born in Hamilton, Ontario where she

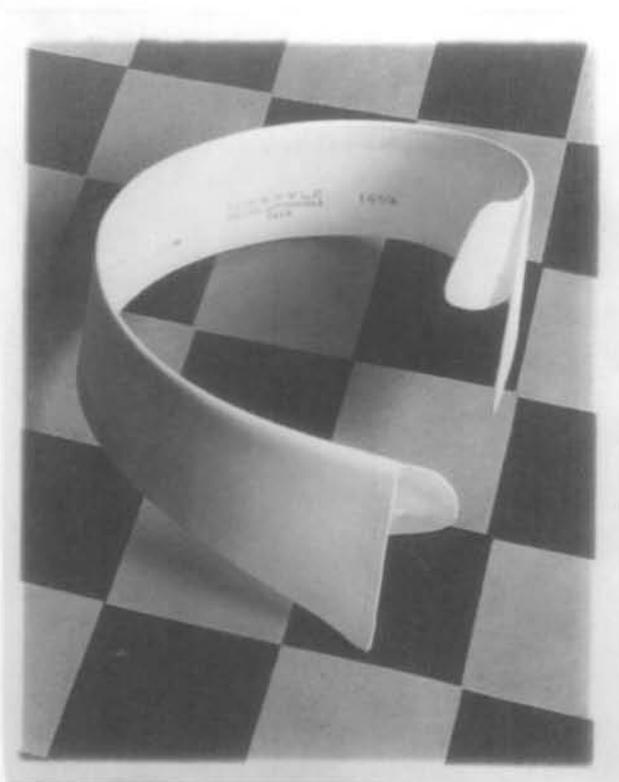


fig. 7

Paul Outerbridge, *Ide Collar*, 1922, gelatin silver print, 12 x 9 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ford Motor Company Coll., gift of Ford Motor Company and John C. Waddell, 1987. (Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987.1100.462)

probably learned photography in her teens from an uncle, Thomas Watkins, an art collector and member of the local camera club, her career as a photographer was formed in the United States. In 1914, at the age of thirty, Watkins left Hamilton for New York to study at the Clarence White School of Photography, where both Stieglitz and Max Weber were on the faculty and where she herself, six years later, would be an Assistant Instructor.³¹ Watkins was associated with advertising and wrote the first in-depth essay on the subject of advertising and photography in 1926.³² A palladium print of subtle and warm tonality, *Domestic Symphony* (fig.10) exemplifies her ability to integrate the simplified patterns of Modernist photography with the muted qualities of Pictorialism.

Although there were Canadian photographers in the twenties and thirties who sought to "refurbish the language of their art," they were willing to do so only to a degree that allowed them to remain within the conceptual and formal tradition of Pictorialism. The influence that camera clubs and the imperative for a nationalist style in photography exercised over photographers is demonstrated by the fact that Man Ray's (1890-1926) two *Rayograms*, which were shown with his



fig.8 Bruce Metcalge, *Collars*, 1927, gelatin silver, 18 x 23 cm, National Archives of Canada. (Photo: National Archives of Canada, PA 126505)

painting *Arc de Triomphe*, in the *International Exhibition of Modern Art* organized by the Société Anonyme and exhibited at the Art Gallery of Toronto in April 1927, went completely unnoticed by commentators.³³ Rather than drawing readers' attention to the radical contribution that his *Rayograms* made to the evolution of photography, reviews of the *International Exhibition* commented instead on the Toronto Camera Club's annual *Salon*. The latter had been installed concurrently with the *International* with the supposed intention of countering some of the heat generated by the radical exhibition.

There are various reasons that could account for why a hybrid form of Pictorialism and straight photography prevailed in Canada over the purer form

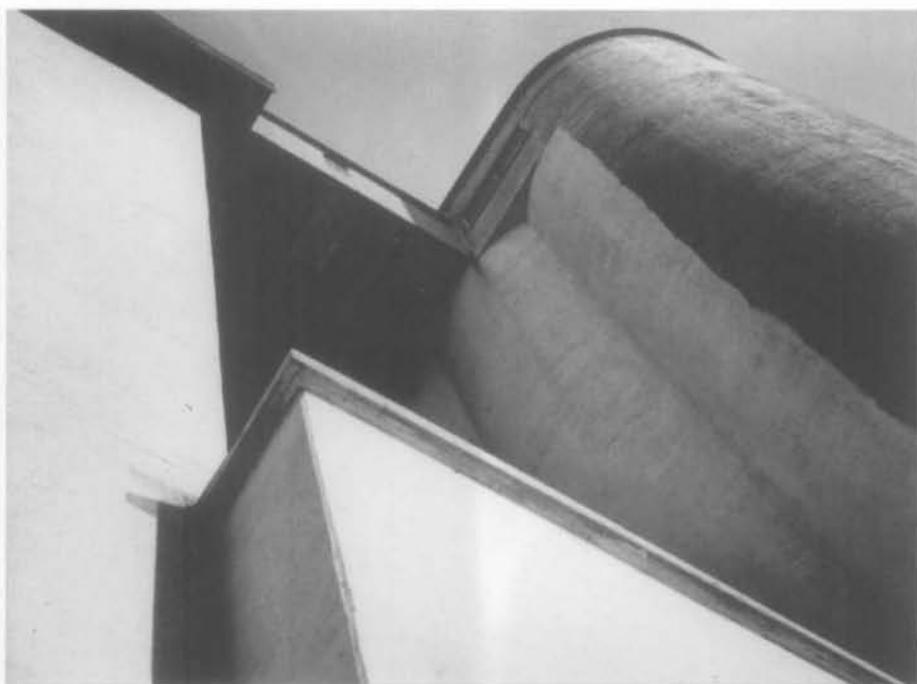


fig.9 John Vanderpant, *Creations of Man*, 1934,
glass lantern slide, 8 x 10 cm, National
Archives of Canada. (Photo: National
Archives of Canada, PA 179552)

of Modernist photography. The canon of Pictorialism was validated by the National Gallery of Canada through its annual hosting of the *Canadian International Salon of Photographic Art* from 1934 to 1939. Although the *Salon* did not include the word "Pictorialist" in its title, the work it promoted was either partly or fully Pictorialist in spirit, ranging from Europeans such as Pierre Dubreuil (act. c.1900) to Canadians Bruce Metcalfe, Johan Helder, John Vanderpant and Yousuf Karsh (b.1908). Absent from these annuals was the work of the European and American Modernist photographers.³⁴

Although there was a growing nationalist spirit in Canada and the period from the late nineteenth century through to the First World War saw the establishment of music and art schools, Canada was not propelled into the Modernist movement in photography the way that Mexico or Russia were. With neither Russia nor Mexico's post-revolutionary culture of experimentation, nor the presence of any indigenous, or even temporarily resident Modernist photographers,

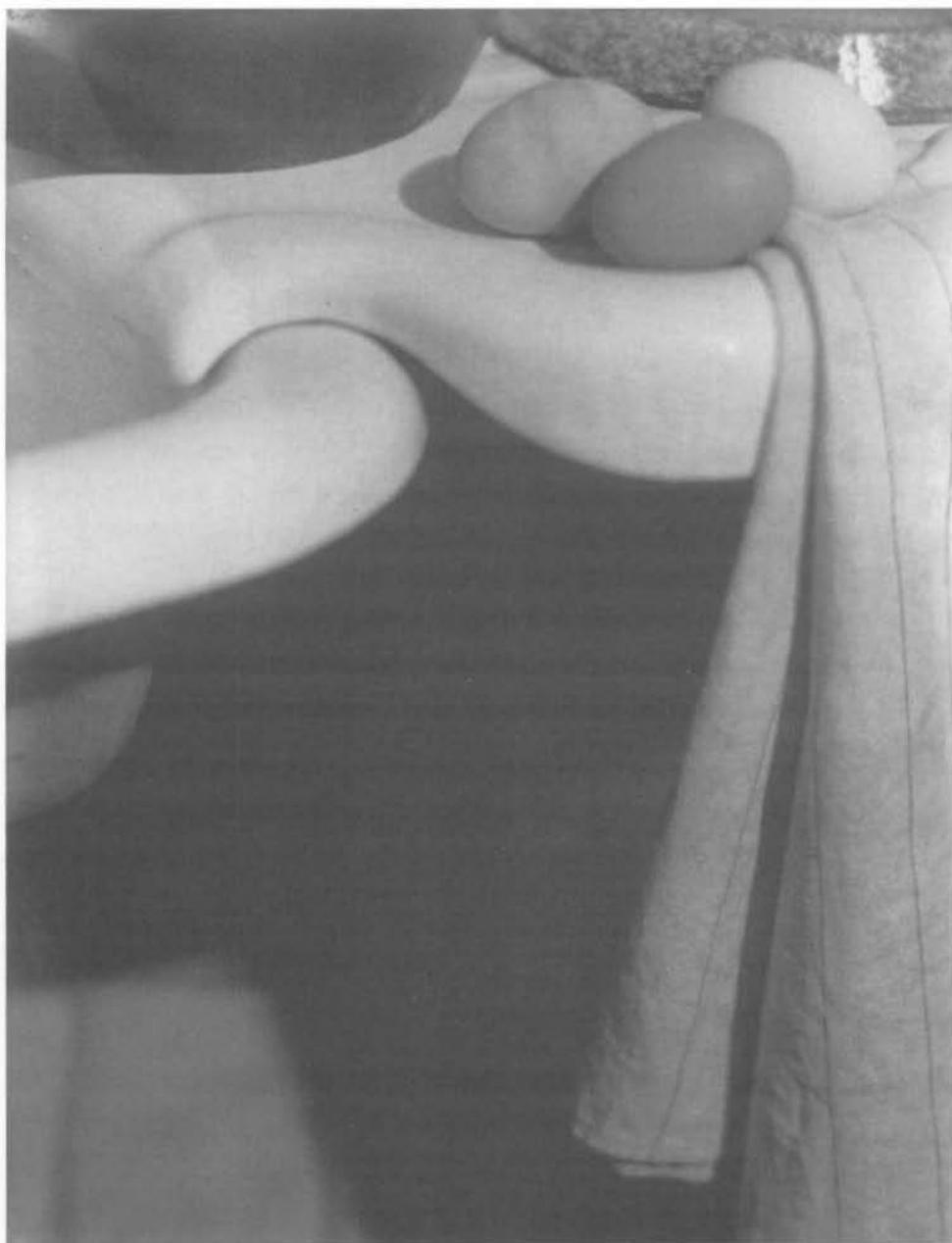


fig.10 Margaret Watkins, *Domestic Symphony*, 1919, palladium print, 21 x 16 cm, National Gallery of Canada. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada, 20,627)

Canadians drew from what had already been institutionalized through the camera club and international salon circuits. Even if there were Canadian photographers who wanted to dissociate their aims from the nationalist agenda, no one here advanced the distinction between "contributions to art and contributions to national identity" as had the artist David Milne.³⁵

Canadian painters whose expertise was called upon in annual *Camera Club* and *International Salon* juries were artists who favoured naturalism in their own work.³⁶ One of the invited jurors for the *Second Canadian International Salon of Photographic Art* in 1935 was the conservative critic and photographer Frank Roy Fraprie, who had criticized Stieglitz for showing "more aggressive forms of modern art" at '291.'³⁷ Modernist photography was given a more respectful reception by Mexico's nationalist painters; "los tres grandes," were sufficiently impressed by the photographs of Edward Weston and later Manuel Álvarez Bravo to take the medium seriously as a way of furthering their own visions (as in the case of David Alfaro Siqueiros), or participating in photography juries as did Diego Rivera. In contrast, Canadian photography went virtually unnoticed by the Group of Seven.³⁸ The result was that Canadian photographers remained marginalized and had a negligible impact on the art community as a whole.

ANN THOMAS

Curator

Photographs Collection

National Gallery of Canada

Notes

1 Frederick R. KARL, *Modern and Modernism: The Sovereignty of the Artist 1885-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1988), xi.

2 For a discussion of the issues, see Dona Beth SCHWARTZ, "Camera Clubs and Fine Art Photography: Distinguishing between Art and Amateur Activity" (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1983).

3 The difference between the camera club practitioners and the Pictorialist photographers is frequently a question of nuances of treatment. Many of the same subjects were adopted by photographers of the Photo-Secession and the Pictorialist movement but rendered in a more generalized style.

4 Lilly A. KOLTUN, "Art Ascendant, 1900-1914," in *Private Realms of Light: Amateur Photography in Canada 1839-1940*, ed. L.A.Koltun (Markham, Ont.: Fitzhenry & Whiteside/Public Archives of Canada, 1984), 38.

5 These activities, their impact and the role of Canadian photographer Sidney Carter (1880-1956) have been well chronicled by David Calvin STRONG in both his 1994 Master's Thesis,

Concordia University, "Sidney Carter (1880-1956) and the Politics of Pictorialism" and in "Photography into Art: Sidney Carter's Contribution to Pictorialism," *The Journal of Canadian Art History* XV11, no.2 (1996): 6-27.

6 KOLTUN, "Art Ascendant, 1900-1914," 44.

7 Harold MORTIMER-LAMB, "Pictorial Photography in Canada," *Photograms of the Year*, 1912, 7.

8 David Calvin STRONG, "Sidney Carter (1880-1956) and the Politics of Pictorialism," 119.

9 KOLTUN, "Art Ascendant, 1900-1914," 48.

10 *Ibid.*, 46.

11 John PULTZ and Catherine B. SCALLEN, *Cubism and American Photography, 1910-1930* (Williamstown: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1981), 1.

12 David Milne living in New York at the time, described his experience of '291': "In those little rooms, under the skylights, we met Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Matisse, Picasso, Brancusi. For the first time we saw courage and imagination bare, not sweetened by sentiment and smothered in technical skill. We were fortunate in seeing it unfolded slowly, in unpretentious surroundings..." in John O'BRIAN, *David Milne and the Modern Tradition of Painting* (Toronto: The Coach House Press, 1983), 15.

13 Alvin Langdon COBURN, "The Future of Pictorial Photography," *Photograms of the Year*, 1916, 24.

14 I would like to acknowledge Bruce Russell for furnishing the date of this work.

15 Several monographic studies have been published over the course of the past twenty years on Canadian photographers working during the Pictorialist period. Those who have not been mentioned here are: Maia-Mari SUTNIK, *E. Haanel Cassidy* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1981); Michael BELL, *Pictorial Incidents: The Photography of William Gordon Shields* (Kingston, Ont.: Agnes Etherington Gallery/Queen's University, 1989); and Maia-Mari SUTNIK, *Photographs by Charles Macnamara and M.O. Hammond: Pictorial Expressions in Landscape and Portrait* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1989).

16 MORTIMER-LAMB, *Photograms of the Year*, 1914, 23.

17 *Ibid.*

18 *Ibid.*, 5.

19 MORTIMER-LAMB, *Photograms of the Year*, 1913, 34.

20 Arthur S. GOSS, "Pictorial Photography in Canada," *Photograms of the Year*, 1920, cited in Andrew C. RODGER "So Few Earnest Workers: 1914-1930," *Private Realms of Light*, ed. L.A. Koltun, 16.

21 MORTIMER-LAMB, *Photograms of the Year*, 1900, 20.

22 Stanley HARROD, "Canadian Letter," *The Gallery*, 15 Sept. 1938, cited in Joan SCHWARTZ, "Salon Crescendo," *Private Realms of Light*, ed. L.A. Koltun, 121.

23 RODGER, "So Few Earnest Workers," 81. "This very fact makes all the difference, because in England there is a great wealth of what one might term 'pretty bits'; just, in fact, the circumscribed and complete bits of landscape which make most satisfactory pictorial compositions. In Canada, on the other hand, there is a great lack of the 'pretty bits'; there are grandeur, vastness, and expansive views which are entrancing to the eye, but which do not make effective compositions when reduced to the confines of a print of any reasonable size."

- 24 SCHWARTZ, "Salon Crescendo," 103.
- 25 F.J. MORTIMER, "The Year's Work," *Photograms of the Year*, 1922, 3.
- 26 RODGER, "So Few Earnest Workers," 87.
- 27 In 1926 Vanderpant established a photography studio and an art gallery in Vancouver. See Sandra SHAUL, *The Modern Image: Cubism and the Realist Tradition* (Edmonton: The Edmonton Art Gallery, 1981), 37.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 38.
- 29 Vanderpant enjoyed a friendship with influential American photographer Edward Weston. In September 1931, he exhibited photographs by Weston and Imogen Cunningham. Included in the works by Weston were examples of his seminal early Modernist photographs from 1922 showing industrial subject matter. See Charles C. HILL, *John Vanderpant: Photographs* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1976), 23 as well as for further discussion of the correspondence between the two photographers. For an indepth discussion on Vanderpant and Modernism, see Melissa K. ROMBOULT, "John Vanderpant: A Modernist Vision of Canada," *History of Photography* 20, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 129-37.
- 30 Joseph MULHOLLAND, "A Life in Photographs," *The Life & Photographic Work of Margaret Watkins* (Glasgow: Street Level Gallery & Workshop, 1994), n.p.
- 31 Lori PAULI, "A Few Hellers: Women at the Clarence H. White School of Photography," *The Life & Photographic Work of Margaret Watkins* (Glasgow: Street Level Gallery & Workshop, 1994), n.p.
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 See L.R. PFAFF, "Lawren Harris and the International Exhibition of Modern Art: Rectification to the Toronto Catalogue (1927) and Some Critical Comments," Art Gallery of Ontario, in "Appendix B: Catalogue section of printed Toronto Catalogue of Exhibition, with annotations," *Racar* X1, nos.1-2 (1984): 85-90, for a discussion of the work displayed at the Art Gallery of Toronto.
- 34 Not that any of the European or American Modernist photographers would have been expected to participate in *Salons* which were outdated by about two decades by this time, but it is informative that they did not include any photographs by Man Ray, Moholy-Nagy, or Heartfield, nor did they include any work by Stieglitz, Steichen, Weston or Strand. Possibly the jurors shared Weston's and Stieglitz's negative opinion of Man Ray and Moholy-Nagy.
- 35 O'BRIAN, *David Milne and the Modern Tradition of Painting*, 15.
- 36 Among the Canadian painters who participated in camera club juries were: Charles MacDonald Manley, George Agnew Reid and J.C. Forbes. Leonard Hutchison helped select the prints for the *6th Canadian International Salon of Photographic Arts* in 1939. J.W. Beatty, was an honorary member of the Toronto Camera Club from the teens. Among the artists who gave talks to Camera Clubs were George Reid, Frederick S. Challener, Owen Staples, F.S. Haines, and Charles Goldhamer. See Peter ROBINSON, "The New Amateur 1885-1900," in *Private Realms of Light*, ed. L.A. Koltun, 29; and Joan SCHWARTZ, *Private Realms of Light*, 112, note 56.
- 37 Frank Roy FRAPRIE, "Pictorial Photography in the United States," *Photograms of the Year*, 1912, 34.
- 38 For more information on the Group of Seven's use of photography see Dennis REID, *Photographs by Tom Thomson* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada Gallery Bulletin, no.16, 1970).

ENTRE L'ANGLE ET LA COURBE

Le modernisme dans la photographie canadienne

Comme le pictorialisme, la photographie moderniste était un mouvement. Même si des similitudes d'expression suggèrent un vocabulaire international, les racines de l'art de la photographie moderniste, dans tous les pays où il s'est développé, diffèrent cependant considérablement. En Europe, aux États-Unis, en Russie et au Mexique, le modernisme en photographie a résulté de circonstances culturelles diverses et spécifiques et n'a pas suivi une tracé évolutionniste régulier.

Même si elle provenait de différentes origines culturelles, la photographie moderniste aux États-Unis et en Europe était également influencée par le désir de montrer la synchronicité avec le présent en explorant de nouvelles idées, de nouveaux sujets et de nouvelles techniques de photographie et de se définir par opposition à l'esthétique romantique et floue du pictorialisme qui, dans les années vingt, avait dégénéré en maniérisme. Au Mexique et en Russie, cet élan pour se libérer des chaînes du passé était intensifié par l'expérience de la révolution politique.

L'article soulève la question des rapports entre la photographie canadienne des années vingt et trente et les autres techniques photographiques modernistes. La photographie canadienne se rapprochait-elle davantage d'un modèle américain plus classique ou du modèle européen plus expérimental? Montrait-elle quelque caractéristique particulière? Et y a-t-il réellement eu des photographes canadiens dont l'œuvre pourrait être qualifiée de moderniste et qui auraient été principalement intéressés à «reformuler le langage de leur art»?

Les trois influences qui ont marqué la direction que la photographie canadienne devait prendre dans les années vingt et trente ont été le pictorialisme, le nationalisme et la peinture canadienne. Le pictorialisme, même dans la vigueur de ses débuts, était un mouvement conservateur qui imitait le pittoresque de la peinture de plein air du XIX^e siècle et les aspects gestuels des techniques traditionnelles de gravure, la lithographie et l'eau-forte. Il a toutefois réussi à faire reconnaître la photographie comme un art. Au Canada, ses liens avec le mouvement pictorialiste américain et européen ont été forgés par Sidney Carter (1880-1956) qui désirait créer un environnement favorable à l'exposition et à la critique réfléchie d'œuvres photographiques, selon le modèle développé par Alfred Stieglitz aux États-Unis. Carter a organisé deux grandes expositions afin d'intégrer la photographie canadienne au mouvement pictorialiste international: le premier *Salon* du Toronto Camera Club de 1903, où trente épreuves de la collection de prêts de la Photo-Secession de New York étaient exposées à côté d'œuvres des membres, et l'exposition pictorialiste internationale de novembre 1907

à la Art Association of Montreal. Bien que les deux expositions aient été accueillies avec une certaine résistance par divers secteurs de la communauté, le pictorialisme allait devenir de plus en plus courant au Canada. Grâce à l'omniprésence de camera clubs, aux États-Unis et au Canada, le pictorialisme avait évolué, dans les années vingt, en deux courants principaux: l'un, hybride plus intéressant de sujets pictorialistes et de formes modernistes anguleuses et l'autre, relevant d'un maniérisme qui embrassait des sujets exotiques et sentimentaux et employait un vocabulaire de contours flous et d'effets d'atmosphère. Tout comme, à l'intérieur du mouvement pictorialiste américain, certains éléments résistaient au modernisme, au Canada, ces mêmes éléments conservateurs tendaient à repousser toute tentative de revitaliser le vocabulaire de l'expression. L'absence, au Canada, de lieu d'exposition et de débats sur la photographie, en dehors du réseau des camera clubs plus intéressés à établir et observer des règles qu'à jeter un regard neuf sur le monde et sa représentation visuelle, restreignait davantage la possibilité de changement à l'intérieur du mouvement pictorialiste lui-même et le développement d'un mouvement moderniste. C'est principalement par les écrits du photographe et peintre canadien Harold Mortimer-Lamb (1872-1970), correspondant auprès de la publication britannique annuelle *Photograms of the Year*, que l'on est renseigné sur l'état de la photographie au Canada depuis le début du siècle jusqu'au milieu des années vingt.

La relation entre peintres et photographes a toujours été un sujet fécond. Dès 1907, à l'occasion de l'exposition de photographie pictorialiste à Montréal, les artistes canadiens ont influencé la manière dont la photographie devait être reçue en tant que forme d'art. Prenant ombrage de ce que Maurice Maeterlinck parlait de la photographie comme d'une forme d'art, dans l'essai qui accompagnait le catalogue, ils persuadèrent le secrétaire de l'Association, John Bethune Abbott, de cacher à la vue du public les pages qui contenaient cette déclaration. Suivant une pratique en vigueur dans nombre d'autres pays, les peintres canadiens, entre autres Charles MacDonald Manley, George Agnew Reid et J.C. Forbes, étaient souvent sollicités pour faire partie de jurys de clubs de photographie ou pour conseiller la sélection d'épreuves pour les salons internationaux de photographie. Cela a permis aux artistes d'exercer une influence considérable sur la direction que devait prendre le médium et il s'agissait souvent de peintres qui ne favorisaient pas le naturalisme dans leurs propres œuvres. De même, un des membres du *Second Canadian International Salon of Photographic Art*, en 1935, était le critique et photographe traditionaliste Frank Roy Fraprie, qui avait reproché à Stieglitz de montrer «des formes plus agressives d'art moderne» à sa galerie 291.

Ainsi, alors que des pays comme le Mexique, la Russie, les États-Unis et l'Allemagne développaient une école moderniste de photographie, les photographes canadiens soumettaient leur art à l'autorité d'artistes travaillant dans un autre médium et subissaient aussi l'emprise de l'esthétique du Camera Club. De plus, une présence nouvelle et influente, le Groupe des Sept, dictait à l'opinion canadienne ce

que l'art devait ou ne devait pas être, aussi bien au plan formel qu'au plan intellectuel. En liant la recherche d'une identité nationale à la représentation du paysage canadien, exécuté dans un style fortement gestuel et pictural, le Groupe des Sept fixa de nouvelles normes auxquelles les photographes canadiens se référaient continuellement et qu'ils s'efforçaient d'émuler, à partir de 1917 environ. Comme il fallait s'y attendre, les photographes étaient plutôt frustrés que satisfaits dans leurs efforts pour atteindre le même degré d'individualisme original et robuste que l'on retrouvait dans les tableaux de leurs compatriotes. Cela n'a rien d'étonnant, vu que les tendances délibérément universalistes du mouvement pictorialiste, aussi bien d'ailleurs que du mouvement moderniste, s'opposaient à toute recherche de spécificité. L'influence exercée sur les photographes par les camera clubs et la promotion d'un style nationaliste de photographie est démontrée par le fait que les deux *Rayogrammes* de Man Ray, exposés avec son tableau *Arc de Triomphe* lors de l'*Exposition internationale d'art moderne* organisée par la Société Anonyme et montrés à la Art Gallery of Toronto en avril 1927, ont été complètement ignorés, sauf pour une mention au catalogue.

Les photographes canadiens qui introduisirent dans leurs photographies un vocabulaire formel nouveau et typiquement moderniste comportant des perspectives aux angles prononcés, des vues de dos des sujets, des formes et motifs géométriques ainsi que de nets contrastes d'ombre et de lumière, modifièrent la radicalité potentielle de leurs œuvres en continuant d'utiliser des éléments anecdotiques et pittoresques de l'esthétique des camera clubs. Cela se manifestait ou bien par l'inclusion d'un titre narratif ou bien par l'adoucissement ou l'atténuation de l'esthétique moderniste pour la faire paraître moins radicale. Des photographies comme *Idle Moments* de John Kirkland Hodges, 1926, *Pool No. 1*, de Johan Helders, vers 1925, *Gas Tanks* de Brodie Whitelaw, vers 1928, *Collars* de Bruce Metcalfe, 1927, *Strength* de John Vanderpant, n.d., démontrent qu'il y avait chez les photographes canadiens d'importants praticiens du style hybride de photographie pictorialiste et moderniste. L'ambiguïté d'intention que nous voyons dans leurs œuvres n'était pas confinée aux photographes canadiens travaillant exclusivement en milieu canadien, mais elle marquait également l'œuvre d'autres photographes qui demeuraient affiliés au mouvement pictorialiste à l'extérieur de Canada, y compris la Canadienne Margaret Watkins (1884-1969), originaire d'Hamilton, qui combinait les vocabulaires pictorialiste et moderniste avec une remarquable élégance, comme en témoigne *Domestic Symphony*, 1919. Il y avait, dans les années vingt et trente, des photographes canadiens qui cherchaient à «reformuler le langage de leur art», mais qui n'étaient prêts à le faire que dans la mesure où ils pouvaient demeurer à l'intérieur des traditions conceptuelles et formelles du pictorialisme.

Traduction: Élise Bonnette

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CANADIAN PAINTINGS

COATS OF ARMS OF CANADA AND THE PROVINCES



Sampson- Matthews, *Canadian Paintings*, catalogue cover, c. 1963, Toronto Public Library, Fine Art Reference Section. (Photo: Jeff Nolte)

SAMPSON-MATTHEWS AND THE NGC

The Post-War Years

In Canada, the concept of the land and the visual representation of the landscape have played a critical role in realizing what Benedict Anderson has termed the “imagined community” and it underpins the Canadian sense of nationalism.¹ In a country with relatively few public art galleries and limited access to original works of art, surrogate images in the form of reproductions have played a critical role. They work across time and space and transcending regional difference to create a “Canadian” vision of the land. In this discussion of the National Gallery/Sampson-Matthews silkscreen project, I pick up on my earlier argument that our collective sense of what is “Canadian” in Canadian art and the positioning of the land (and more particularly of the wilderness aesthetic) as the key to Canadian identity can be traced to the Sampson-Matthews project and, more especially, to the post-war phase of that project.²

This essay builds on the work discussed in my two previous articles: “Establishing the Canon” (1995) described an earlier, little-known reproduction program originated by the National Gallery of Canada in 1928, which disseminated hundreds of thousands of lithographic prints to schools and homes throughout the country. “Envisioning Nation: Nationhood and Identity and the Sampson-Matthews Silkscreen Prints: The Wartime Prints” (1998) examined the foundation of the Sampson-Matthews project, the Gallery’s second major reproduction project.³ Whereas “Envisioning Nation” looked at the development and production of the 36 wartime silkscreens, this current article considers the post-1945 schools program, the last (post-National Gallery) commercial program, and over 80 images associated with the Sampson-Matthews project in the period following the Second World War (see Appendix A). I look at the way in which the wartime project began with the intention of providing a contemporary focus on the Canadian experience and proposed a diverse rather than a homogeneous vision of Canadian identity with a new and more broadly representative paradigm. I also examine how, despite this intention, the project came to reaffirm the position of the wilderness and the Group of Seven, along with its followers, as the touchstones of Canadian art and identity for generations of young Canadians. In the two decades following the war, these widely disseminated, large, attractive and reasonably priced Sampson-Matthews images seemed to confirm the public belief that the expression of national identity through landscape art was both natural and inevitable.

In an attempt to understand how the project shaped the public understanding of Canadian art and identity, this text examines the individual works which comprised the series and the manner in which they were commissioned and disseminated. In analyzing the competing notions of art that defined the project over its history, I trace its evolution from a national program designed to allow artists from across the country to benefit from the advantages of working in silkscreen, to a narrowly-focussed, commercialized venture. Problematizing the "given" of the association between nationalism and landscape already in place through the earlier reproduction program, I examine the silkscreen project. It was intended to be broadly representative of the regional experience in Canada and to reflect the domestic landscape as well as the wilderness, but the project inscribed itself politically and symbolically into the national consciousness primarily through the representation of the wilderness aesthetic. As well, the article considers several little-known independent silkscreen projects which were associated with the Sampson-Matthews prints, such as the Federation of Canadian Artists' post-war silkscreen project and three series of prints published by the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association.

The Post-War Project

By January of 1945 the National Gallery of Canada's endeavour to supply prints to the armed forces was concluded; requests from the Navy, Army, Air Force and Auxiliary Services had been fully answered. Silkscreen prints had been sent to government offices throughout the world and thousands of works had been created especially for use in schools. In all, thirty artists had participated, creating 36 different subjects of which 29 were painted specifically for the project and seven were adapted from paintings in the permanent collections of the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Toronto and Hart House.

Sampson-Matthews was naturally anxious to ensure the continuation of a project that had created business and employment for the firm. Urging the National Gallery to set up a revolving fund to cover the costs of new silkscreens and to vigorously promote sales to schools, Charles A.G. Matthews, the company's director, wrote that his firm had built special equipment for silkscreen production and that he was anxious to make continued use of it "without letup."⁴ To encourage the Gallery's ongoing participation, Matthews pointed out that the smaller-size works (on which the firm had already begun production) could be self-supporting and show a profit even if the Gallery were to give military hospitals half of the quantities that had been ordered. The key, he reiterated, was to "get ... the school project under way."⁵ Prints were distributed to veterans' hospitals and exhibitions circulated to public institutions across the country, promoting interest and sales.⁶ At the same time, Sampson-Matthews was marketing the prints directly to the public. Schools, however, remained the principal marketing target.⁷

As the focus shifted to work for schools, so the size of the prints changed. In 1944 the Gallery had listed twenty-nine large format (30" x 40") silkscreens in its catalogue of "Reproductions on Sale and Lending Collections."⁸ On 28 February 1945 Matthews wrote to the Director H. O. McCurry that the company had ceased further work in the large size and was focussing on the smaller prints, also noting that the print by James Wilson Morrice, worked better in this size than either of the earlier large format runs. By August 1945 small size editions of L.A.C. Panton's *Silver Stream*, Leonard Brooks' *Halifax Harbour*, Morrice's *Quebec Ferry*, Albert Robinson's *Return from Easter Mass* and Thoreau MacDonald's *Winter Morning* were run in quantities of approximately a thousand. By May, however, Sampson-Matthews was back to printing editions in the large size and proposing a new run of 600 each of the prints by Charles Comfort, Arthur Lismer, Fred Haines, J.W.G. Macdonald, Franklin Carmichael, W.J. Phillips, and Morrice, as well as Panton's *Windswept*.

Anxious to generate business, Matthews' correspondence with the National Gallery regularly concerned the need for increased awareness of the prints in schools and the firm's intention to take an active role, along with the National Gallery, in direct promotion to make sure that this occurred.⁹ By March 1946, the Gallery was actively engaged in "endeavouring to make [the] school reproductions more widely known throughout the Dominion" — an approach that would make these prints central to the formation of Canadian identity and a shared vision of the Canadian experience. To enhance its marketing efforts, the Gallery arranged speaking engagements at education conferences and advertised in educational publications.¹⁰

In the typescript introduction of an illustrated brochure to be titled "Silkscreen Prints from Designs by Canadian Artists" (c.1946), the National Gallery described the wartime project. Despite the fact that a number of images had recently been reprinted for schools, the text implied that the works were in short supply, noting that the "original war aims of the series having now been accomplished, the National Gallery has secured a limited quantity of each print for distribution outside the armed forces. These prints are available for purchase by schools and other institutions, as well as by individuals."¹¹ The brochure described twenty-nine of the Sampson-Matthews images "representing typical aspects of Canada from coast to coast."¹² The catalogue descriptions of the works appear to have been based on the wartime "descriptive cards." To heighten consciousness of the project in the years immediately following the War, exhibitions of the prints were circulated to libraries and galleries across Canada.¹³

Highlighting the broad distribution of the wartime prints and their potential as a tool for cultural diplomacy, the Gallery's 1944-45 *Annual Report* stated: "The prints are to be found in almost every quarter of the Allied World. It is difficult to overemphasize the value of this publicity for Canada."¹⁴ Understanding the role of the prints as cultural ambassadors representing Canada abroad, the

Gallery continued to promote them internationally. In 1946 an exhibition was circulated in the United States; another was sent to a youth centre in Vienna operated by the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada.¹⁵ The Gallery's 1947-48 *Annual Report* described the "[i]nternational recognition of the leading role played by the Canadian silk screen prints in art education [achieved] when a group of the prints, sent to Mexico City as part of the Museum exhibition, was transferred to Paris for permanent reference at UNESCO's request."¹⁶

There was also a strong commercial thrust in the post-war years. In 1947, A.Y. Jackson suggested marketing the prints to the CPR and CNR, each of which had its own rather limited (according to Jackson), reproduction series.¹⁷ The most important sale, however, was to the Bank of Montreal as the Gallery's 1947-48 *Annual Report* noted: "One bank has made a large purchase of these [silkscreen] prints from the National Gallery for display in all of its branches throughout the country and abroad."¹⁸ Despite the Gallery's commitment to the project, it was two years before any new subjects were added to the series.¹⁹ Only in January 1948 did the Gallery's Trustees authorize payment of \$50.00 to the artists for editions of the silkscreen reproductions issued by the Gallery for general sale.²⁰ For example, although discussion regarding the reproduction of Emily Carr's *White Church* (in Charles Band's collection) occurred in late 1945 and the original painting was at the Gallery for reproduction purposes two years later; the first mention of *White Church* being available for sale is June 1948.²¹

The Federation Silkscreen Project

One reason for the Gallery's delay in expanding the silkscreen project may have been that, even before the War had ended, it foresaw the program being replaced by a scheme proposed by the Federation of Canadian Artists. McCurry and Jackson believed that a Federation-driven program would overcome the commercial bias they had deplored in the wartime project. Those committed to the scheme believed that the project would prove the value of the silkscreen process as an important new technique for the creation and dissemination of contemporary art prints and provide a new source of income for Canadian artists. In what Dennis Reid would later describe as an "abortive" project, the Federation undertook a "national" plan, commissioning its members to create silkscreen designs for sale and possibly for rental purposes.²²

McCurry, certainly encouraged by Jackson, may have been the key figure in bringing this project to fruition. In early 1944 he wrote to Lawren Harris, "I am ... interested in the scheme for getting the Canadian artists at work on silkscreen prints along the lines developed under the W.P.A."²³ He went on to describe the wonderful quality of the "exciting exhibition" of American silkscreens from the Museum of Modern Art, "New American Silk Screen Colour Prints," which the National Gallery had hosted in January 1944, and to extol the promise that fine

art prints held for the future.²⁴ Having circulated the exhibition to the Art Association of Montreal, McCurry proposed to Harris: "I would like to have it shown in every centre where we can get a group of artists together to study it and to realize its possibilities in making Canadian art available to all the people. I would be willing to buy a few sets of equipment which could be placed in such centres as perhaps the art schools in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto and other large cities and allow any artists of standing to use the apparatus." He also remarked that "the Museum of Modern Art exhibition demonstrates that ... in good hands ... the results [of the silkscreen process] bear very little relation to the commercial products we have turned out for the forces." He concluded, "I know that the National Gallery and the Federation can co-operate to great purpose in the days that are ahead."²⁵

At McCurry's urging the American silkscreen exhibition toured Canada for almost a full year, travelling from Ottawa and Montréal to Toronto, a Maritime tour (booked by the Saint John Art Club), Vancouver and Winnipeg. In a proselytizing mood, McCurry wrote to Jack Humphrey, who had contributed his *Grand Manan* design to the wartime project: "I hope you will insist on having the silk screen exhibition and that you and some of the Saint John artists will be interested in trying this medium. The best way, I am sure, is for the artist himself to do the printing but it would be quite practicable, I think, to have someone else do it under the artist's direct supervision."²⁶ McCurry must have been pleased by the report that, after seeing the exhibition, Maritime artists were "planning to try out the process and [had] ... spent considerable time in the study of the various techniques."²⁷ Prints from the exhibition were ordered from the New York-based Silk Screen Group by individuals across Canada.²⁸ So impressed were members of the Québec region of the Federation of Canadian Artists, who had viewed the exhibition and held a panel discussion on the silkscreen technique, that they expressed the desire "to draw the attention of all members of the F.C.A., all other artists and the public throughout Canada to the exhibition and, generally, to assist in publicizing it."²⁹

On 16 February 1944, McCurry wrote to Arthur Lismer at the Art Association of Montreal looking for backing when he went to the Gallery's Board to discuss the scheme for funding silkscreen centres across the country: "I am very definitely interested in making this process more widely known in Canada and encouraging Canadian artists to use it. That was ... one of the primary reasons the National Gallery brought the [MOMA] exhibition to the Canada and has arranged its tour. I have not yet had the opportunity of discussing with the Trustees my suggestion that equipment be purchased by the National Gallery and placed in strategic centres such as the Art Association. ... If you approve of this idea and I gather that you do, you might be willing to write me definitely requesting action." That same day Lismer wrote, "Is there a chance that we could set up an outfit in our

schools and get artists to come in and work at it? The Federation is definitely interested." During the war years, however, it proved impossible to obtain a quorum of the Gallery's Board. Transactions were approved by the Chair and there is no evidence that McCurry's proposal was ever formally presented to the Trustees.³⁰

In a draft for "Reconstruction in the Arts," the Federation of Canadian Artists' post-war brief to the federal government Committee on Reconstruction, Lawren Harris outlined the "National Gallery plan and rental scheme."³¹ Jackson strongly endorsed the Federation's program, which reflected his own commitment to the potential of the silkscreen.³² The "Silk screen prints plan" included a partnership of the Federation, the National Gallery and Sampson-Matthews; all artists would be eligible to participate. Profits were to be allocated to artists according to the number and size of prints sold. The mass production this scheme offered differed from the traditional artists' prints which McCurry noted had much more limited production and sale. The plan was for "each region to get endorsement of the plan from various art, music associations & clubs, service clubs, Canadian clubs, teachers associations, trade unions etc. in its region — giving number of members in its region."³³ Convinced by the promise of both income and audiences (and likely counting on McCurry's offer to buy the equipment), the Federation (echoing McCurry), proposed the establishment of silk screen production facilities in centres across Canada which would be available to any artist wishing to work in this medium. Harris put up the money to get the Federation project going.

In the end, the vision of centres for the production of original silkscreens throughout the country did not materialize; in the Federation's final scheme the prints were not produced locally or even regionally. Rather, Toronto-based Sampson-Matthews was responsible for both the production and marketing and it was there that decisions on what would be printed were taken. It was intended, however, that the project would be managed by the Federation which would retain the profits on sales made through its offices and agents across the country.

Offered the option of participating as a partner in the scheme or simply purchasing work for resale, the National Gallery opted for the latter.³⁴ Sensing potential problems even before the project was fully underway, Jackson warned McCurry against "getting loaded down with things which will not sell." He advised the Gallery to take an arm's length position, observing that this would leave it "free to buy what prints" and as many as it wished. The Gallery did, however, agree to act as a purchaser and distributor of the silkscreens.

Production of the Federation prints (all employing the smaller format of the earlier silkscreen project) began in November 1945. Jackson seems to have thrown himself into the project, donating a design based on Thomson's *Joe Creek* to help finance the program and proposing production of a design by his niece, Naomi Jackson, of [*Winter*] *Ste. Adele*.³⁵ At the same time Sampson-Matthews was beginning work on Thoreau Macdonald's *Country Road*. By spring of 1946 Sampson-

Matthews was redoing the design for Bertram Brooker's *Laurentian Village* (originally proposed for the wartime project) in reduced size for the Federation. Dorothy Williams' *Indian Village* was being printed and Rody Kenny Courtice's *White Calf* was under consideration.³⁶ Harris contributed *Algoma Lake* and *Island, Georgian Bay* and Jackson, *Smart River*.³⁷ On 5 June 1946 a reassured Harris wrote to McCurry, "Alec, Cass and I have had meetings about silk screen prints and now feel that the project has every chance of success." (figs.1 and 2)

In his letter, Harris envisioned a large private-sector market where the general public would purchase the prints for personal use or as gifts. Calculating potential sales, Jackson suggested that the largest market would be Ontario (70%), with approximately 20% of sales in the West and the rest in Quebec and the Maritimes. Jackson and Harris, on behalf of the Federation, debated the appropriate selling price of the silkscreens. Anxious to expedite sales, Harris wanted to retail them for \$3.50; Jackson thought \$4.50 more appropriate, pointing out that Harris's proposal offered no allowance for overhead expenses.³⁸ The proposed 20% educational reduction would further reduce the Federation's income and its margin for profit. Harris argued that since the large wartime prints had sold for \$5.00, the smaller Federation prints should retail for a proportionately reduced price. The debate between Harris and "the Rev. Dr. Jackson" (as Harris called him) was ongoing and Harry McCurry became the middleman in correspondence on the issue.³⁹ Jackson also argued that with the reduced stock of the large wartime prints on hand, private sales of those prints should be curtailed and the remainder reserved for schools. Believing that the production of the wartime prints was essentially complete, he observed that "in a year or two, any schools will regret not having purchased them."⁴⁰ McCurry offered to prepare statistics on the sales of wartime prints, suggesting that the information would have an "important bearing on the Federation's programme and will be some guide as to what can be expected."⁴¹

By 1947 the Federation had established a distribution system for both the National Gallery and the Federation prints through its branches as well as a number of public and private art galleries and artists' associations across the country.⁴² The Federation was responsible for all records, invoicing of its prints etc, and Sampson-Matthews was in charge of distribution on the Federation's behalf. The Gallery distributed Federation prints which it had purchased at a wholesale price and included them in an illustrated publication of reproductions produced in collaboration with the Department of External Affairs in late 1948 for distribution to Canadian missions abroad. McCurry also offered to include an insert indicating the locations at which the prints could be obtained in the National Gallery catalogue of reproductions. The Bank of Montreal also purchased the Federation's silkscreens and presented the prints in the post-war exhibitions at its branches across the country.⁴³

The 1948 National Gallery publication offers evidence that the original nine prints were the only ones the Federation actually produced. Four images selected

FEDERATION OF CANADIAN ARTISTS SERIES - (Size 20" x 27")



Bertram Brooker, *Laurentian Village*
Green, red, blue



Rody Kenny Courtice, *White Calf*
Light and dull reds, green



Lawren S. Harris, *Algoma Lake*
Light browns, green, yellow



Lawren S. Harris, *Island, Georgian Bay*
Light green, blue, yellow



A.Y. Jackson, *Smart River*
Blue, grey, black, yellow



Naomi Jackson, *Ste. Adèle*
Light and dark greys, dull red

FEDERATION OF CANADIAN ARTISTS SERIES - (Size 20" x 27")



Thoreau Macdonald, *Country Road*
Grey, white, blue



Tom Thomson, *Joe Creek*
Blue, red, grey



Dorothy Williams, *Indian Village*
Warm grey, white, blue

for reproduction followed the Ontario wilderness formula. Each was the work of Jackson or Harris (including Jackson's translation of Thomson's *Joe Creek*) — both of whom had made a personal commitment to the project. The distinguishing feature of each of the others, three of which represented the typology of the pastoral ideal, was their decorative, Christmas-card prettiness. As Jackson later summarized it, "the whole thousand members turned in about twenty designs, most of them little water or oil paintings that had nothing to do with silkscreen and as for sales, I doubt if more than 15 members made any effort to sell them."⁴⁴

In this letter to McCurry he also wrote: "I don't think the Federation can make it go. ... It is no use the Federation making any more [prints] and yet they should not be dropped. There is nothing else as good or as practical on the market. Wherever they are used people are enthusiastic about them and the schools — Canada could use fifty thousand of them." Jackson also asked whether the Gallery could "help get the Federation out of the hole they are in as a result of their silk screen venture." On 1 February 1951, Jackson would report to McCurry that though the Federation had been able through the project to pay off all their debts and to make a "good profit," it had never paid the artists for their designs. Some years later the Gallery, unhappy with the state of the Sampson-Matthews program, would again look at the development of projects intended to encourage Canadian artists to create original works for the silkscreen medium, this time under its own auspices. In 1953, the Gallery's trustees discussed a proposal for a country-wide competition for new designs for silkscreens. Lawren Harris, then a Board member, supported the project (despite the Federation experience) with the caveat that the designs submitted had to be original. Despite extended discussions and strong support for the proposal from Robert Hubbard, Curator of Canadian Art, it never came to fruition.⁴⁵

The Canadian Pulp and Paper Prints

In 1946 Rielle Thomson, President of the Pulp and Paper Association of Canada, commissioned ten paintings by Canadian artists similar in size to the smaller Sampson-Matthews silkscreen prints. A year later he had Sampson-Matthews reproduce the paintings as prints.⁴⁶ It may have been Matthews who suggested working in the same format as the small wartime prints. With an eye to broader dissemination of the images which carried a strong promotional message for the pulp and paper industry, Sampson-Matthews undertook to offer a portion of the initial print run to the National Gallery at a very low price.⁴⁷

Rather than the unspoiled wilderness landscapes that dominated the wartime project and remained central to the formation of the Canadian aesthetic, this first Pulp and Paper series depicted the experience of the natural world mediated by the resource, industrial and transportation technologies. Representing men actively engaged in various aspects of life in forestry, the images portrayed mastery over the

country's abundant natural resources. The familiar pictorial convention of wilderness was adapted to project the economic value of presumably unlimited resources in Thoreau MacDonald's *The Forest*, Cloutier's *Woods Work*, Sydney Hallam's *Log Driving*, Casson's *Mill Village*, Comfort's *Bunkhouse Scene*, Will Ogilvie's *Paper Making*, Bieler's *Pulp Making*, Jackson's *Paperboard Making*, Harris's *West Coast Mill* and Franklin Arbuckle's *Shipping Paper*.

Published in book form by the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association in 1948, the prints were also distributed to schools and universities across the country.⁴⁸ Although created as a promotional tool, they were exhibited along with the National Gallery's silkscreen prints in venues throughout Canada. Integration into the ostensibly neutral context of the exhibitions institutionalized the mandate of industrial development, associating the forestry industry and its practices with the rhetoric of national unity. Commenting on the uniqueness of this series but apparently unaware of the differing mandate of the Pulp and Paper prints, a Windsor review of the exhibition at the Willistead Art Gallery noted the "change from the usual emphasis on landscape in Canadian painting; [in these prints] most pictures show people doing something."⁴⁹ By 1949 the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association had exhausted its supply of prints and potential customers were referred to the National Gallery which still had "a few sets on hand."⁵⁰

Pleased with the success of the earlier series, in 1950 the Pulp and Paper Association purchased six new subjects for reproduction, this time in the larger silkscreen format.⁵¹ Casson, Thoreau MacDonald, Comfort, Jackson, Arbuckle and Cloutier were each commissioned to create an image representing a specific Canadian pulpwood tree within an apparently unspoiled northern landscape. By November 1950 Comfort's *Balsam Fir* and MacDonald's *Black Spruce* were in production. Writing to McCurry on 2 November 1950, Matthews urged him to order a quantity for the Gallery, promoting them as "exceedingly valuable, especially for schools." While the Gallery purchased the "charming" MacDonald (a pristine forest scene), on this occasion it deferred on the Comfort (portraying a locomotive pulling flatcars loaded with logs), which it deemed "more of a commercial poster."⁵² In September 1951 the Gallery ordered 2000 prints from this second series and they would often be marketed along with the National Gallery images.⁵³

Except for Comfort's *Balsam Fir*, the evidence of the encroachment of industry which had characterized the earlier prints, was generally eliminated in this second series. As well as being distributed by the Gallery (with a promotional text noting the Pulp and Paper Association's involvement), the prints were reproduced in a small black and white booklet, titled *Six Forest Landscapes*.⁵⁴ Another industry booklet featuring the prints included a colour reproduction of Arbuckle's *Western Hemlock* and two images from the earlier series as well as a line drawing of each species of tree. This publication promoted the industry as protector of Canada's natural heritage and its practices as environmentally sound, with captions such

as "A forest with a future" and "More growing than going."⁵⁵ Facilitated by Sampson-Matthews' key role in the decision-making process regarding selection of prints and marketing strategy for the National Gallery, in 1953 the six Pulp and Paper prints from the second series would be illustrated as a group in the Gallery's catalogue of reproductions.⁵⁶ For Sampson-Matthews this was all in the line of business, providing a superb distribution system for one client through collaboration with another.⁵⁷ For the Pulp and Paper Association their presence in a catalogue issued by the National Gallery of Canada and the association of the resource industry with the dominant images of unspoiled nature and the project of national identity was a brilliant marketing coup.

The Post-War Gallery Project

In 1948 Sampson-Matthews had sent the Gallery a number of new designs for approval for the school market. Neither McCurry nor Jackson was thrilled with any of them as few contained the "art qualities" that Jackson had stated must be associated with a project designed for this audience. Although Jackson and McCurry were described, with Casson, as the committee that approved the selection of prints for the series "on behalf of the National Gallery," all of the images which Sampson-Matthews proposed were eventually published despite Jackson's and McCurry's concerns about a number of them. While Jackson was heavily involved in the Federation project and the selection of prints in the first phase of the Sampson-Matthews/National Gallery wartime project, his influence over the selection of images for the second schools focussed part of the program waned in the post-war years.

The majority of the post-war reproductions were by members of the Ontario Society of Artists and depicted stereotypical images of Canadian life, both rural and urban. Of the three works by Thoreau MacDonald, Jackson wrote that they looked "very fine, perhaps better technically than anything [Sampson-Matthews] have done."⁵⁸ McCurry deemed Sydney Watson's *St. Lawrence Town, Quebec* too "dead" for student use.⁵⁹ However, the subject of Robert Pilot's *Skating, Dufferin Terrace* seemed to McCurry "100%" since it featured skating, "the foremost Canadian winter sport," in a "well-known Canadian locality." He was, however, appalled by the inept handling of the figures, not one of which showed a "natural skating position." Adamant that "the silk screen prints are spread too widely to permit us to be careless about such elementary matters," McCurry urged Casson to "count it out" if the problems could not be corrected. Once again the design was printed despite McCurry's concerns; although some work may have been done to correct the problems.

McCurry offered an equivocal response to one of Casson's own designs, more in keeping with the wilderness aesthetic. Apparently unwilling to be candid about his assessment of the work, McCurry told him that while he personally deemed *Summer Morning* "excellent," he did not think it would be popular. He went on to

add that others had found the rocks "too theatrical" and that "the composition did not hold together sufficiently well." Such criticism does not appear to have discouraged Casson and the work remained in print for the life of the project.

Carr's *White Church* and Harold Beament's *The Waiting Ones* were also included in the June 1948 list of Gallery reproductions. While Jackson was enthusiastic about the Carr, he had little use for Beament's work. Of Beament's wartime efforts, Jackson had written, "I wish the Navy would get rid of Beament but it is hard to find anyone familiar with boats apart from A.L. [Arthur Lismer] and he could not leave his work."⁶⁰ It was also by June 1948 that Yvonne McKague Houser's *Poplar and Spruce* and Milne's *Boston Corner (sic)*, recently acquired by the National Gallery, were run in the smaller size. The remuneration paid to artists for the original use of their images appears to have been increased as there are National Gallery records requesting payment of \$100 each to Casson, Comfort, Watson and Ogilvie in 1950.⁶¹

It is interesting to note the change in the operational model of the silkscreen program in the post-war period. First, it is Casson not Jackson, who is in the front line, soliciting and approving designs for new silkscreens. McCurry still appears to have had nominal veto power although his reservations do not seem to have had much impact. Secondly, the stated intention of representing a wide variety of artists from across the country appears to have shifted to offering a number of commissions to a relatively few Toronto-based Ontario Society of Artists members. Geographic representation in subject matter was still considered important although the artist might be based in central Canada. Thirdly, an illustrative approach to subject matter became even more predominant.

Perhaps because of Jackson's dislike of what he deemed the commercial quality of some of the newer prints, the commissions were complemented by a growing reliance on the popularity of earlier work, particularly the Group's wilderness imagery and the easily recognizable subject matter of Tom Thomson. In early 1949, Casson reported that three Thomson sketches (*Portage, Ragged Lake, and March* and *Northern Lights*) were being adapted for reproduction as silkscreens.⁶² Praising the quality of these prints, Jackson suggested adding a few more images to create a "Thomson set." In February 1951 Jackson turned in a large-format design for *Dease Bay, Great Bear Lake*, writing to McCurry that this northern subject should be popular. A few months later, he asked McCurry to have another of his canvases from this series of northern scenes (*West Bay Fault, Yellowknife*), which belonged to the Department of Resources and Development, delivered to Sampson-Matthews for translation to screenprint. His *Smart River*, originally done as a contribution to the earlier Federation of Canadian Artists project, would be included in the National Gallery's later publications as *Smart River, Alaska Highway*.⁶³ A 1951 letter from Fred Amess in the B.C. Department of Education to Harris complained that the focus in the post-war reproduction program had

shifted to the tried and true, particularly work by Thomson and the Group and artists who echoed them in style and subject matter.⁶⁴ The letter stated the concern that “there is quite a lapse in the prints of Canadian art after the group of seven.”

That same year, McCurry expressed his belief to Jackson that the wartime prints had become “a little hackneyed.”⁶⁵ For his part, Jackson was firm about the need for quality *new* work, recommending that no additional reprints should be made from the series and that all prints should be limited to a thousand copies.⁶⁶ However, reworking existing images was a cost-effective method of operation and many of the extant images would be reprinted a number of times in the next twenty years. Only Casson and Jackson, the artists most directly involved in the production of the series, would withdraw a successful subject once a print run was sold out and replace it with a new image.

In November 1951 Jackson, Casson and Matthews drew up a working list titled “National Gallery Reproductions” for McCurry’s consideration and included possible subjects for future silkscreens. Reflecting the narrowed vision of the program, it focussed in the first instance on popular works in public and private collections, primarily by the Group of Seven and their contemporaries. These included a large-scale work based on J.E.H. MacDonald’s *Autumn in Algoma (The Fall of the Leaf)* — which would be at least 50% larger than anything printed before, as well as Emily Carr’s *Blunden Harbour* and Jackson’s *Red Maple*, all in the collection of the National Gallery.⁶⁷ (These works were never realized as silkscreens, although a number of them would be published as lithographs.) Other works proposed included Thomson’s *Pointers*, a work by Lismer and J.E.H. MacDonald’s *Little Spruce* (the latter two from Isabel McLaughlin’s collection), as well as works by Carmichael and Harris. The Gallery was holding Jackson’s *Laurentian Farm* for translation to silkscreen and Casson’s *White Pine* — “another Georgian Bay subject” — was in production.⁶⁸ At the same time, a second print by Albert Robinson (*Noontime in the Hills*) was recommended for reproduction but never published.⁶⁹

Reflecting the Toronto-centric nature of the project in these years, Casson, Matthews, and Jackson set themselves assignments to determine other appropriate works by O.S.A. members. “Cass” was to visit Fred Haines’ exhibition at the Laing Gallery and to see what Canadian subjects York Wilson had in his studio. At the same time, they recommended proceeding with Comfort’s *Algonquin Lake*.⁷⁰ Jackson and Casson were also to look at *Quebec Roofs* by Montréaler, Fred Taylor in the R.C.A. exhibition, “which is felt likely suitable for adapting.” Cloutier, Hallam and Alan Collier were on the recommended list; Pantou, Palmer, William Winter and Jack Bush were not to be asked to make paintings. Because of copyright concerns, they did not pursue another Gagnon work.⁷¹

A year later, two works from the National Gallery’s collection, B.C. Binning’s *Ships in a Classical Calm* and Alfred Pellán’s *Le Pot à Tabac* were forwarded for reproduction (probably at the urging of McCurry), but would not be printed until late

1953.⁷² Although the most abstract works in the series, neither reflected the vitality of the current Canadian milieu. Few artists associated with the Contemporary Arts Society and none of the members of the Automatistes or Painters XI were included in the series.⁷³ Binning and Pellán, along with Morrice's *Quebec Ferry*, would be the closest the series would come to representing the "modern" experience. The problem appears to have been multi-fold. First there was the inherent conservatism of Jackson and those responsible for the project. Their conviction that the "moderns" did not represent Canadian art determined the parameters of the selection process. Secondly, there was the *de facto* operational control of the project by Sampson-Matthews and Casson. For the printing company, this was a business proposition with the emphasis on commercial success. Thirdly it was easier to hand out commissions to experienced designers and to locally-based friends and colleagues than to search broadly for "new" talent. The failure of the Federation to produce silkscreens of the quality that McCurry had admired in the 1944 Museum of Modern Art exhibition may also have discouraged further risk-taking. While the Gallery did publish a small lithographic reproduction of Borduas' *Parachutes végétaux*, it was clearly considered too challenging for the mass market.⁷⁴

The situation did not improve. In March 1952 Jackson complained about Stanley Turner's design for the *Parliament Buildings*, which McCurry had "passed on ... before [Jackson] saw it."⁷⁵ In September, Jackson laid blame for the poor quality of the recent prints on Casson who had been President of the O.S.A. (1941-46), claiming that he was "too considerate of the lame ducks in the O. S. A. and trie[d] to keep them in circulation." In this category, Jackson included Haines (*Rural Bridge*), Turner (*Parliament Buildings*), and Hallam (*Cape Breton Harbour* and *Indian Harbour, Nova Scotia*).⁷⁶ He urged McCurry to create a committee to approve designs and to remove responsibility for the selection of work from Sampson-Matthews. By the early 1950s the project seems to have become a fiefdom for Casson to commission work that Jackson considered second-rate. Jackson, though a lesser player, remained involved for in 1951 he had translated his *Laurentian Farm* into silkscreen, as he did Ruth Pawson's *Late Harvest*.⁷⁷ It was probably Jackson who obtained Sarah Robertson's *Ice Cutting, Lake of the Two Mountains* for reproduction in late 1952.⁷⁸

In 1952 the National Gallery documented the fifteen best-selling prints: all were images reprinted from the original wartime series. Not surprisingly, Thomson's *Northern River* and Lismer's *Isle of Spruce* were the most popular works having sold virtually the entire recent runs of several thousand prints. MacDonald's *Mist Fantasy*, Harris' *Maligne Lake*, Morrice's *Quebec Ferry*, Robinson's *Easter Mass*, Pantón's *Windswept*, Phillip's *Victoria Glacier* and Comfort's *Bon Echo*, along with Haines' *Beechwoods*, Thoreau MacDonald's *Wild Geese*, Hallam's *Plowman*, McKague Housser's *Evening-Nipigon*, Cloutier's *Sugar Time*, and Sampson's *Veterans of the Sea*, were also among those with the highest number of sales.⁷⁹

The 1953 Catalogue: *60 Canadian Landscapes*

By the fall of 1952 Sampson-Matthews was urging the National Gallery to approve a new and aggressive marketing approach that would be controlled by the printing firm, although the Gallery would have the right to approve copy.⁸⁰ The first stage of this new campaign was the preparation of a "catalogue illustrating some sixty or more Canadian landscapes and including the Coats of Arms of Canada, the latter designed by Casson."⁸¹ Intended primarily for schools across the country, it would also be heavily marketed to the private sector, particularly financial institutions and the tourist industry along with the general public. Although Matthews assured McCurry that the promotion would be cost-free, his analysis was based on the expectation that the Gallery would share costs of promotion in the first instance and recoup them through increased sales of the thousands of prints it held in Sampson-Matthews' inventory.

Despite the Gallery's concern about the artistic value of the prints and the management of the program, the catalogue Sampson-Matthews had proposed was published in mid-1953 under the Gallery's auspices, presumably to increase sales of their own large backlog of prints.⁸² Although the numbers of the works included skipped from number 46 to number 71, the *60 Canadian Landscapes* catalogue in this original format remained the principal marketing tool for the National Gallery silkscreens throughout the fifties.⁸³

With the publication of the 1953 catalogue, the sales strategy shifted from the marketing of sets of prints (primarily to public institutions) to the more successful sale of individual images to public and private purchasers. Marketing was left very much in the hands of Sampson-Matthews which opened a showroom in its downtown Toronto premises for the specific purpose of exhibiting the prints. In the first six months of 1953, the Canadian Bank of Commerce purchased over one hundred for display in its branches and offices. Resort owners and others in the tourist industry were also seen as target markets. Focussing on the sale of prints to the Ontario government, Jackson identified artists whose names could be used to promote the strong Ontario base of the project. In so doing he acknowledged the heavy provincial bias in the selection of artists and the relatively narrow base of artistic participation.

The marketing strategy for schools and school boards was national although the decision was made that in light of the over 33,000 schools in Canada, only Ontario schools would receive a direct mailing of the catalogue. Advertisements were placed in publications such as the program of the British Columbia Annual Teachers' Convention, the *Alberta Teacher*, the *Saskatchewan Bulletin*, the *Ontario Educational Association Programme*, the *Montreal Protestant Teachers' Magazine*, the *New Brunswick Education Review*, and the Newfoundland Teachers Association's house-organ to promote the prints prior to provincial teachers' conventions. Because all provinces were covered in the advertising campaign, it was anticipated

that there would be a significant response in requests for catalogues, which contained order forms.⁸⁴

A decision was apparently made not to reprint and consequently not to illustrate works that were out of stock or in short supply and that were not considered essential to the series. Fifteen other works, either for future publication or for rerun but not in print at the time, were not illustrated in the catalogue. Thus Brooks' *Haliburton Village*, Fred Brigden's *Assiniboia Valley*, Haworth's *Port au Persil*, McKague Housser's *Indian Children*, McLaughlin's *Blossom Time*, Palmer's *Maple Lake* and Weston's *Vancouver Lions*, as well as Jackson's *Peace River Bridge*, *Alberta Farms* and *Quebec Village*, all of which were out of stock or in very short supply were neither reprinted nor illustrated.⁸⁵ Though Stanley Turner's *Parliament Buildings* had just been run in an edition of 700, it too was omitted from the catalogue, perhaps because of slow sales.⁸⁶

Jackson, who remained the most prolific artist in the entire project, retained his commitment to being represented by new images. In 1946 he had reworked his painting *Maple and Birch*, in the collection of the Art Gallery of Toronto, which he described as not well-painted although it "would make an swell silk screen ... in the large size."⁸⁷ With his *Jack Pine* commissioned by the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association, *Maple and Birch*, and *Dease Bay, Great Bear Lake*, there were three large Jackson prints included in the 1953 catalogue. In addition, his two Northern landscapes and his *Laurentian Farm* were included in the smaller format.⁸⁸ A total of ten works by Jackson were included in the silkscreen series, seven created after the wartime project. There were also five by Casson; five by Thoreau MacDonald; and six by Tom Thomson, all but one produced in the post-war years. To accommodate expected demand, Thomson's *Northern River*, Lismer's *Isles of Spruce*, Housser's *Evening-Nipigon*, Morrice's *Quebec Ferry*, Carr's *White Church* (also called *Indian Church*) and Jackson's *Maple and Birch* were rerun in full quantities and Haines' *Beech Woods* was also reprinted. Half quantity orders were placed for Harris's *Maligne Lake*, Phillips' *Victoria Glacier*, Panton's *Windswept* and Hallam's *The Plowman*; all other works intended for inclusion were in sufficient supply.

An examination of the content and layout of the 60 *Canadian Landscapes* catalogue of 1953 offers a cogent illustration of the range and quality of the post-war program. Carefully composed of a combination of wartime works and those completed between 1947 and 1952, each page includes at least one work by a member of the Group of Seven (page one illustrating five such works). Clearly designed to build upon the information gleaned from the analysis of recent sales, each page illustrated the diversity of Canada's geography. The first page of illustrations included J.E.H. MacDonald's *Mist Fantasy*, Harris' *Maligne Lake*, Lismer's *Isle of Spruce*, Jackson's *Dease Bay, Great Bear Lake*, Casson's *White Pine*, Thoreau MacDonald's *Wild Geese*, Morrice's *The Ferry, Quebec*, and Hallam's *Cape Breton Harbour*. Though all the artists (except Lismer and Morrice) were Ontario-based,

geographically the works included the standard repertoire of classic Group of Seven northern Ontario landscapes, a western mountain range, a Nova Scotia harbour scene, northern Canada, a farm scene and a Québec view.

The second page of the catalogue included two images of British Columbia: J.W.G. Macdonald's *B.C. Indian Village* and Carr's *Indian Church*, along with Jack Humphrey's east coast *Swallow Tail*, *Grand Manan*, Comfort's *Algonquin Lake* and Watson's *St. Lawrence Town, Quebec*. It also included Fritz Brandtner's prairie farm image, the *Potato Pickers*, Binning's *Ships in a Classical Storm* and Pellan's *Le Pot à Tabac*. The third page featured Cloutier's *Sugar Time, Quebec*, Tom Roberts' southern Ontario *Village in Winter*, Phillip's *Victoria Glacier* and McKague Housser's *Evening-Nipigon River* as well as works by Haines, Hallam, and Casson, many of which had earlier been condemned by Jackson and McCurry. The following page similarly combined images from different parts of the country. Carmichael's *White Water* and Robinson's Québec scenes (*Returning from Easter Mass* and *Village on the Gulf*) were illustrated along with works which Jackson and/or McCurry had found questionable at best: Fred Haines' "poisonous" *Beech Woods*, Frederick Taylor's "rather lame" *Roof Tops, Quebec*, Robert Pilot's "flawed" *Skating, Dufferin Terrace*, Casson's compositionally problematic *Summer Morning* and Beament's decorative image of Inuit life, *Departure for the Hunt*. If none of the latter works met Jackson's criteria of "artistic quality," they had passed the test of broad audience appeal. To augment the catalogue, Sampson-Matthews included the six forest landscapes from the 1950 Pulp and Paper series.

In addition to the large-format prints which were the mainstay of the wartime and schools program, the catalogue included another eighteen images produced in "half size" (27 x 20 inches); five of the first seven illustrated were by Tom Thomson. These were accompanied by Robertson's *Ice Cutting* and Milne's *Boston Corner (sic)*, (the only non-Canadian subject in the series). There were, as well, three works by Jackson (*West Bay Fault, Yellowknife and River, Alaska Highway [Smart River]* and *Laurentian Farm*), J.E.H. MacDonald's *Mill at Cobocokk* and four farm subjects (three of them winter scenes). Leonard Brooks' *Halifax Harbour* provided an east-coast image and Ruth Pawson and John Ensor produced prairie images of harvest and grain elevators.⁸⁹ McKague's *Poplar and Spruce* was also included among the half-size works. Robinson's *Easter Mass*, Morrice's *Ferry*, Panton's *Silver Stream* and Thoreau MacDonald's *Winter Morning* were reproduced in both large and small format. The catalogue was rounded out with the set of eleven illustrations of Casson's armorial bearings of Canada and the ten provinces — marketable images for the schools and other public institutions that still represented the largest clientele for the silkscreen prints.

A comparative analysis of the 1953 and 1955 inventory lists reveals that despite the emphasis on geographical diversity and the inclusion of so many popular Group of Seven images, Sampson-Matthews' boast of increased sales in the period

after the catalogue was published ring hollow. Thomson's *Northern River*, reprinted in 1953 in an edition of 750 was far and away the best seller; almost 500 prints were sold during this two-year period.⁹⁰ Popular prints such as Jackson's *Maple and Birch* and Thomson's small landscape scene *Aura Lea Lake* had sold no more than 230 prints. J.E.H. MacDonald's *Mist Fantasy*, Lismer's *Isle of Spruce* and Thoreau MacDonald's *Wild Geese* had each sold about 200 prints.

Interestingly, the prairie scenes were among the more popular images. In the 1930s complaints concerning the National Gallery's lithographic reproduction program had made it evident that the prairie provinces were hungry for images that reflected their experience. Pawson's *Late Harvest* sold 240 prints and Ensor's *Summer's Store* had 145 sales. The two western mountain scenes, Harris' *Maligne Lake* and Phillips' *Victoria Glacier*, had sold 150 and 200 respectively. Large images of Morrice's *Ferry* and Cloutier's *Sugar Time, Quebec* each sold about 150 copies. The two semi-abstract works, Binning's *Classic Calm* and Pellan's *Le Pot à Tabac* (printed in a relatively small run of 250 each at the time the catalogue went to press), had each sold 170 prints.⁹¹

In 1954 and 1955 Sampson-Matthews documented sales on a monthly basis and almost all were individual works.⁹² In the case of the small prints, Thomson's were the most popular. As the school year progressed sales of Thomson's *Northern River*, Lismer's *Isle of Spruce* and MacDonald's *Mist Fantasy* increased, reinforcing the impression that public institutions tended to collect images representing the Group aesthetic.⁹³ Among private sales, Tom Roberts' *Village in Winter* was repeatedly the best seller, along with east-coast scenes, prairie images and Phillips' west-coast mountain range.

The End of the Partnership

By 1954 the relationship between the National Gallery and Sampson-Matthews had become seriously strained. The Gallery was concerned about its indebtedness to the printing firm; an April 1954 report prepared by Matthews indicated that, of the ten reprinted subjects authorized in October 1952, only two (costing \$4641) had been invoiced. The balance of eight subjects (\$13,263), although completed, had yet to be charged since McCurry had requested that Matthews wait until after the end of 1954 when the invoices would be split into three smaller amounts.⁹⁴ Despite this, McCurry also authorized re-runs of Casson's *White Pine* and Haines' *Beech Woods*, indicating a continuing commitment to the project perhaps because of Matthews' report attributing a 154% increase in sales between October 1953 and 1954 to his new marketing scheme.

Sampson-Matthews was equally concerned about its own financial position and upset with the Gallery's hesitation to share both the cost and the work involved in an aggressive marketing campaign. Matthews suggested to McCurry that the Gallery "might wish to have Sampson-Matthews Limited take over the complete

silk screen proposition," recommending that the firm be responsible for all expenses associated with the print program, producing all new subjects and future re-runs without cost to the Gallery. The company would also undertake to add a minimum of two or three new subjects the first year, increasing the number of subjects annually as sales warranted. In exchange for crucial National Gallery sponsorship, he proposed that new subjects should be approved by the Gallery. In addition, Sampson-Matthews would continue to pay the Gallery for the revenues generated by the sale of prints held in stock on its behalf. Despite this offer of a buy-out, the Gallery continued to be a player over the next year.⁹⁵

In April 1954 Sampson-Matthews was concerned that it required more control and submitted two more proposals for the continuation of the silkscreen project: "the first being a joint participation between themselves and the National Gallery of Canada which would include the production of five or six new subjects per year at Sampson-Matthews' expense."⁹⁶ The second proposal was for the firm "to take over the entire project and for [the Gallery] to purchase existing subjects at a much lower price than the present arrangement." Sampson-Matthews would sell new subjects to the Gallery at a discount of approximately one-third. In March 1955 claiming that his firm was losing money, Matthews proposed a new working relationship.⁹⁷

By 1955, however, the climate had changed. Despite Matthews' assurances that sales had increased dramatically, the Gallery's Board members were concerned about the inventory which stood at 25,000 prints.⁹⁸ Although it had paid in full for all prints produced to date, it still owed Sampson-Matthews almost \$5000 for advertising and catalogues.⁹⁹ McCurry, who had managed the project, had retired under a cloud. A 1953 report by the federal government reviewing the Gallery's organization and methods of operation had strongly criticized its management and identified the handling of reproductions as one of a number of problems.¹⁰⁰

The Trustees were determined to cut their losses. The new Director, Alan Jarvis, wrote to Matthews that given the "considerable stocks" of existing silkscreens, the Trustees had decided there would be no further production for some years to come.¹⁰¹ At its May 1955 meeting, the Board instructed Sampson-Matthews that they could purchase the prints held in their inventory for the Gallery at a 50% discounted price in exchange for credit against the Gallery's debt. Thus the thirteen-year collaboration came to a formal end. Sampson-Matthews purchased substantial quantities of the Gallery's inventory and ended its regular monthly sales reports to Ottawa.¹⁰² Both Sampson-Matthews and the Gallery would continue to sell the prints on an individual basis. For the next five years, the Gallery issued royalty cheques to the artists or their estates.¹⁰³ Their records of payment are informative and suggest that Ottawa sold relatively few prints by living artists during these years.¹⁰⁴ Sampson-Matthews, however, would produce twenty new images in the eight years between 1955 and 1963.

100 Canadian Paintings

The dissolution of the National Gallery/Sampson-Matthews partnership in 1955 did not mean that the silkscreen program came to an end. In 1957 Sampson-Matthews published *100 Canadian Paintings* as a vehicle to market earlier prints as well as a number of new works. Although the Gallery had no direct involvement in the project after 1955, Sampson-Matthews' text suggested otherwise. Their booklet carried the credit line: "The subjects illustrated represent Canada from coast to coast. They were painted by Canadian Artists, and have been approved by The National Gallery of Canada." There is, however, no correspondence between the Gallery and Sampson-Matthews regarding approval of new images although the first forty-eight images in the 1957 catalogue — taken from prints included in earlier series — would have had the Gallery's imprimatur in earlier incarnations. Sampson-Matthews also included eleven "new" subjects. The large-size prints included Turner's *Parliament Buildings* (which had not made the 1953 catalogue), Jackson's *Junction of the Peace and Smoky Rivers*, Carmichael's *Autumn Wood Interior*, Alan Collier's *Spring Mood*, as well as Tom Roberts' *Road to the Village* and Joachim Gauthier's *Autumn Road, Haliburton*. The new smaller prints included Thoreau MacDonald's *Country Road* and Phillips' *Valley of the Ten Peaks*. Long after the formal break, Sampson-Matthews' marketing would continue to draw heavily on the credibility of the original wartime project.

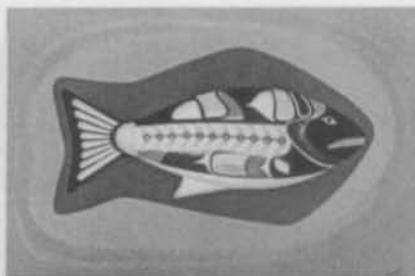
100 Canadian Paintings also included Casson's armorial bearings of Canada and the provinces and a group of six new prints commissioned by the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association, continuing the effort to favorably position the industry in the public consciousness. These prints were based on original images by First Nations and Inuit artists in a variety of media, including soapstone and scrimshaw carvings, a mask and paintings, selected by Marius Barbeau and translated into stylized adaptations by his son-in-law, Arthur Price (fig.3).¹⁰⁵ The somewhat vague catalogue text equated Native and folk art and positioned the Native subject firmly as "other," providing little insight into the work of the original artist. Indeed, despite the generalized texts that accompanied each print and also identified the tribal or geographic origin of the original work, Price's designs erased the identities of the individual creators. Although the National Gallery was no longer associated with the project, the Sampson-Matthews prints continued to circulate broadly in Canada and overseas. In 1958, for example, an exhibition of the prints was donated to and circulated in the U.S.S.R.¹⁰⁶

Canadian Paintings

A later booklet published by Sampson-Matthews c.1963 and titled *Canadian Paintings*, offers a clear picture of the direction the project took after the firm assumed full control.¹⁰⁷ Created in the last year in which new prints were produced, the publication shows that marketing had become much more sophisticated.

NATIVE ART— BY ARTHUR PRICE, A.R.C.A.

Canadian folk art falls into six divisions: North Pacific coast, Eskimo, Western Plains, Scrippsian, Eastern Woodlands, and French Canadian. The Indians of the North Pacific Coast expressed themselves in monumental wood carvings called totems, whereas the Prairie hunters painted their designs on buffalo skins. The Eskimo have always been carvers of ivory and soapstone, drawing their inspiration from animal life around them. Scrippsian was the art of white scholars who carved bone and ivory while at sea. Reproductions are from original paintings by the well-known artist, Arthur Price, A.R.C.A.



NA-1 KING SALMON 30" x 20"



NA-2 TROPIC MASK 30" x 20"



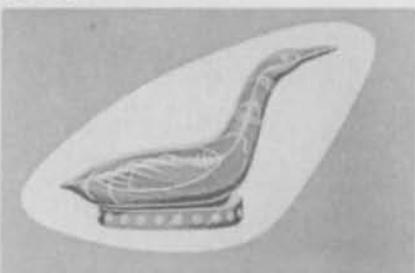
NA-5 SCRIPSIAN ENGRAVING 30" x 20"



NA-3 BEAVER AND STURGEON 30" x 20"



NA-6 PLAINS HORSEMAN 30" x 20"



NA-4 SOAPSTONE LOON 30" x 20"



NA-7 THUNDERBIRD 30" x 20"

14

fig.3 Sampson-Matthews, *Canadian Paintings*, catalogue, c.1963, page 14, Toronto Public Library, Fine Art Reference Section. (Photo: Jeff Nolte)

The booklet divides the “Sampson-Matthews collection” into categories to appeal to a variety of interests: for example, “22 Favourite Subjects - In 2 Convenient Sizes” included, among others, Lismer’s *Isle of Spruce*, Thomson’s *Northern River* and Casson’s *White Pine*. Three new images, Collier’s *Emerald Lake*, *Yoho Park*, Tom Roberts’ winter landscape from “anywhere” Ontario — *Red School House*, and Hilton Hassell’s decorative *Descending Sails*, were also in this category. Four of the twenty-two “favourite subjects” were by Roberts (fig.4).

Thirty-five images were available only in the large format, including eight grouped under the rubric “The Trees of Canada” — “from the quiet splendour of the silver birch to the stark sky-patterns of the jackpine.” (fig.5) Eight other prints, including Turner’s *Parliament Buildings*, Comfort’s *Bon Echo* and Robinson’s *Village on the Gulf*, along with Housser’s *Evening*, *Nipigon River* and Sampson’s *Veterans of the Sea*, represented “The Provinces of Canada” — “infinite in variety, in scenery in character ... inspiring a whole spectrum of mood and colour.” (fig.6) To suit the “crisp, simplified lines of today’s interior decor,” Sampson-Matthews offered “The Contemporary Scene” — the seventeen images included everything from Harris’ *Maligne Lake*, Jock Macdonald’s *B.C. Indian Village*, Carr’s *Indian Church* and Housser’s *Indian Children* to Brandtner’s *Potato Pickers*, Watson’s *St. Lawrence Town Quebec*, Binning’s *Ships in a Classical Calm* and Pellan’s *Le Pot à Tabac*. (fig.7) Finally, the brochure offered a collection of “twenty-two gems,” which included “six landscapes by that prince of painters Tom Thomson.” Works by Jackson, Thomson and MacDonald are described as expressing “something of the essence of the Canadian scene with the most exhilarating simplicity and charm.”

Without the National Gallery to provide direct access to schools the marketing focus had shifted to individual purchasers and businesses. In addition, the terms *reproductions* and *paintings* were used interchangeably, implying — as the National Gallery would not have done — that the images were original works of art.¹⁰⁸ Sampson-Matthews’ promotional pitch stated that the large “paintings” were “ideal for spacious rooms in the home or for main business or reception areas in institutions,” while the smaller images were “designed for more compact rooms or private offices.”¹⁰⁹ The price range established in the 1953 catalogue was now raised more than tenfold, from \$8.00 for a large print and \$6.00 for a small print to a range of \$100.00 to \$200.00 for the larger images and \$80.00 to \$150.00 for the smaller works.¹¹⁰ Predictably, Group of Seven works commanded the highest prices.

Defining Canadian Art

Few people today would recognize that the initial purpose of the wartime prints project was to broadly represent contemporary Canadian artistic production. On the contrary, it was “Group of Seven” silkscreens that hung in the corridors and the classrooms of schools and public spaces, and continued to dominate the collective



15 OLD WOOD HOUSE
47" x 37" and 37" x 27"

Tom Wilson, R.C.A.



28 EXTENDING SAILS
57" x 37" and 37" x 27"

Wilcox Meadell, U.S.A.



53 EMERALD LAKE, YONGE PARK
57" x 37" and 37" x 27"

Alan C. Collier, R.C.A.

22 FAVOURITE SUBJECTS—IN 2 CONVENIENT SIZES

The twenty-two paintings on this and the following two pages (up to No. 36 on Page 5) are available in two sizes. The larger size (40" x 30") is ideal for spacious rooms in the home or for main business or reception areas in institutions. The smaller size (27" x 20") is designed for more compact rooms or private offices. The pictures in this group comprise the work of 16 notable Canadian artists and embrace a variety of subjects — winter and summer scenes typical of many regions of Canada. . . . Be sure to specify which size is required when ordering reproductions.



40 NORTHERN BIRCH
37" x 27" and 27" x 20"

Sam Thomson



5 TILES OF SPRUCE
37" x 27" and 27" x 20"

Arthur Lipman, I.L.O., R.C.A.



3 CAPE BRETON HARBOUR
37" x 27" and 27" x 20"

J.S. Nelson, R.C.A.



6 WHITE PINE
37" x 27" and 27" x 20"

A.J. Cannon, R.C.A., N.A.

fig.4 Sampson-Matthews, *Canadian Paintings*, catalogue, c.1963, Toronto Public Library, Fine Art Reference Section. (Photo: Jeff Nolte)



46 BALSAM
40" x 30" Charles Conroy, L.L.B., R.C.A.



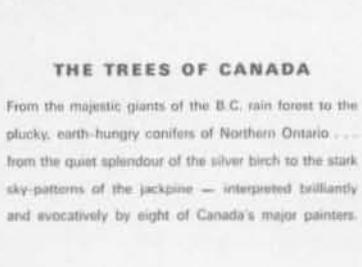
43 EASTERN HEMLOCK
40" x 30" Albert Couler, R.C.A.



45 WESTERN HEMLOCK
40" x 30" Franklin Artuski, R.C.A.



44 JACK PINE
40" x 30" A. Y. Jackson, C.M.B., L.L.B.



THE TREES OF CANADA

From the majestic giants of the B.C. rain forest to the plucky, earth-hungry conifers of Northern Ontario . . . from the quiet splendour of the silver birch to the stark sky-patterns of the jackpine — interpreted brilliantly and evocatively by eight of Canada's major painters.



41 SPRUCE
40" x 30" Thomas MacDonell



38 ALGONA COUNTRY
40" x 30" Lawton Harris, L.L.B.



51 AUTUMN WOOD INTERIOR
30 1/2" x 30" Franklin Carmichael, R.C.A.



23 WINDSWEEP
40" x 30" L. A. C. Purton, R.C.A.

fig.5 Sampson-Matthews, Canadian Paintings, catalogue, c.1963, p.6, Toronto Public Library, Fine Art Reference Section. (Photo: Jeff Nolte)



17 CUTBOND, NIPISSIN RIVER Vernon McKenzie Hunter, R.C.A.
40" x 30"



20 FISHERMAN'S POINT, INGRESOR BAY A.J. Cassa, R.C.A., N.A.
40" x 30"



33 VETERANS OF THE SEA J.L. Simpson, R.C.A.
40" x 30"



47 PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, OTTAWA Stanley Farnet, R.C.A.
40" x 30"

THE PROVINCES OF CANADA

Infinite in variety, in scenery, in character . . . inspiring a whole spectrum of mood and colour. Eight Canadian artists contribute to a provincial panorama in these paintings of the diverse landscapes of our huge country.



36 THE PLOUGHMAN J.S. Nelson, R.C.A.
40" x 30"



37 SON DENO Charles Conner, L.C.D., R.C.A.
40" x 30"



31 VILLAGE ON THE GULF Albert H. Robinson, R.C.A.
40" x 30"



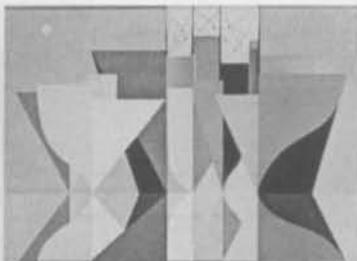
24 VICTORIA GLACIER Walter J. Phillip, R.C.A.
40" x 30"

fig. 6

Sampson-Matthews, *Canadian Paintings*, catalogue, c.1963, p.7, Toronto Public Library, Fine Art Reference Section. (Photo: Jeff Nolte)



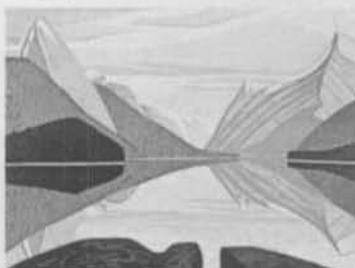
9 ST. LAWRENCE TOWN, QUEBEC
40" x 30" Sydney Wilson, R.C.A.



10 SHIPS IN CLASSICAL CRIM
40" x 30" B. C. Binning, A.R.C.A.



13 LE POT A TABAC
30" x 30" Alfred Pellan



2 MALISEE LAKE
40" x 30" Lawren Harris, L.L.B.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

This group of reproductions illustrates the Canadian scene as interpreted through the eyes of eight contemporary artists, ranging from the conservative formalism of Lawren Harris to the out-and-out abstraction of B. C. Binning. These silk screen prints are particularly suited to the crisp, simplified lines of today's interior decor.



25 SUMMER MORNING
30" x 30" A. J. Casson, R.C.A., N.A.



11 ALGONQUIN LAKE
40" x 30" Charles Comfort, L.L.B., R.C.A.



14 POTATO PICKERS
40" x 30" Fritz Brandler



12 BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN VILLAGE
40" x 30" J. W. G. MacDonnell, A.R.C.A.

fig.7 Sampson-Matthews, *Canadian Paintings*, catalogue, c.1963, p.10, Toronto Public Library, Fine Art Reference Section. (Photo: Jeff Nolte)

memory. This is not surprising. Jackson, J.E.H. MacDonald, Lismer, Harris, Carmichael, Casson, and Tom Thomson were all represented by at least one print in the wartime series and the numbers increased substantially in the post-war years. With ten works by Jackson, five by Thomson and a strong representation of classic Group images by Lismer, Harris and MacDonald, it is little wonder that the silkscreen project reinforced the dominance of the Group in Canadian art history. It may well be that east-coast and prairie viewers have a somewhat different sense of the project's shape, but there are no sales records that prove or disprove this assumption. Jackson would write in 1960, "I feel that the silk screens made during the war were by far the best publicity Canadian Art ever received."¹¹¹

In the beginning, the implementation of the program was driven by projected responses of sponsors and the military. It bears repeating that Jackson considered Morrice's *Quebec Ferry* and Brandtner's *Potato Pickers* the most "advanced" work in the wartime series. In later years the conservative nature of the program was assured by Casson and Sampson-Matthews' concern for the marketability of the work. Members of the Contemporary Arts Society, Borduas and the Automatistes (the "French derivatives" as Jackson called them) and those English-Canadian artists influenced by Abstract Expressionism were considered inappropriate for the series.¹¹² Indeed, except for the token inclusion of Binning and Pellán in the post-war period, the work of the "moderns" (as Jackson called them) was never truly considered for inclusion in the project.

Thus the search for "wholesome understandable pictures" that had driven the wartime project continued to dominate the selection of work in the post-war years. Sampson-Matthews' criteria of "typical Canadian scenes" that stylistically fell somewhere between what Matthews referred to as the "old hats" and the "moderns" remained the order of the day. If Casson was pushed by Jackson and McCurry in the first phase of the project to publish Brandtner's *Potato Pickers*, despite its technical difficulty and the questionable popularity of its subject matter, there appears to have been few demands for a larger vision in the post-war years. Despite the lip-service paid to offering a "new" medium and a new way of working to Canadian artists, conservative tastes and the location of the decision-making process in the commercial rather than the artistic realm meant that this vision of Canada (and the goal of national unity which continued to frame the discourse of national cultural institutions) was to be achieved largely through the work of central-Canadians using conventional and safe representations. Jackson's retreat to the popular Group images, the "Thomson series" and his own reworking of the Canadian landscape theme rather than engaging the new generation of artists led not only to a reliance on reproductions of the popular images of Thomson and the Group and their associates from public and private collections but also the commissioning of contemporary Group-style works from artists such as Casson, Jackson and Collier.

To McCurry, Harris and Jackson, the Federation project represented the best hope of creating a program that focussed on original works of art by Canadian artists produced in the silkscreen medium. Despite avowed interest from a range of constituents, the Federation's project elicited few responses and little in the way of truly original work. It is not surprising that the later plan, to replace the post-war project with a national silkscreen competition in order to encourage artistic production in the medium, did not move beyond its long incubation period with the Gallery's Board of Trustees. After 1955, the Gallery turned to other reproduction projects, and particularly to *Canadian Art* magazine as well as book publishing to broaden awareness of Canadian art. Within several years, it would become involved in another silkscreen reproduction program, the Markgraf print, which in the late 1960s, offered a range of silkscreen images by contemporary artists such as Yves Gaucher, Greg Curnoe, and Joyce Wieland at reasonable prices. Despite the quality of the prints, the Markgraf project did not have the influential impact of the earlier silkscreen projects, perhaps in part because its images had moved beyond the familiar landscape and wilderness aesthetic. There is little doubt that the wartime project struck a popular and patriotic chord in a country engaged in nation-building and the creation of its national identity. Continuing the National Gallery's earlier reproduction program and the public conflation of landscape and nationalism, Sampson-Matthews silkscreen prints similarly served in the construction of what it meant to be Canadian.

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Notes

- 1 Benedict ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).
- 2 I have received a great deal of help and unstinting assistance in my research. At the National Gallery of Canada, I am indebted to Cyndie Campbell, Archivist; Murray Waddington, Head, Library, Archives and Fellowship Program; Rosemarie Tovell, Curator of Prints and Drawings; and Charles Hill, Curator of Canadian Art. Invaluable assistance was also provided by Randall Speller, Documentalist at the library of the Art Gallery of Ontario and Cynthia Storey, a former student in the M.A. Program in Art History, York University. I would also like to thank Fred Turner and John Libby for generously sharing information with me concerning the fate of the Sampson-Matthews silkscreens.
- 3 Joyce ZEMANS, "Establishing the Canon: The Early History of Reproductions at the National Gallery of Canada," *The Journal of Canadian Art History* XVI, no. 2 (1995): 6-40 and "Envisioning Nation: Nationhood, Identity and the Sampson-Matthews Silkscreen Project: the Wartime Prints," *The Journal of Canadian Art History* XIX, no. 1 (1998): 7-51.
- 4 C.A.G. Matthews to H.O. McCurry, Director, NGC, 18 Jan. 1945. Unless otherwise noted, all citations are from the artists' files and Gallery correspondence in the library of the National Gallery of Canada. Given its experience and success with the wartime projects, Sampson-Matthews obtained a government contract for silkscreen production. In 1948 the Army decided to make silkscreens of the work of war artists such as Lawren P. Harris (*Tank Advance*), and McCurry directed them to Sampson-Matthews.
- 5 *Ibid.* As well a "Memo to Mr. Matthews from GEW, on Armed Forces Reproductions and Description Cards," 10 December 1945, indicates that 5 works were in stock in small size, L.A.C. Panton's *Silver Stream*, Leonard Brooks' *Halifax Harbour*, J.W. Morrice's *Quebec Ferry*, Albert Robinson's *Easter Mass*, Thoreau MacDonald's *Winter Morning*.
- 6 Rose MACDONALD, "At the Galleries: 20 Canadian Prints at Hospital [Sunnybrook]," (unidentified newspaper), Clipping File: Silk Screens. The exhibition of twenty large prints was also displayed at the London Public Library and Art Museum which had acquired them.
- 7 Sampson-Matthews, "Revised List of Silk Screen Prints," NGC, nd. The prints cost \$5.00 each; the frames cost an additional \$5.00. There was a discount of 20% for educational institutions.
- 8 "The National Gallery of Canada, Reproductions on Sale and Lending Collections," marked "For Payment of Silk Screen Designs" and annotated regarding payment to artists for designs in the first and second editions up to 9 December 1944.
- 9 Matthews to McCurry, 16 March 1945 discusses an exhibition of all the large silkscreens currently in print organized at Hart House in conjunction with the Ontario Education Association Convention in Toronto. See also Matthews to McCurry, 14 May 1945.
- 10 McCurry to Inez Paul, President of the Ontario Association of Teachers of Art, Etobicoke High School, 5 Mar. 1946. A note from the Secretary-Treasurer of the Ontario Association of Teachers of Art and Crafts, 2 May 1946, indicates that Robert Hubbard, then with the Education Department of the National Gallery, spoke to the Association and also distributed pamphlets titled "Reproductions on Sale and Lending Collections." The Winnipeg office of Canada Packers, a former sponsor of the prints, ordered prints for St. John's College and Rupert's Land Girl's School.
- 11 "Silkscreen Prints from Designs by Canadian Artists," 2, undated, annotated typescript.

- 12 There is a discrepancy here in the numbers of artists, works and prints issued. In this catalogue text, only twenty artists are acknowledged as having donated their works, each of them being sponsored. There are also reproductions of works from the National Gallery and the Art Gallery of Toronto.
- 13 In 1949, the Association of Canadian Clubs circulated an exhibition of 29 prints to clubs across the country, remarking that the series had been "enlarged and made available to the general public, and the prints are distributed to art centres, schools and public buildings," Clipping File: Silk Screens.
- 14 "Canadian Art Abroad," *The National Gallery of Canada Annual Report of the Board of Trustees*, 1944-45 (Ottawa: The King's Printer), 6-7, reported that 163,210 prints, including the "well-known" silkscreen prints had been distributed in 1944-45.
- 15 Jane WATSON CRANE, "Canada Sends Exhibit Here from Ottawa," *Washington Post*, 2 June 1946; "Canadian Paintings for Vienna Youth Center," *Canadian Press*, undated.
- 16 "Educational Work in Canada," *Annual Report*, 1947-48, 6.
- 17 Jackson to McCurry, 26 July 1947 noted, "Canadian Pacific are putting silk screens in their stations and hotels. They are not very good except one of grain elevators — it may be by Phillips... . The CN thing could use a few hundred National Gallery silkscreens very effectively, ones like *Mist Fantasy*, my *Quebec Village*, Jock Macdonald's *Indian Village* would all be appropriate."
- 18 The silkscreens purchased by the Bank of Montreal included those produced by the Federation of Canadian Artists.
- 19 On the post-war prints A.J. Casson had eliminated the space for the printed panels which had carried either Gallery or sponsor imprints at the bottom of each work and added to the images so that they were all full depth and a standard size. Signatures in the image were lowered accordingly and a one-line standard Gallery imprint added. While there are some variations, the credit line on a number of silkscreens suggests the standard post-war format included the phrase "Painted by [artist's name]" on the left; "Issued by the National Gallery of Canada," in the centre; and the title of the work on the right. Usually printed in a very narrow white border across the bottom of the print, the information was occasionally printed at the bottom of the image itself.
- 20 Minutes of the Board of Trustees 64th Meeting, 28 Jan. 1948. All Minutes of the meetings of the Board were subsequently published in the Gallery's *Annual Report*.
- 21 "National Gallery Reproductions," 30 June 1948. The printed list shows the quantities produced in one, two, or three runs. The second column shows approximate quantities on hand at Sampson-Matthews, 30 June 1948.
- 22 Dennis REID, *The Group of Seven: Selected Watercolours, Drawings and Prints from the Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1989), 25.
- 23 McCurry to Harris, 12 Feb. 1944, MG30 D208, Vol. 1 (1941-47), National Archives of Canada (NAC).
- 24 On 22 December 1943 McCurry wired the MOMA to say there was "unusual interest" in the silkscreens, indicating the Gallery would like to make a number of purchases and to have photographs for press and magazine articles. The press release read, "Only two years ago the creative use of the silk screen process was begun by a mere handful of WPA artists on an experimental project. Since that time the Silk Screen Group has been formed. ... It numbers around fifty members including many well-known artists whose interest in practicing the medium is increasing rapidly. Among them are: Henry Gottlieb, Mervin Jules, Elizabeth Old, Hulda Robbins, Harry Sternberg, Anthony Velonis, Human Warsager." [A complete list of the artists included is in the

File, 5.5-S Exhibitions in Gallery.] The exhibition included 35 prints and an "Introductory display showing the equipment and the technique of making a print." The NGC file includes xeroxed copies of works from the exhibition including *Smokestacks* by Harry Sternberg; *White Church* by Charles Barrows, *Two Napoleons and a Josephine* by Ruth Gikow, *Children Playing* by Sylvia Wald and *Easton, PA*, by Leonard Pytlak.

25 A post-war document describing the benefits of a proposed merger between the Saskatoon Art Association and the Federation of Canadian Artists included the creation of a "Silkscreen reproduction plant" for the use of Canadian artists under the heading, "Future plans in the making." Whether this was to be western-based or refers to the Reconstruction document plan, the Federation seems to have retained its relationship with the Gallery and Sampson-Matthews throughout its silkscreen project. (MG30 D208, Vol. 2, file 1, The Federation of Canadian Artists [FCA], [NAC]).

26 McCurry to Humphrey, 21 Feb. 1944, 5.5-S, Exhibitions in Gallery.

27 A.R. Crookshank to McCurry, 16 May 1944, 5.11, Maritime Art Association.

28 McCurry to Doris Melzer, Executive Secretary, Silk Screen Group, 96 Fifth Avenue, New York City, 1 Apr. 1944. Three were ordered by C.A.G. Matthews who wrote to McCurry that his designers were interested in what they could learn from the works. Matthews, who had seen the prints at the Art Gallery of Toronto ordered works by Charles Barrow, Leonard Pytlak and Sylvia Wald (Matthews to McCurry, 27 Mar. 1944). Matthews wrote, "While A.Y. Jackson and I had both seen these in Ottawa, they were new to the rest of the group ... each artist has painted his design on the screen as the work progressed. However, there are some effects we shall try to achieve by the copying method. We would like to secure the prints listed below ... as quickly as possible." There is also an excerpt of a letter from Martin Baldwin, AGT, 29 Mar. 1944, indicating that the Gallery wanted to purchase prints from this exhibition in response to a number of requests from the public.

29 Frederick Taylor, Chairman, Quebec Region, F.C.A. to the Secretary, NGC, 3 Mar. 1944, 5.5-S, Exhibitions in Gallery.

30 Minutes of the Board of Trustees 62nd Meeting, 31 Jan. 1947; the Director reported developments regarding the FCA and its formation in 1941 and his recommendation that the Board should deal directly with the Federation was approved.

31 "Reconstruction through the Arts," handwritten draft, undated, MG30 D208, Vol. 2, FCA, NAC.

32 Jackson to McCurry, 14 Mar. 1946.

33 MG30 D208, Vol. 5, file 5-22, FCA, NAC.

34 Jackson to McCurry, 16 Nov. 1945. See also Jackson to McCurry, 14 Mar. 1945.

35 Jackson to McCurry, 16 Nov. 1945 and 17 Dec. 1945. He also proposed a small Fritz Brandtner, adding "Casson is making a smaller one in the same colours so the two can run together." Observing that they were also producing a work by Kit Thorne of Vancouver, he noted the importance of "recognizing the west."

36 Jackson said that production of Courtice's *White Calf* depended upon "repair[ing] the legs." A reference to a 1958 royalty list records one payment of 30 cents to Courtice, suggesting that the Federation print remained available for the following decade. *The Isabel McLaughlin Gift: Part 2* (Oshawa: Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 1990), incorrectly describes the print as a wartime print.

37 REID, *The Group of Seven*, 24, notes that Harris' *Algoma Landscape* never appeared in later National Gallery catalogues. It is likely that he is referring to this Federation print, *Algoma Lake*, which, though reproduced in the 1948 External Affairs publication, was not included in the National Gallery's 1953 catalogue. Harris' *Algoma Country* was, however, listed as #38 in 1953.

- 38 Jackson to McCurry, 17 Dec. 1945.
- 39 Jackson to McCurry, 27 Mar. 1946; Harris to McCurry, 9 Apr. 1946; Jackson to McCurry, 26 Apr. 1946. On 9 April, Harris wrote, "I am most anxious that they sell at \$3.50. Alex insists that \$4.50 is the lowest possible figure. I figure it this way - 1.00 per print to Sampson-Matthews: .75 commission to Federal Region/Branch or to an art gallery or Art Association, club, etc.; .75 royalty to artist; .10 packing, mailing."
- 40 Jackson to McCurry, 26 Apr. 1946.
- 41 McCurry to Jackson, 7 May 1946.
- 42 H.G. Kettle, Executive Secretary, FCA to McCurry, 7 Feb. 1946.
- 43 "Culture in the Counting House," (unidentified newspaper), Clipping File: Silk Screens. The review mentions that the new series, exhibited at the Sun Life building, Montréal, was sponsored by the FCA. Twenty-eight prints were displayed and visitors were asked to vote for their favorites to "guide the purchasing decision of the Bank."
- 44 Jackson to McCurry, 3 Mar. 1949, adding "we sent a hundred to Montreal and I don't think they sold any."
- 45 At the Board of Trustees 78th Meeting, 11-12 Mar. 1953, the project, approved at the previous meeting, "had not gone forward owing to pressure of other urgent National Gallery projects," and was again postponed. At the next meeting Hubbard offered a draft of regulations for an earlier proposed competition to be discussed with Lawren Harris. At the meeting, 21-23 Oct. 1953, Harris proposed that, despite reservations about the value of the silkscreen project in light of facsimile reproductions, both the catalogue and the silkscreen competition should proceed; "it was agreed that notices would be sent out to the artists that were selected and that they would be given a year to do prints and it would be decided which ones would be used for the new project."
- 46 Rielle Thomson to McCurry, 27 Feb. 2 1947, Canadian Pulp and Paper Assoc. 1.8., reproductions, 1947-58. "Last year I commissioned ten Canadian artists to paint us ten pictures covering this industry. I asked them to give us art — not illustrations... . The size of the paintings is the same as that of the smaller silk screen reproductions issued by The National Gallery. This year I am having the paintings reproduced by the silk screen process. When they are completed some months hence, I shall venture to send you a complete set. I propose to send sets to schools and universities." The series of ten prints (1947) was published with a unique double-sided information sheet attached to the back of each painting. With the title of the work and the name of the artist, the works were identified as "from his original painting for the pulp and paper industry." The introduction read, "This print, number one of a series by ten distinguished Canadian painters, is a reproduction in oil paint of *The Forest* (Thoreau MacDonald), Pulp and Paper Industry of Canada, 1947."
- 47 See Jackson to McCurry, 25 June 1947, Canadian Pulp and Paper Assoc. 1.8.
- 48 *Ten Pulp and Paper Paintings*, published by the Association in Montréal (1948), included biographical information on each of the artists and information about the industry. This set of silk screens was also published in a promotional brochure on the pulp and paper industry of Canada. The National Gallery was invited to order the works at cost before they were produced. Jackson recommended 200 prints by MacDonald, Hallam, Comfort and Cloutier and 100 by Ogilvie and Casson. On Matthews' advice (3 July 1947), McCurry increased the Casson order to 100 and ordered 50 each of Jackson, Bieler, Arbuckle and 100 Harris, a total of 1350 prints. (Matthews to McCurry, 26 Jan. 1948). These prints seem to have been largely depleted by 1953 as they were not included in the 1953 catalogue.
- 49 Valerie CONDE, "Silk Screens" and "Previously Shown," *Windsor Daily Star*, 17 July 1948.

- 50 Thomson to Dorothy Carlisle, Librarian, Sarnia Public Library, 29 Sept. 1949.
- 51 The paintings were exhibited at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts along with the silkscreens in an exhibition titled *Art in Industry/Six Forest Landscapes*, 12 Dec. 1951-8 Jan. 1952.
- 52 McCurry to Matthews, 7 Nov. 1950. McCurry reserved judgement until he saw the other designs but was concerned that the Gallery should not engage in the project too hurriedly.
- 53 Handwritten note, 26 Sept. 1951, "Pulp and Paper S.S. Prints." These prints were issued with labels identifying them as a series "of six landscapes by distinguished Canadian painters who have depicted the chief pulpwood species of the TREES OF CANADA." The double-sided bilingual label, on the verso, dated 1951 indicated that the series was composed of Thoreau MacDonald's *Spruce*, Comfort's *Balsam*, Jackson's *Jack Pine*, Cloutier's *Eastern Hemlock*, Arbuckle's *Western Hemlock*, and Casson's *Poplar*.
- 54 See also 60 *Canadian Landscapes* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, c.1953), illustrations 41-46: "Six of Canada's leading painters were especially commissioned by the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association to paint this series of fine landscapes."
- 55 The six new tree studies are reproduced in black and white line drawings with the caption "First amidst industry." This booklet also contains both Harris's *West Coast Mill* with a drawing of *Western Hemlock* and the caption "More growing than going," and MacDonald's *The Forest* (from the earlier series), with a drawing of *Spruce* and the caption, "One fifth the wood."
- 56 The Bieler and the Ogilvie prints from the earlier series were not included in the 1953 catalogue though some prints remained in the Gallery's stock until the end of the decade.
- 57 The correspondence also confirms that it was Sampson-Matthews rather than the National Gallery which was responsible for this phase of the project. Large unframed prints retailed for \$10.00 (\$18.00 framed).
- 58 Jackson to McCurry, 2 Mar. 1949.
- 59 McCurry to Casson, 6 July 1948. McCurry asked Watson to add "a couple of children trudging off to school, or home from school, or throwing snowballs, or a dog or a cow or a cat, — almost anything [that] would relieve its feeling of a dead town."
- 60 Jackson to McCurry, undated wartime correspondence. As a Naval Officer on a tour of duty in the Arctic in 1937, Beament made numerous drawings. President of the RCA (1949-52), he would become known for his 1955 design of the Canadian ten cent stamp depicting an Inuit man spearing fish from his kayak.
- 61 March 1950 and April 1950, invoices to Treasury Office, Dept. of Public Works from the NGC; the Ogilvie design was never printed.
- 62 Casson to McCurry, 22 Mar. 1949; he adds that he has taken a personal interest in these works and will ensure that the colour is correct.
- 63 The documentation of the C.A.G. Matthews gift of original gouaches to the McMichael Canadian Collection, Schedule "A," lists these works as *Smart River, Alaska*, and *Yellow Knife*. In the 1953 catalogue the work was included as #79, *River, Alaska Highway* and described as "A snow edged river reflecting an evening sky of soft yellows, a dark blue distant hill and darker tree forms with buff shore lines."
- 64 Fred Amess, Dept. of Education, Summer School of Education, Victoria B.C. to Lorne (sic) Harris, 18 July 1951, Sampson-Matthews, 1.8-5, file 11. He also requested the development of a small illustrated brochure to help retailers select appropriate works for sale (in this case to American tourists in Victoria).
- 65 McCurry to Jackson, 3 Feb. 1951.

- 66 Jackson to McCurry, 1 Feb. 1951.
- 67 The Gallery had already begun to look at other approaches to reproduction, independently of Sampson-Matthews. McCurry's 1952 correspondence file (MG30 D186, NAC) includes correspondence with the Pallas Gallery Fine Arts Publishers, London, in which the Gallery agreed to purchase 3500 lithographic copies of *Red Maple* at \$1.25 each, with 500 copies for the Pallas Gallery, for a total cost of \$4375. In an earlier transaction the Gallery had order 4200 copies of Lismer's *Rain in the North Country* at \$1.05 each, along with 500 copies for the Pallas Gallery.
- 68 Stanley Turner's *Parliament Buildings* had also been approved.
- 69 Robinson's *Village on the Gulf* (1921), which had been acquired by the Art Gallery of Toronto in 1950, was published by 1952.
- 70 Comfort had been paid \$100 for the design in April 1950.
- 71 Sampson-Matthews, 21 Nov. 1951, "National Gallery Reproductions, Notes on Reproductions."
- 72 "Approval of Catalogue," 30 Oct. 1952. See also Matthews, "Silk Screen reproductions being held at Sampson-Matthews Ltd. as of June 30 1953," which lists these new subjects as incomplete. On 30 November 1953 Stanley McLean, President of Canada Packers wrote to Matthews that the prints of Binning, Pellan and Harris "get better and better." (Charles Andrew Graham Matthews, MG30 D230, Vol. 2, NAC). Matthews to McCurry, 5 Nov. 1952 shows his unfamiliarity with the work being reproduced as he twice refers to Pellan as "Pallent."
- 73 See the author's "Envisioning Nation," 35, for further discussion on the narrowness of the project.
- 74 See the *Catalogue of Reproductions, c.1955*; It includes work from earlier lithographic series: 46 large silkscreen prints at \$6.00 and 19 smaller silkscreens at \$5.00. Jackson's *Red Maple* was never included in the silkscreen series but was published as a lithograph (22 3/4" x 28") and priced at \$2.50. The Federation prints were not included, although the six prints from the 1950 Pulp and Paper series were.
- 75 Jackson to McCurry, 23 Mar. 1952. On 7 September 1952, Jackson wrote, "Sorry about the Turner, you must have told them to go ahead while you were thinking of something else. It's a swell subject and they muffed it."
- 76 Although this work by Hallam is always referred to in the catalogues as *Indian Harbour*, it is titled *Fish Houses* in the July 1954 sales report from Sampson-Matthews and in "Silk Screen Reproductions, Stocks on hand as of July 31 1955."
- 77 Jackson to McCurry, 22 Mar. 1952. Jackson was paid \$75 for designing the silkscreen; the royalties went to Pawson. See "National Gallery Reproductions," 21 Nov. 1951, which states that "the Gallery is holding two Jackson paintings, half size. One of these is *Laurentian Farms*: the other a Quebec scene with snake fence."
- 78 Matthews to McCurry, 17 Dec. 1952.
- 79 Matthews, 15 Sept. 1952, "The First 15 in Point of Sales."
- 80 Matthews to McCurry, 7 Oct. 1952. Heavily underlined, this letter stressed the current "inadequate publicity and selling facilities" and the "relatively small scale [of sales] in relation to the possible market."
- 81 *Ibid.* A Memorandum documenting transactions for the fiscal year 1944-45 documents a National Gallery payment to Sampson-Matthews of \$3705.30 for the coat-of-arms project. The catalogue included a full colour insert of Thoreau MacDonald's *Spruce* (#41) with the reference, "This insert may help to a better understanding of the richness of each of the pictures which in this catalogue are in black and white only."

82 As of June 1953, the Gallery had 6300 prints paid for and in stock at Sampson-Matthews. The list indicates that the Binning, Pellan and Harris's *Algoma Lake* were new subjects, not yet completed; while the Harris run was 750, those for Binning and Pellan were only 250. The Gallery owned a stock of 41 large subjects, 6 from the Pulp and Paper series, and 23 small prints. Thomson's *Northern River* and Carr's *White Church* were being rerun in editions of 750 and 700 respectively in anticipation of future sales. On June 30, there was only one Tom Roberts (*Village in Winter*), two Thoreau MacDonalds (*Wild Geese* and *Winter Morning*) and three Cassons (*White Pine*, *Summer Morning* and *Fisberman's Point*) indicating that a number of new prints were rapidly commissioned to fill out the offering. Jackson's *Gold Mine*, in stock in small size, was not included in the catalogue.

83 The inner cover reads: "Presenting 60 Canadian Landscapes for Schools. Offices. Homes." The first page is titled "Silks Screen Reproductions Featuring the Work of Leading Canadian Painters;" at the bottom of the page in bold print is "The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa." The text reads: "All [of the landscape subjects] have been approved by a committee acting on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the National Gallery and composed of A.Y. Jackson, C.M.G., LL.D., the distinguished Canadian painter; A.J. Casson, President of the Royal Canadian Academy, 1949-52, who has also supervised and directed their production; and H.O. McCurry, LL.D., Director of the National Gallery of Canada. These pictures are particularly suitable for use in offices, schools and homes, and already have had wide acceptance by those wishing to make a representative collection of reproductions of Canadian art for a modest outlay."

84 Sampson-Matthews, 16 June 1953. Document titled "SCHOOLS" outlines the marketing strategy. See also Sampson-Matthews, "National Gallery Reproductions: Recommendation to Cover all Schools," 12 Jan. 1954.

85 This information is ascertained by comparing inventory lists prepared by Sampson-Matthews dated 30 June 1953 and 31 July 1955. For example, the firm held 23 of Jackson's *Peace River Bridge* in 1953 and 19 in 1955, "Silk Screen Reproductions: Stocks on Hand at Sampson-Matthews Ltd., as of July 31 1955." On 6 December 1950, Jackson was paid \$50 each for six designs for silkscreens, including the *Negus Mine* and *Smokey and Peace River Junction*. Documents indicate that *Quebec Village* was out of stock in 1945, as was *Alberta Farms*. Approximately 200 copies of *Peace River Bridge* remained in stock into the 1950s.

86 Two years later in July 1955, there were still 680 prints in stock.

87 Jackson to McCurry, 26 Apr. 1946. Requesting that McCurry arrange for the printing, he waived his royalty rights in exchange for a \$100 fee. The print was not produced until c.1949.

88 The original image for *Gold Mines* [*Negus*] dates from a trip McCurry had arranged for Jackson, who was in Banff during the summer of 1943, to record work on the Alaska Highway for the federal government (McCurry to Jackson, 9 Aug. 1943).

89 Ensor's tempera design, auctioned at Sotheby's on 14-15 May 1973, was inscribed, "Peace River, Sexsmith Grain Elevators." The entry refers to the NGC catalogue, Vol. III, p.80, for a watercolour of the same subject by Ensor (reproduced no. 5778).

90 In June 1953 there were 153 prints in stock; a rerun of 750 additional prints was not yet complete. In July 1955, there were 436 prints in stock.

91 See note 85.

92 "Silk Screen Reproductions; Sales for the Month of July, 1954," Sampson-Matthews, 4 Aug. 1954. In the majority of cases, only 1 or 2 copies of each print were sold. In the small size, Pawson's *Late Harvest* and Thomson's *Aura Lea Lake* sold 6 and 5 prints respectively. In August, Hallam (with 15 sales of *Fish Houses*, *Indian Harbour*) and Roberts' *Village in Winter* (13) again led in sales. Phillips' *Victoria Glacier*, Hallam's *Cape Breton Harbour* and Sampson's *Veterans of the Sea* followed close behind.

- 93 Sampson-Matthews, 1 Dec. 1954, "Sales for the Month of October, 1954."
- 94 McCurry to Matthews, 12 Apr. 1954 and "National Gallery Reproductions: Report of Meeting with Mr. McCurry, January 13th, 1954."
- 95 Matthews to McCurry, 23 June 1954. Matthews calculated the total cost per large print at approximately \$4.00. The net cost of the small silk screen was established at approximately \$2.20; a straight discount of 40% on large and small prints was the best they could offer. At its April 1954 meeting, the Board discussed transferring the silk screen project to Sampson-Matthews with continuance of Gallery sponsorship and association. "It was felt ... desirable to keep the silk screen project under National Gallery control, but that the present lack of staff and working space made this difficult and it might be necessary for the National Gallery to divest itself at least partly from the project and secure the more active co-operation of Sampson-Matthews." The problem was referred to the Executive Committee. (Minutes of the Board of Trustees 18th Meeting, 21-22 Apr. 1954.) No action was reported at the October 1954 Board Meeting although it was proposed that the Director make recommendations in this regard.
- 96 See note 94.
- 97 Matthews to McCurry, 9 Mar. 1955. See also Minutes of the Board of Trustees 82nd Meeting, 18-19 May 1955. Sampson-Matthews' letter requesting a fifty percent or more commission on sales with the recommendation of an increased advertising sales campaign was read. On the motion proposed by Lawren Harris, the Gallery moved to advise Sampson-Matthews that "the National Gallery does not wish to continue reproducing subjects in the silk screen process at the present time and recommends postponement of such action for a few years." No future minutes record direct reference to the silkscreen project.
- 98 Sampson-Matthews, 8 Aug. 1955, "Silk Screen Reproductions, Stocks on Hand, 31 July 1955," included work in both large and small format. Matthews was also holding 1037 of the Canadian Pulp and Paper "Trees" series owned by the National Gallery.
- 99 See "Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees," 18-19 May 1955.
- 100 Minutes of the Board of Trustees 79th Meeting, 20-21 Oct. 1953, (dated 21 Apr. 1954 and signed by McCurry), 615. See also McCurry, MG30 D186, Vol. 3, NAC. McCurry responded to the criticisms in a six page, typescript document, "Comment on the Report of the Survey made by the Organization and Methods Division of the Civil Service on Canada on the National Gallery of Canada, Jan. 1, 1954." He wrote, "It is admitted that the current procedure regarding sales of reproductions and publications leaves something to be desired owing to the lack of staff. The development of sales by the National Gallery was a wartime growth of great rapidity and it was not possible ... to establish the most approved methods of handling revenue. Nor has it been possible to keep stocks of reproductions ... under lock and key. A simple system of controlling sales [requires additional staffing]. ... It should be remembered that the NG is an educational institution charged with the duty of cultivating correct artistic tastes and Canadian public interest in the fine arts and that a considerable portion of its work consists of lending reproductions extensively throughout Canada."
- 101 See note 99.
- 102 The last sales report covers June 1955.
- 103 NGC, "Royalties to be paid on the Sales of Silk Screen Prints for the Period July 1, 1954 to June 30, 1955;" "Royalties to be paid for the period 1 July 1955 to 30 June 1957." Among others, Bieler, Price and Courtice, received small cheques for sales of their silkscreens. (Casson received the largest cheque, \$214.60, while Bieler received 30 cents.) See also: "The National Gallery of Canada Royalties on the sale of silk screen prints for the period 1 July 1957 to February 20, 1958 inclusive."

104 For the year 1954, the estate of J.S. Hallam received \$144.80 for 362 sales of two images; Tom Roberts received \$93.60 for 234 prints and Casson received \$103.60 for 259 sales of his various prints. (Only three of Isabel McLaughlin's *Blossom Time* were sold that year.) In 1955 and 1956, MacDonald, Jackson, Casson and Haines accounted for the majority of the sales.

105 These images were also published in booklet form and distributed by the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association. On 14 December 1956, Alan Jarvis wrote to Thomson, the Association's President to thank him for the "excellent booklet on native design." Thomson had written on 5 Dec. 1956: "I enclose our latest flight into the visual arts. I do not know whether the illustrations are good or not, but at least they have the virtue of making people look at them. I thought you would be interested in seeing this effort. (Matthews, MG30 D230, Vol. 1 & 2, NAC.)

106 "Canadian Paintings Shown In Russia," *Montreal Gazette*, 6 Sept. 1958. The exhibition was also documented in the *U.S.S.R. Illustrated News*, published by the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa. The most popular works were those by Jackson, Thomson, Beament, Roberts, Collier, MacDonald, Leonard Brooks, Watson and Humphrey. See also I. DEMLIN, "Canadian Art in Stalingrad," *Northern Neighbours* (August 1958): 15-16. (I am indebted to Rosemarie Tovell for drawing my attention to these articles.)

107 Although the catalogue is actually undated, it states that it was published 45 years after Sampson-Matthews was founded. In an interview with Matthews and Casson (c.1978), Robert Stacey ascertained that Sampson-Matthews was founded in 1918.

108 The section, "22 Favourite Subjects - In 2 Convenient Sizes" refers to "twenty-two paintings." The term "reproduction" is used elsewhere in the brochure but the emphasis is always on the notion of originality as well as the prestige of the painters included in the series.

109 The Sampson-Matthews collection boasted that "the most comprehensive group of Canadian reproductions ever offered to the public are particularly suitable for use in offices, clubs, schools, hospitals and public buildings, as well as in the homes of people with discriminating taste."

110 The prices had been adjusted over the life of the prints. In April 1949, McCurry approved a price increase from \$5.00 to \$6.00 for large prints (\$5.00 for schools and \$4.00 for trade) and from \$4.00 to \$4.50 for small prints (\$3.50 for schools and \$3.00 for the trade).

111 Jackson to Matthews, 9 July 1960, Collection of Fred Turner, Toronto.

112 Jackson to McCurry, 14 Jan. 1944.

APPENDIX A

THE NATIONAL GALLERY/SAMPSON-MATTHEWS Post-War Prints

SERIES I and SERIES II are listed in Volume XIX/1 (1998), "Envisioning Nation: Nationhood and Identity and the Sampson-Matthews Silkscreen Prints: The Wartime Prints"

ARTIST	WORK
<u>FEDERATION OF CANADIAN ARTISTS (1945-1948)</u>	
Bertram Brooker	<i>Laurentian Village</i>
Rody Kenny Courtice	<i>The White Calf</i>
Lawren Harris	<i>Island, Georgian Bay</i>
	<i>Algoma Lake</i>
A. Y. Jackson	<i>Smart River (River, Alaska Highway)</i>
Naomi Jackson	<i>(Winter) Ste. Adele</i>
Thoreau MacDonald	<i>Country Road</i>
Tom Thomson	<i>Joe Creek</i>
Dorothy Williams	<i>Indian Village</i>
<u>PULP AND PAPER PRINTS (1947)</u>	
Franklin Arbuckle	<i>Shipping Paper</i>
Andre Bieler	<i>Pulp Making</i>
A.J. Casson	<i>Mill Village</i>
Albert Cloutier	<i>Woods Work</i>
Charles Comfort	<i>Bunkhouse (Scene)</i>
J.S. Hallam	<i>Log Driving</i>
Lawren Harris	<i>West Coast Mill</i>
A.Y. Jackson	<i>Paperboard Making</i>
Will Ogilvie	<i>Paper Making</i>
Thoreau MacDonald	<i>The Forest</i>
<u>PULP AND PAPER PRINTS (1950)</u>	
Franklin Arbuckle	<i>Western Hemlock</i>
A.J. Casson	<i>Poplar</i>
Albert Cloutier	<i>(Eastern) Hemlock</i>
Charles Comfort	<i>Balsam</i>
A.Y. Jackson	<i>Jack Pine</i>
Thoreau MacDonald	<i>(Black) Spruce</i>
<u>60 CANADIAN LANDSCAPES (1947-1953)</u>	
B.C. Binning	<i>Ships in a Classical Storm</i>
Harold Beament	<i>The Waiting Ones</i>
	<i>Departure for the Hunt</i>
Emily Carr	<i>Indian Church</i>
A.J. Casson	<i>Summer Morning</i>
	<i>White Pine</i>
	<i>Fisberman's Point, MacGregor's Bay</i>
Charles Comfort	<i>Algonquin Lake</i>
John Ensor	<i>Summer Store</i>
Fred Aines	<i>Rural Bridge</i>
J.B. Hallam	<i>Cape Breton Harbour</i>
	<i>Indian Harbour, Nova Scotia</i>
	<i>(Fishing Houses, Indian Harbour)</i>

Lawren Harris
Yvonne Housser
A.Y. Jackson

J.E.H. MacDonald
Thoreau MacDonald

David Milne
Ruth Pawson
Alfred Pellan
Robert Pilot
Tom Roberts
Sarah Robertson
Albert Robinson
Frederick Taylor
Tom Thomson

Sydney Watson

100 CANADIAN PAINTINGS (1953-1957)

Franklin Carmichael
Alan Collier
W.J. Phillips
Joachim Gauthier
A.Y. Jackson

Tom Roberts

Thoreau MacDonald
J.E. Sampson

Stanley Turner

PULP AND PAPER PRINTS (1956)

Designed by Arthur Price

CANADIAN PAINTINGS (1957-1963)

Alan Collier
Hilton Hassell
Arthur Price

Algoma Country
Poplar and Spruce
Maple and Birch
Dease Bay, Great Bear Lake
West Bay Fault, Yellowknife
Laurentian Farm
Mill at Coboconk
The Plough
The Snow Storm
Winter Evening
Boston Corner
Late Harvest
Le Pot à Tabac
Skating, Dufferin Terrace (Citadel in Winter, Quebec)
Village in Winter
Ice Cutting
Village on the Gulf
Rooftops, Quebec
Portage, Ragged Lake
March
Northern Lights
Aura Lee Lake
St. Lawrence Town, Quebec

Autumn Wood Interior
Spring Mood
Valley of the Ten Peaks
Autumn Road, Haliburton
Gold Mine (Negus Mine)
Junction of the Peace and the Smoky Rivers
Road to the Village
Main Street
Country Road
Gaspé
Misty Shore
Parliament Buildings

King Salmon North Pacific Coast
Plains Horsemen
Iroquois False Face (Iroquois Mask)
Beaver and Sturgeon
Soapstone Loon
Scrimshaw Engraving

Emerald Lake, Yoho Park
Descending Sails
Thunderbird

*Dates refer to the period of time during which the image was first produced

SAMPSON-MATTHEWS ET LA GNC

Les années d'après-guerre

Le concept de la terre et la représentation visuelle du paysage ont joué, au Canada, un rôle décisif dans la conscience de ce que Benedict Anderson appelait la « communauté imaginée » qui sous-tend le sens canadien du nationalisme. Dans un pays où il y a relativement peu de galeries d'art et où l'accès à des œuvres originales est limité, des images de substitution, sous forme de reproductions, ont joué un rôle critique, traversant les frontières du temps et de l'espace et transcendant les différences régionales pour créer une vision « canadienne » de la terre. Dans le présent article des *Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien*, le second qui traite du projet de sérigraphies Sampson-Matthews, je reprends mon argument initial que notre sens collectif de ce qu'il y a de canadien dans l'art canadien et la place de la terre (et plus particulièrement de l'esthétique de la nature sauvage) comme clé de l'identité canadienne, ont leur origine dans le projet Sampson-Matthews et, plus spécialement, dans la phase d'après-guerre de ce projet.

Cet essai se fonde sur ce qui a déjà été étudié dans deux articles précédents. « Comment on a fixé le canon » (1995) décrivait un programme antérieur peu connu mis sur pied par la Galerie nationale en 1928, qui distribuait des milliers de lithographies dans les écoles et les maisons à travers le pays. « Une vision de la nation. La nation, l'identité et les sérigraphies du temps de guerre de Sampson-Matthews » (1998) traitait de la fondation du projet Sampson-Matthews, le deuxième plus important programme de reproductions de la Galerie nationale. Alors que « Une vision de la nation » examinait le développement et la production des 36 sérigraphies du temps de guerre, le présent article traite du programme scolaire d'après 1945, le dernier programme commercial de la Galerie et les reproductions associées au projet Sampson-Matthews au cours de la période qui a suivi la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. J'examine, en particulier, la manière dont le projet, qui devait, à l'origine, fournir une vision contemporaine de l'expérience canadienne et qui proposait le concept d'une identité canadienne diversifiée plutôt qu'homogène, en est venu à réaffirmer la position du Groupe des sept et de leurs disciples comme pierre de touche de l'identité et de l'art canadiens. Au cours des deux décennies qui ont suivi la guerre, ces reproductions Sampson-Matthews (30" x 40"), grandes, belles, abordables et largement diffusées, semblaient confirmer la croyance populaire que l'expression de l'identité nationale par l'art du paysage était à la fois naturelle et inévitable. Pour tenter de comprendre comment le projet a forgé la perception canadienne de l'art et de l'identité, le présent article examine les œuvres individuelles qui

composent la série et comment elles ont été commandées et diffusées. En analysant les diverses conceptions de l'art qui ont défini le projet au cours de son histoire, j'en trace l'évolution, depuis le programme national, destiné à permettre aux artistes à travers le pays de bénéficier des avantages de la sérigraphie, jusqu'à l'entreprise commerciale à la vision étroite. À partir du «donné» de l'association entre nationalisme et paysage, déjà mis en place par le programme antérieur de reproductions, j'étudie comment le projet de sérigraphies destiné à donner une large représentation de l'expérience régionale au Canada et à refléter le paysage canadien et la nature sauvage, s'inscrivait, politiquement et symboliquement, dans la conscience nationale à travers la représentation de l'esthétique de la nature sauvage.

L'article traite aussi de plusieurs petits projets de sérigraphies, indépendants et peu connus, associés aux sérigraphies Sampson-Matthews. Le premier, un projet de sérigraphies de la Fédération des artistes canadiens réalisé après la guerre, était destiné à encourager les artistes à travers le pays à utiliser ce médium et à développer de nouvelles sources de revenus pour les artistes canadiens. Cependant, plutôt que d'être faites par des artistes de toutes les parties du pays, les sérigraphies étaient produites par Sampson-Matthews à Toronto. Le projet se solda par un échec. Neuf sérigraphies seulement furent complétées. Bien que financée par Lawren Harris et supportée par la Galerie nationale, la Fédération n'a jamais produit la même sorte de sérigraphies d'art que le projet américain W.P.A. (Works Progress Administration) qui avait servi de modèle au projet canadien. L'article étudie aussi trois séries de sérigraphies publiées par la Canadian Pulp and Paper Association. Commandées par le président de la Canadian Pulp and Paper Industry et réalisées par Sampson-Matthews, ces sérigraphies étaient essentiellement une entreprise commerciale dans le but de créer une image positive de l'industrie au plan de l'environnement. Distribuées par Sampson-Matthews et la Galerie nationale, ainsi que par la Pulp and Paper Association, ces images, qui représentaient divers aspects de l'industrie de la forêt, étaient un excellent outil de relations publiques.

Le programme de sérigraphies de guerre avait été motivé par les réactions présumées des commanditaires et de l'armée. Dans les années d'après-guerre, la nature conservatrice du programme de la Galerie nationale était assurée par le souci de rentabilité des imprimeurs. On trouvait que les membres de la Société d'art contemporain, Borduas et les automatistes, (les «dérivés français» comme les appelait Jackson), et les artistes canadiens-anglais influencés par l'expressionnisme abstrait américain ne convenaient pas pour cette série. Le travail des «modernes» (selon les termes de Jackson) n'a jamais été vraiment pris en considération pour le projet en dépit du fait que la production se soit poursuivie jusque dans les années soixante. La recherche de «bonnes images compréhensibles» qui avait motivé le projet du temps de guerre continuait de dominer la sélection des sérigraphies de la Galerie nationale et de Sampson-Matthews dans les années d'après-guerre. Les normes établies par Sampson-Matthews concernant ce qui était «des scènes typiquement canadiennes»,

dont le style se situait entre ce que Matthews appelait les «vieux jeu» et les «modernes», demeuraient la règle. L'intention de la Galerie nationale d'encourager chez les artistes canadiens le développement d'un nouveau médium et d'une nouvelle manière de travailler, était soumise à des goûts conservateurs et au fait que la prise de décision se situait au plan commercial plutôt qu'artistique. Après 1955, lorsque le projet passa de la Galerie nationale à Sampson-Matthews, l'impératif commercial devint encore plus fort. Peu de gens aujourd'hui reconnaîtraient que l'objectif initial de ce projet du temps de guerre était de faire largement connaître la production artistique contemporaine au Canada. Au contraire, ce qui continue de dominer la mémoire collective, ce sont les sérigraphies du «Groupe des Sept» suspendues aux murs des écoles et des endroits publics et dont plusieurs avait été créées vingt ou trente ans avant d'être imprimées. Il n'y a pas de quoi se surprendre. Jackson, J.E.H. MacDonald, Lismer, Harris, Carmichael, Casson, et Tom Thomson ont tous été représentés par au moins une sérigraphie dans la série du temps de guerre, et ce nombre a augmenté considérablement dans l'après-guerre. Avec dix œuvres de Jackson, cinq de Thomson et une forte représentation d'images classiques du Groupe par Lismer, Harris et MacDonald, il n'est guère étonnant que, rétrospectivement, le projet des sérigraphies ait été vu comme le renforcement de la domination du Groupe dans l'histoire de l'art canadien. De plus, dans les dernières années de production, Sampson-Matthews combinait les images de tous les projets dans une même brochure de commercialisation et ne faisait guère de différence entre les sérigraphies du temps de guerre, celles de la Galerie nationale après la guerre, celles de la Fédération des artistes canadiens et de la Pulp and Paper Association et celles de la phase post-Galerie/Sampson-Matthews du projet.

Après 1955, la Galerie s'est tournée vers d'autres projets, notamment la revue *Canadian Art* et la publication de livres, pour faire mieux connaître l'art canadien. Plusieurs années après, elle s'engagera dans un autre programme de reproductions, les sérigraphies Markgraf, qui offraient un large éventail d'images par des artistes contemporains à prix très abordables. Mais le projet de sérigraphies Markgraf, tout en étant attrayant, d'excellente qualité et abordable, n'avait pas l'impact formateur des projets précédents, peut-être en partie parce que ses images n'étaient plus axées sur l'esthétique familière du paysage et de la nature sauvage. On ne peut nier que le projet du temps de guerre touchait une corde populaire et patriotique dans un pays occupé à se construire une nation et une identité nationale. Poursuivant le programme antérieur de reproductions de la Galerie nationale et la confluence du paysage et du nationalisme, les sérigraphies de Sampson-Matthews, qu'on retrouvait partout au pays dans les écoles et les bibliothèques, aussi bien que dans les lieux de villégiature et les maisons particulières, servaient pareillement à la construction de l'identité canadienne.

Traduction: Élise Bonnette

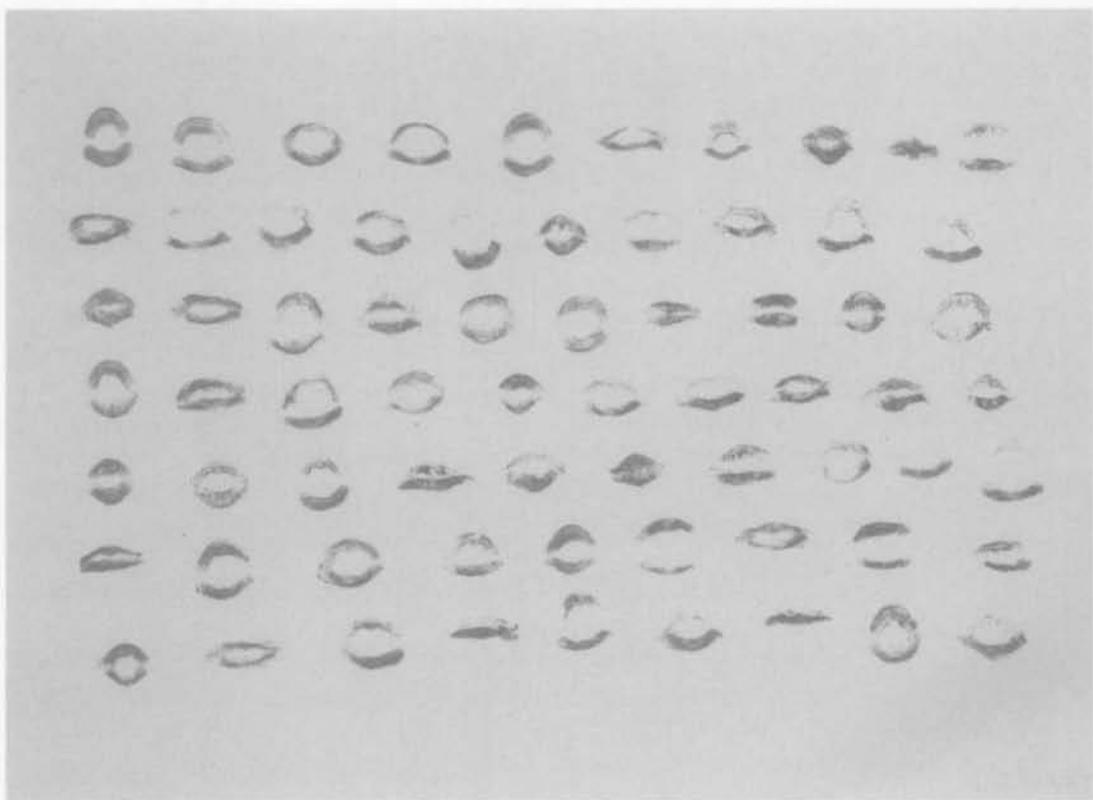


fig.1 Joyce Weiland, *O Canada*, 1970, lithograph, 57 x 76 cm, Fogg Art Museum, Margaret Fisher Fund. (Photo: The Estate of Joyce Weiland)

ANTHEM LIP-SYNC

In 1998, Marjorie B. Cohn, curator of prints at the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, announced she was including *O Canada* (fig.1) by Joyce Wieland in *Touchstone: 200 Years of Artists' Lithographs*, which investigated the history of lithography since its invention in 1798. Cohn declared *O Canada* from 1970 to be her favourite print in the exhibition.¹ "For *O Canada*, the artist sang her national anthem and pressed her lipsticked mouth to the lithographic stone at each syllable," Cohn wrote; "the array of kiss marks was printed in lipstick pink."² Cohn gave Wieland's print pride of place in the exhibition, installing *O Canada* on the title wall. As far as I can tell, for I did not see the exhibition, the juxtaposition served a double purpose. On the one hand, it reinforced the theme of the show — the capacity of the lithographic process to reproduce unmediated the autographic touch of the artist. (What could be more autographically tactile, more intimate, even erotic, than warm lips drawing life out of cold stone?) On the other hand, it signalled Cohn's deep affection for the medium in question, an affection she wished viewers to share by, as it were, blowing lithographic kisses in their direction. In this essay, I want to examine Wieland's lipstick imagery from 1963 to 1971, especially those images in which she is blowing kisses at Canada, and to consider how her expression of a feminized patriotism has been differently read by audiences.³

When Wieland made *O Canada* in 1970, she had been living in the United States for eight years.⁴ In 1962 she and her husband, the artist Michael Snow moved from Toronto (where she was born) to New York City. She stayed in New York for ten years before returning to Toronto. During the decade away from Canada — away from her "home and native land!", as the first line in the Canadian national anthem exclaims — she developed a multipartite practice as a visual artist. Among the early paintings executed in New York was *West 4th* (fig.2), a 1963 Popphallic painting of filmstrip frames displaying red-tipped cigarettes and lipsticked mouths, with the frames running unevenly up and down the vertical length of the canvas.⁵ Wieland was a painter, collagist, embroiderer, photographer, quilter and mixed media artist, not to mention filmmaker. She produced experimental work in all these disciplines, though film was the medium for which she received the widest recognition at the time; among her best-known films were (and still are) *Patriotism, Part II* (1964), *Rat Life and Diet in North America* (1968), and *Reason Over Passion/La Raison avant la passion* (1967-1969).⁶ Given her willingness to experiment across media, it may seem surprising that printmaking and bookmaking



fig.2 Joyce Weiland, *West 4th*,
1963, oil on canvas, 77 x
30 cm, Private collection,
Toronto. (Photo: The Estate of
Joyce Weiland)

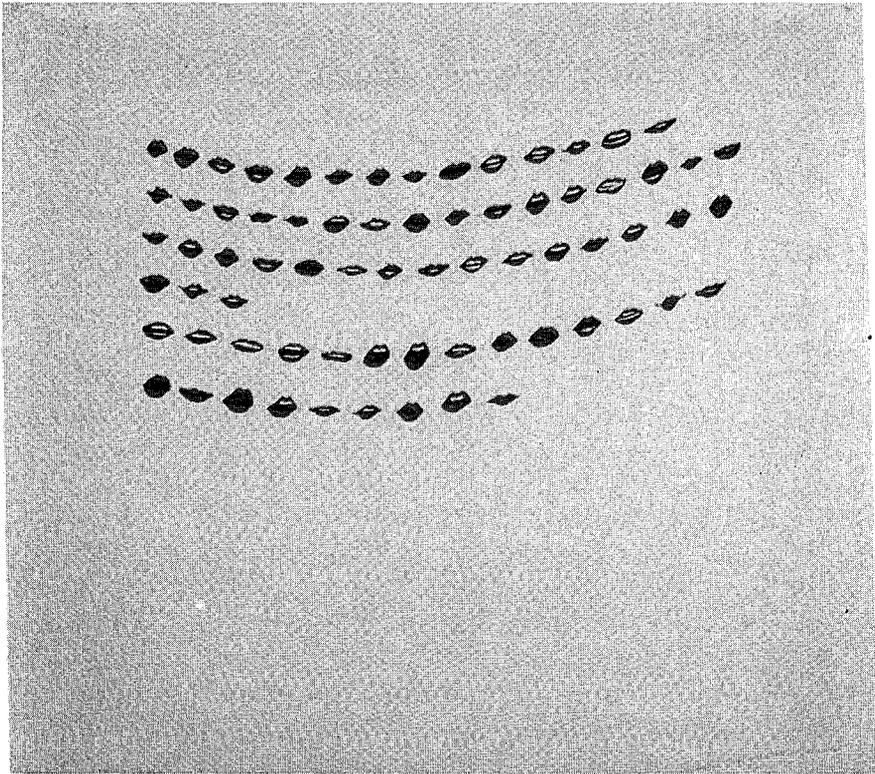


fig.3 Joyce Weiland, *O Canada Animation*, 1970, embroidery on cloth, 107 x 114 cm, private collection. (Photo: The Estate of Joyce Weiland)

escaped her interest until the end of the period. Even then they engaged her attention only sparingly. She has made just one artist's book, *True Patriot Love: Véritable amour patriotique*, a pièce d'occasion to accompany her 1971 retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa (the first accorded a female artist by that institution).⁷ And she has made just one lithographic print, *O Canada*, executed in Halifax, at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, where she was a visiting artist and teacher for a semester in 1970.

It is worth emphasizing that both the book and the print are one-offs. In the book, Weiland interleaved her own hand-written texts and photographs among the facsimile pages of another book, the *Illustrated Flora of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago*.⁸ The resulting hybrid — arctic plants intertwined with “planted” art, so to speak — functioned as an exhibition catalogue, though Weiland doubly con-

founded the identity of the publication by disguising it as a parliamentary report, an official document, encasing the contents between severe maroon covers stamped with a gold Government of Canada seal. In the middle of the book, Wieland inserted the typed text of the first stanza of the national anthem, along with a photograph of *O Canada Animation* (1970), a version of the *O Canada* lithograph in which the red lips (and added gleaming white teeth) are represented by embroidery on cloth (fig. 3).⁹ The embroidered version of *O Canada* was not the only version of the lithograph executed in another medium in the exhibition; nor was it the only medium associated with so-called women's work. *O Canada* — the quilt — placed each letter in the first stanza of the Canadian anthem on a gridded red ground of quilted cloth. The letters stitched onto the red cloth were white, a direct allusion to the red and white colors of the Canadian flag. Instead of producing a series of works in one medium on the theme of the Canadian anthem, Wieland produced a series of individual works in *several* media on that theme.

In the introduction to *Touchstone*, Cohn points out that artists have drawn (or scratched or mouthed) lithographs, but have rarely printed them.¹⁰ Lithography has traditionally segregated the production of prints on paper from the process of creating an image on the printing matrix, because of its technical complexities and the necessity of substantial capital investment. Cohn argues that the division of labor has had the salutary effect of freeing up the artist to experiment with different options for mark-making, with results that are often startlingly immediate — a registration of the artist's tactile presence. The opportunity for Wieland to make a lithograph on the "O Canada" theme was provided by the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design Lithography Workshop. Founded in 1969, the workshop was a direct consequence of the Tamarind Lithography Workshop's success in reviving the medium by drawing prominent artists to Los Angeles.¹¹ The art-school enterprise hoped to attract contemporary artists to Halifax and the east coast in much the same way that Tamarind had attracted artists to Los Angeles and the west coast; it even hired one of Tamarind's former employees as a master printer. The school's initiative paid off and before the workshop closed down in 1976, it had produced 186 editions of prints by leading artists in Europe and North America. Many of the prints registered the kind of tactile immediacy of interest to Cohn.

In *O Canada* Wieland gives us the fragile tactility of her own skin. The repeated kiss of her lips stamps the print 68 singing times, each kiss a sexualized syllable of the Canadian national anthem. As both a feminist and a nationalist, Wieland played with the fact that the anthem was composed in the masculine case. The second line of the first stanza requires an audience to sing the words "true patriot-love in all thy sons command," regardless of the niceties of gender. The print ironically conflates male patriotic love with female erotics, while refusing to collapse the tension between the two. For Dennis Young, who purchased the print

for the Art Gallery of Ontario soon after it was executed, *O Canada* was “an engaging *mélange* of [Wieland’s] major themes: erotic and patriotic love.”¹² Cohn observed, rather more sharply, that “It is a feminist’s acid satire against dominant macho patriotism, and at the same time it is an affectionate patriotic affirmation.”¹³ Notwithstanding Thomas Crow’s observation that the art object is mute, the lithograph seemed to speak with bite and humor to both these observers.¹⁴

But how does it speak? Crow’s observation about the silence of the art object points to a vexing contradiction, for it is the peculiarity of art to resist interpretation as well as to beckon it. In trying to figure out exactly what sounds are being emitted from the lipstick traces of *O Canada*, and to whom the lithograph is beckoning for interpretation, what “glowing hearts” (to pull another phrase from the national anthem) are there to respond, it would help to know more about contemporary audiences for the print. Wieland believed, like Prime Minister Trudeau who was a fan of the artist’s work,¹⁵ that a national program of bilingualism had the potential to hold Canada together internally in the face of Quebec’s growing desire for independence, and at the same time to fend off cultural incursions and blandishments from the United States of America. If both French and English were equal as languages, so the logic went, then the “founding nations” (a construction that conveniently ignores the preceding aboriginal nations within the Canadian geographical landmass) would also be equal.

Pace Foucault and his insights into the complexities of power as a discursive formation, the idea was that a language balance would induce a power balance within Canada. That is one reason why Wieland uses English and French side by side in many of her titles, and why “O Canada,” which does not need translation from French to English or English to French, suited her purposes so well. There is little doubt Wieland hoped that in the best of all possible worlds, which is to say a world in which Canada remained united as “The True North, strong and free” (another phrase from the anthem), both a *sovereigniste* francophone Quebecer and a federalist British Columbian of similar age and class might look at *O Canada* during the 1971 retrospective exhibition and read the print in a comparable manner. She imagined that, if the bite and humour registered for both viewers in the same way, then Trudeau’s policy of bilingualism and reconciliation might succeed. But would the bite and humor have, in fact, registered in the same way? Make no mistake, *O Canada* is a political statement.¹⁶ To the *sovereigniste* Quebecer in 1971, who had just undergone the depredations and anxieties of the FLQ crisis that culminated in the imposition of the repressive War Measures Act by the Trudeau government, might not the antheming lips in *O Canada* have seemed to be singing from the wrong songsheet? Might they not have seemed to be a substitute, a gross caricature, for the incantatory lips featured in Leni Riefenstahl’s films of the 1930s? Wieland herself admitted as much. During an interview in 1972, she stated that she sometimes “felt like Leni Riefenstahl ... a government propagandist.”¹⁷ Even



fig.4 Vito Acconci, Kiss off, 1971, lithograph on paper, 76 x 58 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario. (Photo: Art Gallery of Ontario)

as she was producing her most political work, she recognized that politics amuses and bites differently for different audiences. Like irony, it cuts more than one way.

During the same interview, Wieland said "I think of Canada as female. . . . All the art I have been doing or will be doing is about Canada. I may tend to overly identify with Canada."¹⁸ One of the products she bottled and sold at the time of her retrospective was "Sweet Beaver" perfume, a concoction that was part false advertising, part sexual innuendo and part patriotism, not unlike the elements comprising *O Canada*. More than humor and female erotics, however, separate the patriotism of *O Canada* from the patriotism expressed by the Canadian anthem or by the Canadian flag. The bombast of the flag, with its snow whites and Mountie reds, is contradicted in the print by the employment of an off-white paper stock and slightly muted reds in the repeating lips. The high chroma of Madison Avenue lipstick and toothpaste advertisements is likewise contradicted, subduing the color protocols of both Ottawa and Madison Avenue.

In 1971 Wieland's lipstick semiphore attracted the attention of Vito Acconci. When Acconci was at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design as a visiting artist, he used the Lithography Workshop to print *Kiss Off* (fig. 4). Like the print that inspired it, *Kiss Off* functions as both homage and satire. Following Wieland's lead, Acconci applied lipstick to his mouth (as shown in the photo-transfers at the top of the print), but instead of imprinting the lithographic stone with his lips he kissed his own hands and then manually smeared the stone.¹⁹ By this act of displacement, he wiped away the female identity he had just put on and, of course, violently wiped away the lipstick traces produced by Wieland in the name of a feminized patriotism.

Acconci's erasure was prophetic. Thirty years have passed since Wieland executed *O Canada*, and during that time most versions of Canadian patriotism, feminized or not, have subsided. A few years ago the Canadian government even sold reproduction rights to the emblems of the Canadian Mounties to the Disney Corporation, a transaction that would have been unthinkable in the 1960s and 1970s. Although Canada itself is not yet a brand name, and "O Canada" not yet reduced to a promotional jingle, patriotic feeling now registers uncertainly in Canada. Recently a student at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, familiar with Wieland's print as well as with Acconci's, worked on her hands and knees planting lipstick kisses across an entire gallery floor. It took her days to cover the space and, figuratively speaking, to move Wieland's kisses off the gallery wall and underfoot.²⁰ At Harvard, Cohn chose to put Wieland's kisses back on the wall as a centrepiece of her lithography exhibition — but she did it to tell a different story than the one promoted by the artist, and to pleasure an American audience.

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Notes

- 1 Marjorie B. COHN, *Fogg Print Fans' Newsletter* (Cambridge, Mass.), 15 Aug. 1998, n.p. Cohn's declaration that *O Canada* was her favourite print in the show was not disclosed in the catalogue accompanying the exhibition. See Marjorie B. COHN and Clare I. ROGAN, *Touchstone: 200 Hundred Years of Artists' Lithographs* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Art Museums, 1998).
- 2 COHN, *Fogg Print Fans' Newsletter*, n.p.
- 3 In particular, I wish to examine how the multiple codes structuring *O Canada* have been differently interpreted by audiences possessing a range of cultural competences. See Pierre BOURDIEU, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984).
- 4 For information about Wieland and her work, I have relied principally on Lucy LIPPARD, Marie FLEMING and Lauren RABINOVITZ, *Joyce Wieland* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario and Key Porter Books, 1987), and on the bibliographies and chronologies appended to the catalogue. I also consulted the Joyce Wieland archives, at York University.
- 5 The words "causes cancer" are pencilled across one of the filmstrip frames, pointing to Wieland's acidulous engagement with health and later ecological issues in her art. But that is another story.
- 6 See Kathryn ELDER, ed., *The Films of Joyce Wieland* (Toronto: Toronto International Film Festival Group, 1999).
- 7 Joyce WIELAND, *True Patriot Love: Véritable amour patriotique* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1971). Johanne Sloan investigated some of the complexities of *True Patriot Love: Véritable amour patriotique* in a paper delivered at the annual conference of the the Universities Art Association of Canada, Toronto, 5 November 1999.
- 8 *Illustrated Flora of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago* was first published as *Bulletin*, no. 146 by the National Museums of Canada in 1964.
- 9 WIELAND, *True Patriot Love*, 140.
- 10 COHN, "Introduction," *Touchstone*, 12.
- 11 A brief history of the workshop is recounted in Robert STACEY and Liz WYLIE, *Eighty/Twenty: 100 Years of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design* (Halifax: Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, 1988), 80-81. See also Eric CAMERON, "The Lithography Workshop" *NSCAD: The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design Prints and Books* (Halifax: Press of NSCAD, 1982).
- 12 Dennis YOUNG, "Introduction," *Recent Vanguard Acquisitions* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1971), 19. In his assessment of *O Canada*, Young added that the lithograph was a "candidate for the most brilliantly conceived Canadian print of the year."
- 13 COHN, "The Artist's Touch," *Touchstone*, 28.
- 14 Thomas CROW, *The Intelligence of Art* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 1.
- 15 Margaret Trudeau may also have been an admirer of Wieland, but in a fit of exasperation at her husband's preference for "reason over passion" she is reported to have torn the hand-stitched letters off a Wieland quilt of the same name and to have "flung them in his face." Olivia WARD TAYLOR, "Artist Joyce Wieland," quoted by LIPPARD, FLEMING, RABINOVITZ, "Watershed: Contradiction, Communication and Canada in Joyce Wieland's Work," *Joyce Wieland*, 181, note 18.

16 "O Canada" was adopted by Parliament as the official national anthem in 1967, the year of the country's centennial. The music was composed by Calixa Lavallée and the verses written by Judge Adolphe-Basile Routhier in 1880. For most of the period following its composition, the song was associated with French-speaking Québec.

17 See "Kay Armitage Interviews Joyce Wieland," *Take One* 3 (February 1972): 23.

18 WIELAND, *Take One*, 24.

19 STACEY and WYLIE, *Eighty/Twenty*, 81. I am grateful to the artist Gerald Ferguson, who was instrumental in the success of the Lithography Workshop in Halifax, for first drawing my attention to *Kiss Off*.

20 Sarah Hollenberg, *Sarah, You Just Can't Have 50,000 Perfect Kisses*, installation piece, Gallery II at the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design, 1999.

L'O CANADA Entre féminisme et patriotisme

Cet essai étudie les images de rouges à lèvres de Joyce Wieland, de 1963 à 1971, spécialement celles où elle envoie des baisers au Canada, et examine les différentes manières dont son expression d'un patriotisme féminisé est interprétée par le public. Lorsque l'artiste a créé la lithographie *O Canada* en 1970, elle habitait aux États-Unis depuis huit ans. Elle a demeuré à New York pendant dix ans avant de revenir à Toronto. Pendant la décennie passée loin du Canada — loin de son «foyer et de sa terre natale!», comme le dit le premier vers de la version anglaise de l'hymne national du Canada — elle a développé une technique multipartite. Mais elle n'a fait qu'une seule lithographie, *O Canada*, exécutée à Halifax, au Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, en tant qu'artiste invitée et professeur durant un semestre en 1970.

Dans *O Canada*, Joyce Wieland nous livre la fragile tactilité de sa propre peau. Un baiser de ses lèvres se répète 68 fois sur la lithographie, chaque baiser représentant une syllabe sexualisée de l'hymne national canadien. En tant que féministe et nationaliste, Wieland a joué avec le fait que l'hymne a été composé au masculin. Le deuxième vers du premier couplet demande à l'auditoire de chanter «un véritable amour de la patrie anime tous tes fils», sans se préoccuper des distinctions de genre. La lithographie marie ironiquement l'amour masculin de la patrie à l'érotisme féminin tout en refusant d'évacuer la tension entre les deux. En dépit de la remarque de Thomas Crow que l'objet de l'art est muet, la lithographie semble parler avec mordant et humour. Mais comment parle-t-elle? La remarque de Crow sur le silence de l'objet de l'art montre une fâcheuse contradiction, car c'est le propre de l'art que de résister à l'interprétation tout en l'invitant. En essayant de trouver exactement les sons émis par les traces de rouge à lèvres dans «O Canada» et à qui la lithographie demande une interprétation, quels «cœurs ardents» (pour reprendre une autre expression de l'hymne national) pourraient y répondre, l'essai mène une enquête auprès des publics contemporains de la lithographie, y compris le premier ministre Trudeau. Il enquête aussi auprès des publics d'aujourd'hui.

Il y a plus que de l'humour et de l'érotisme féminin qui distingue le patriotisme de *O Canada* du patriotisme exprimé par l'hymne ou par le drapeau canadiens. La grandiloquence du drapeau, avec le blanc de la neige et le rouge de la Gendarmerie royale, est contredite, dans la lithographie, par l'emploi de papier blanc cassé et de rouges légèrement atténués pour les lèvres. Le fort con-

traste chromatique des rouges à lèvres de Madison Avenue et de la publicité pour dentifrices est également contredite, atténuant aussi bien les couleurs d'Ottawa que celles de Madison Avenue. *O Canada* est un manifeste politique qui ne touche pas de la même manière différents publics. Comme l'ironie, cette lithographie a plusieurs façons de mordre.

Traduction: Élise Bonnette

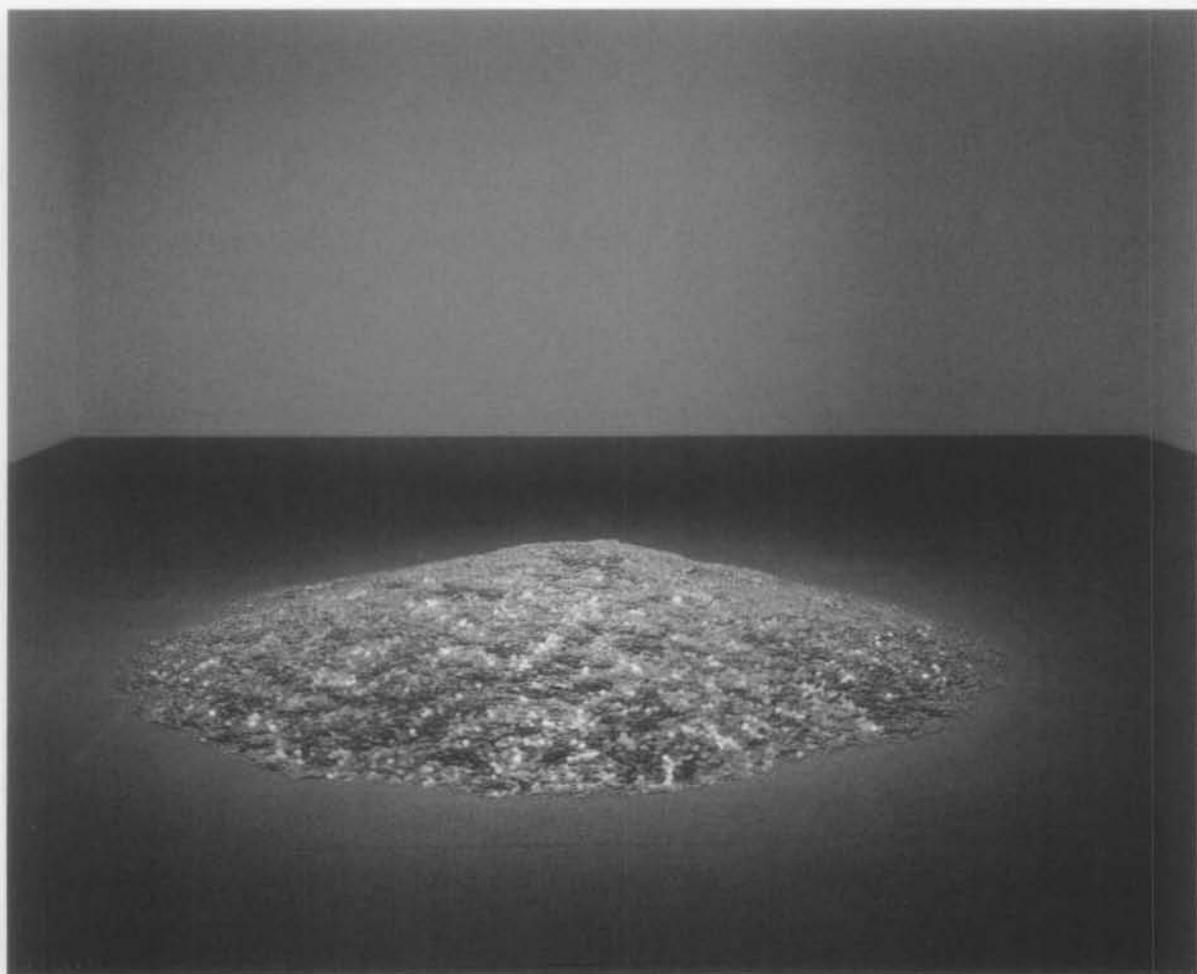


fig.1 Gerald Ferguson, *1,000,000 Pennies*, 1979, 1,000,000 Canadian pennies, collection of the artist, installed at the National Gallery of Canada, 1999. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada)

LATE STYLE IN THE WORK OF GERALD FERGUSON

The maturity of the late works of significant artists does not resemble the kind one finds in fruit. They are, for the most part, not round, but furrowed, even ravaged. Devoid of sweetness, bitter and spiny, they do not surrender themselves to mere delectation. They lack all the harmony that the classicist esthetic is in the habit of demanding from works of art, and they show more traces of history than of growth.¹

Late in 1999, a moment of no mere *fin de siècle ennui* but full-fledged end-of-the-millennium gravitas, I was preparing a slightly ironic exhibition for the National Gallery of Canada about time and big numbers which I called *2000 and Counting*. The two artists in the first part of the show, which opened in November, were the Japanese Tatsuo Miyajima, and the Canadian (and transplanted former American) Gerald Ferguson. Ferguson's contribution to the exhibition consisted of two works quite different in terms of appearance and date, that nonetheless spoke very well to my theme because of their literal manifestation of vast quantities: a glittering heap of three tonnes of newly-minted pennies in one room and a dizzying grid of one hundred black paintings that filled the walls of another, not to mention the counting implied in their titles, and the large-scale manufacturing processes or the huge number of repeated painterly gestures involved in making them. These attributes introduced just the balance of fact and metaphor that I was looking for.

The two works were *1,000,000 Pennies* (fig.1), which Ferguson first assembled with the help of a bank loan for an exhibition at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary in 1980, and *1,000,000 Grapes* (fig.2), which he painted in Halifax in 1996 and 1997, using a stencil of forty grapes and 250 passes over each canvas with a roller laden with black enamel paint, representing 10,000 grapes per canvas (fig.3). Although Ferguson's well-known work ethic and commitment to task-like procedures to make his art give one no reason to doubt that the painted grapes do indeed total one million, it is impossible to verify this visually, as the individual clusters are lost in an expanse of inky blackness (with small spots of white canvas showing through here and there), leaving at least one critic to note the resemblance of the installed canvases to starry skies. It is, in fact, possible to continue this metaphor of infinitude, comparing the telluric origins of the copper in the bright pile of pennies — a modern paean to the limitless power of shiny things to fascinate human beings — with the dark, absorptive surface of the orderly rows of canvases which reflect their blackness in the shiny surface of the

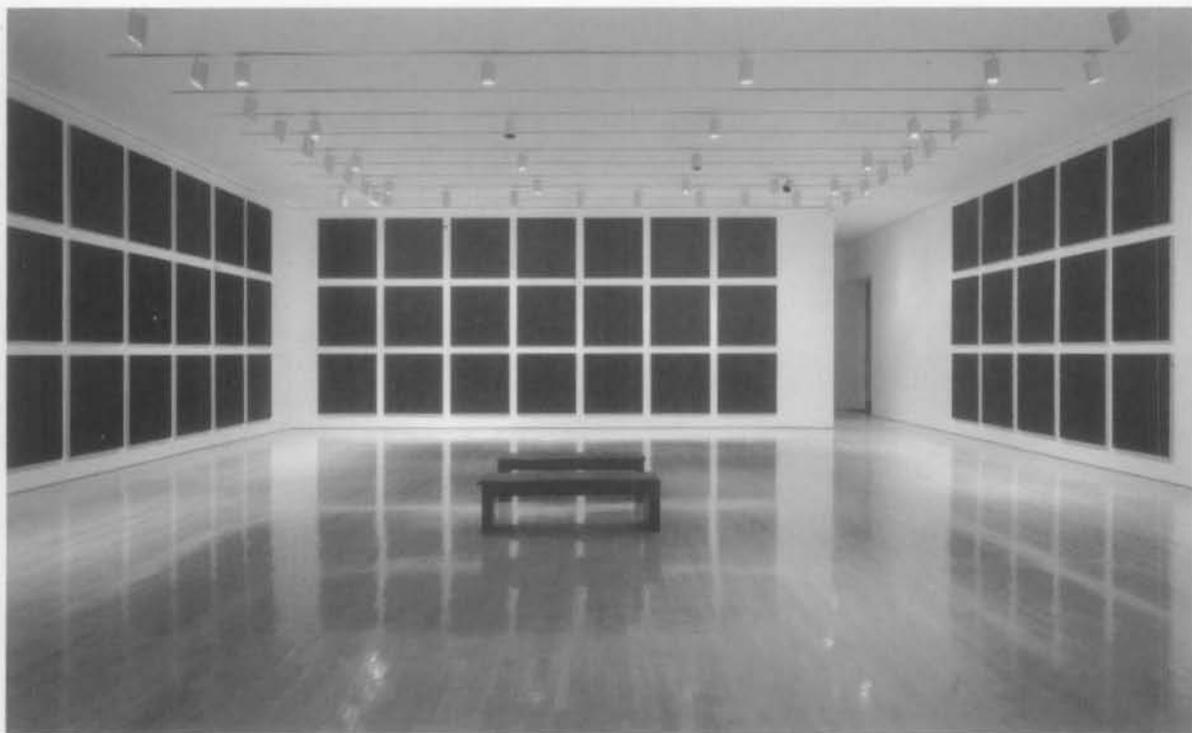


fig.2 Gerald Ferguson, *1,000,000 Grapes*, 1996-97, acrylic gloss enamel on canvas, 120 x 120 cm (each canvas), courtesy of the Wynick/Tuck Gallery, Toronto, installed at the National Gallery of Canada, 1999. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada)

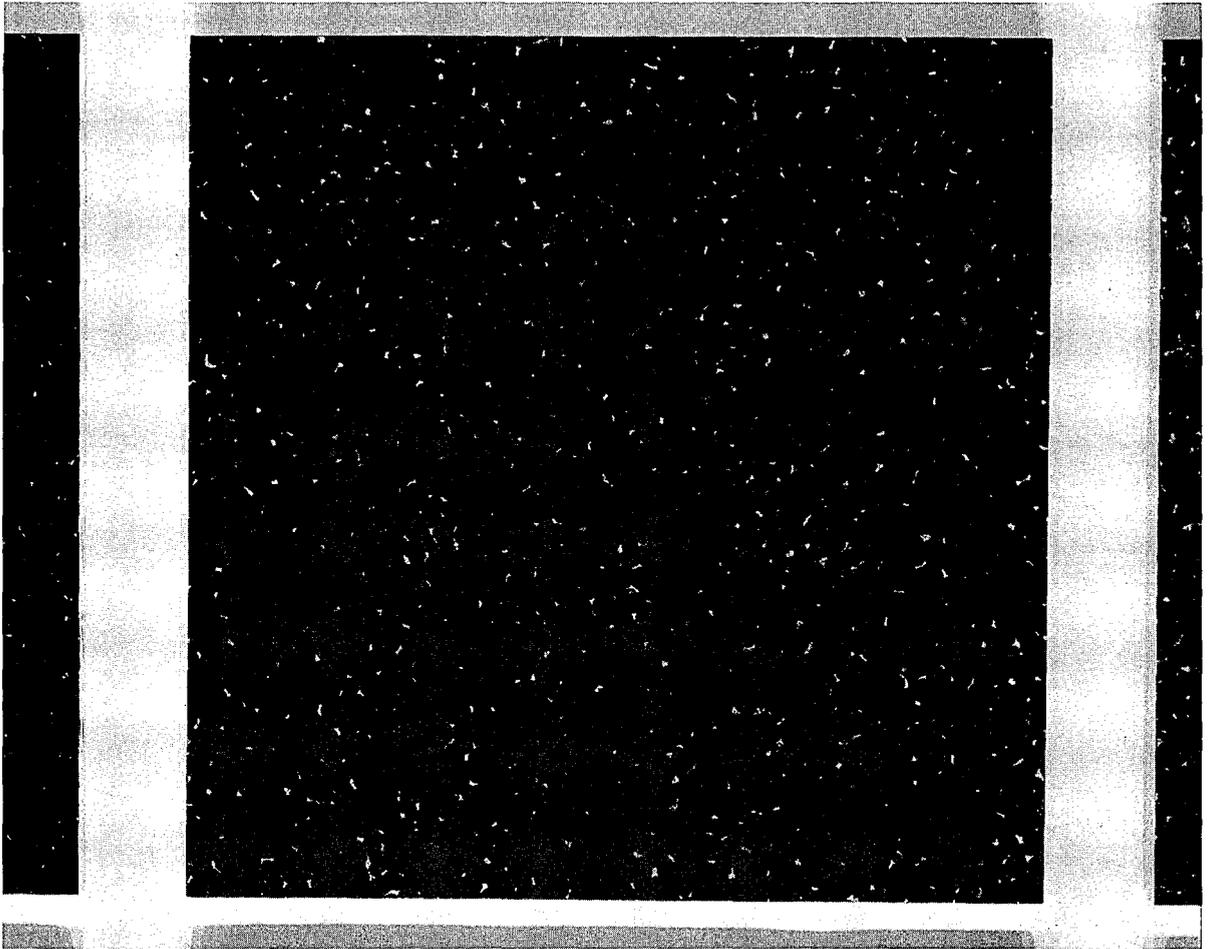


fig. 3 Gerald Ferguson, *10,000 Grapes* (detail), 1996-97, acrylic gloss enamel on canvas, 120 x 120 cm, Mount Saint Vincent University Coll., gift of the artist. (Photo: Steve Farmer)

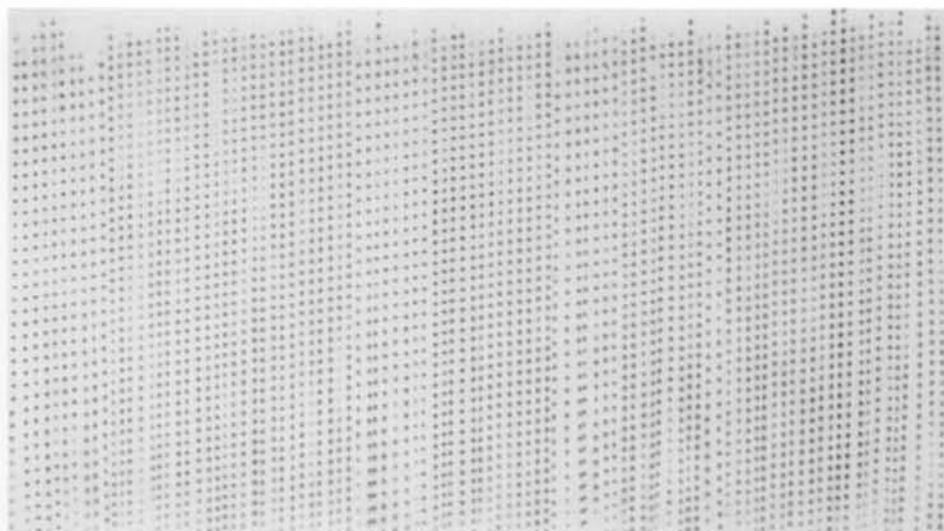


fig.4 Gerald Ferguson, *Untitled*, 1969, enamel paint on unprimed canvas, 173 x 310 cm, National Gallery of Canada. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada)

floor, causing another space to open up beneath one's feet. But it is unlikely that Ferguson had anything like infinity on his mind in making these works. Quite the opposite, one suspects, though he must have enjoyed the intangible effects on the imagination that these extremely tangible works provoked.

In one way, *1,000,000 Pennies* and *1,000,000 Grapes* are quite similar, as each is made up of a multitude of small discs or disc-like forms. The use of repeated units to create a work has been characteristic of Ferguson's modular art-making procedures throughout his career, but the discs recall in particular the dot paintings he made in the late sixties and early seventies, one of which, an untitled painting from 1969 (fig.4), is in the collection of the National Gallery. In appearance, however, this painting differs from the later works, as it is composed of vertical rows of black dots clearly, though somewhat unevenly (owing to the irregularities of each pass with the spray can of paint over the template, which was a length of plasterer's corner beading) delineated on the white ground of the canvas. It is this orderliness, together with an economical avoidance of excess, that distinguishes this painting and others like it made in the seventies from later works like *1,000,000 Pennies* and *1,000,000 Grapes*, and which perhaps led Dennis Young to recall the old-fashioned principle of "decorum" in his discussion of these works. "In such art," Young wrote,

“the formal result, though unpredictable in detail, would demonstrate that the work existed not capriciously, at the artist’s whim to modify or terminate a sequence, nor to conform with some past expectation of taste, but absolutely — as a system that proclaimed its own inexorable order.”²

Young is describing the deliberate suppression of personality that is characteristic of much art derived from conceptual principles since the sixties, best articulated by Sol LeWitt’s famous statement in his 1967 *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art*, “The idea becomes a machine that makes the art.”³ Ferguson certainly adhered to such principles, mentioning LeWitt along with Carl Andre, Joseph Kosuth and Lawrence Weiner as artists whose ideas were of interest to him at the time. However, he “could not accept the notion that visual considerations were not part of visual art,”⁴ and has remained committed to painting, with occasional interruptions while he explored other media, throughout his career. Yet by his own admission, the painting of the late sixties held no interest for him.⁵ Staying away from traditional artists’ materials, he used enamel paints and improvised templates employed according to systematic, predetermined procedures, to produce reasonably regular, rationally-structured compositions, thereby setting his paintings at a distance from the aestheticized visual pleasures of formalist abstraction. The phrase “with care taken” recurs several times in his notes on individual paintings, conveying the workmanlike attitude Ferguson brought to the tasks he set himself. In regard to such work, the notion of a style based on “decorum,” in the sense intended in Latin rhetoric, which judged the fitness of the level of language used in relation to the audience addressed and the purpose intended, seems appropriate. Of the grand, the mixed and the plain styles identified by the Romans, Ferguson’s is clearly plain.

The significance of style, however, goes beyond how something is expressed. It is also the mutual adjustment of expressive form and content, an artist’s personal manner evolving over time, as well as the range of choices available to him or her at a particular moment and place in history. This is true even with regard to the “absolute” and “inexorable order” of systemic art like Ferguson’s, and Eric Cameron is right to note that “system is not an alternative to sensibility.” Elaborating, Cameron states, “The system is respected throughout, but Gerald Ferguson himself is the maker of the object as well as the deviser [*sic*] of the system, and at the end he exercises a visual judgement as to the acceptability of the results.”⁶

Early Work in a Late Style

Late style is not only manifest in the late work of an artist. It can also be discovered to be the style of the period in which the artist matures, late modernism in the case of Gerald Ferguson. And in a more general way, as the situation of art reflects that of society, it can be argued that the latter part of the twentieth century in the West

is marked by a pervasive sense of lateness, overwhelmed, at times, by a consciousness of the history that has preceded it. A rapid survey of art critics and theorists as different as Clement Greenberg, Arthur Danto, Yve-Alain Bois and Frederic Jameson, reveals the frequency with which phrases like "the crisis of Western art," "post-historical," "late capitalism," and "the death of painting" appear in their writings on culture. Theodor Adorno, the philosopher and cultural critic who has written eloquently about late style in the work of Beethoven, opens his own late work, *Aesthetic Theory*, with a radical statement of contingency: "It is self-evident that nothing concerning art is self-evident anymore, not its inner life, not its relation to the world, not even its right to exist." Adorno's view of the modern world is pessimistic, even fatalistic: it is a world in which "individual and social interests are irreconcilable and where general harmony can be obtained only at the expense of individual freedom."⁷ To protest these conditions, art must become negative if it is to remain authentic, inverting the affirmation that constitutes the commodity form. Further, if art is to exist in a critical relationship to society, while at the same time embodying the social tendencies of its time, as Adorno believed, it must become ever more autonomous, deriving its forms from the specifications of the artist's imagination. However, the artist's subjective freedom is not unlimited; the artist is "constrained by history to deal with the most advanced... material available," for this is what "provides the experience of increasing freedom, openness, newness."⁸

Ferguson's early work turns on the invention of objective structures and impersonal procedures that deliberately limit subjective freedom in the search for an authentic position from which to make art. Looking back on his early work, Ferguson describes how his interest in and identification with the radical art issues of the late sixties, which were reductionist and conceptual, caused feelings of conflict and even guilt with his role as a painter. Although painting was supposedly dead, he writes,

I needed painting's physical and visual confirmation (and still do), along with all of the attendant strategies, structures and methods as intellectual reassurance. I felt I was doing something to change the face and understanding of painting by the marks I was making on canvas. This was the only position I could take, because painting is the only thing I ever really understood. Yet I hated so much that was synonymous with painting such as class (painting's use as a conspicuous display of property and position), the self-indulgence, and the privileged place of the artist as a historical norm.⁹

Further, he had doubts about the social role of art. Although he did not believe that art in itself could bring about social change, he had faith, at first, in its capacity to affect society indirectly. Therefore, art institutions had a moral imperative to foster art's development. However, disillusionment soon set in: "So much of the art that I had identified as being radical was being assimilated by those very structures and institutions that it had formerly threatened."¹⁰

His response was to try to demystify the art-making process. Looking for a formal readymade, he stumbled on the alphabet and made a series of works with the typewriter, twenty-six pages filled within preset margins with a single, repeated letter. The only criterion was that each page be error-free. It was more difficult than it looked and took a considerable length of time to complete. Intending to transfer the process to painting, he used four-inch stencils and spray paint and made several works with stencilled letter forms before he hit upon the idea of using the period from the stencil. This can be seen as an ironic reference to the search for the "degree zero" of painting, perhaps, that resulted in the dot paintings. Less potentially abstract were two paintings based on the letter "I", one executed in black paint sprayed through a stencil of a seriffed "I", and the other drawn in pencil around an "I" without a serif. At first one sees only the abstract pattern of the surfaces of the two canvases. At a deeper level, however, one must acknowledge the representational meaning that the letter let into the two paintings — the reference to the singular identity of the author — even though it is cancelled out by the repetition of the gesture. Creative authorship and its associations with inspiration and expression are held in abeyance, replaced by a strict, production-oriented work ethic.

When one looks attentively at Ferguson's work from about 1968 to 1978, what becomes apparent is the discipline with which he submitted to the rational logic of the self-imposed structure of his works. Nowhere is this containment of subjectivity made more objectively clear than in a drypoint etching from 1972 titled *Close to the edge, but not going over the edge*. The image is of a square defined by the bevelled edge of the etching plate, within which a hand-drawn, continuous, but irregular line is traced. The double entendre of the title points obliquely to what is at stake: the risk of losing the singular balance of subjective and objective reality in the work of art. The wavering line of the square within the square exemplifies the artist's struggle for control, while at the same time it forms the imperfect, human side of an irreconcilable dichotomy between subjective freedom and the objective structure of the work. One can see a similar, though less obviously psychological opposition in the stencilled dot paintings. Their visual interest derives from the tension in their formal law between arbitrariness and order. In the gap between the rationality of the procedures and the unavoidable imperfection of the execution, one glimpses the human truth in their machine-like aesthetic. The invisible referent in all the works of this early period is work itself. Work well-done confers moral value on painting, confirming its possibility and its worth independent of its status as commodity.

Changing Values

Noting the challenge that the growing pluralism of art in the seventies posed to the progressive and linear view of the development of modern art, Nancy Tousley

wrote in an article on Canadian painting: "The one aspect of 70s painting that might not be expected to continue with vigour into the 80s is analytic process painting. Stemming from minimal and conceptual art, process in and of itself seems to have outlived its purpose as the single motivation for making painting." She did, however, suggest that conceptualism might still be a force in "reopening areas for artistic exploration through the making of objects."¹¹

The decade of the eighties was a period of reevaluation in Gerald Ferguson's work, in which he absorbed and responded to a crisis in art marked by the return of image painting, the rise of the relativist theories of postmodernism, and the growing importance of the art market. He left the task-like procedures of systemic painting behind, choosing to interrogate interrelated issues of authenticity, the mediation of experience and the commodification of art. The turning point came in 1979 with the proposal for *1,000,000 Pennies*, a pile of pennies in a room that both literally and symbolically embodies value. Ferguson's statement for the catalogue of the Glenbow Museum's presentation of the work in 1980 takes on the issue directly:

When acquired, it is the option of the owner whether the sculpture is displayed as described in the form of 3 tonnes of copper coins, or when stored, deposited in a bank where it will accrue interest as a \$10,000 savings account.

Currently, the selling price of the work is \$10,000. The artist will defer payment if the prospective buyer agrees to supply the one million pennies and deposit them in a bank until the investment generated equals the initial investment in the material, thus establishing objective value in the work. At prevailing interest rates, it will take about six years for the piece to reach maturity. With the mutual consent of the artist, the piece may be periodically withdrawn from the bank and displayed, therefore, it will take an indeterminate time before the artist is paid.

After that, it is at the discretion of the owner whether to continue to deposit the one million pennies in a bank, allowing them to further appreciate, or to withdraw them and keep it as a sculpture, in which case it will appreciate through the rarity of coins and the value of copper. Either way, the intent of the work is satisfied while fulfilling the popular conception that "works of art increase in value over time."¹²

The value symbolized by *1,000,000 Pennies* is exchange value, not the moral value of work. It may have involved a lot of work to get the money together, but not labour in the sense in which it can be applied to the earlier paintings. Interestingly, Ferguson's authorship is not at stake; industrially-manufactured objects chosen by the artist have been part of the stock in trade of art since Duchamp's first ready-made. However, the authenticity won through self-denial in

the paintings is thrown, as it were, to the winds as the pennies fall to the floor. Dennis Young, writing about the new direction of Ferguson's work, observed:

it seems to be the one work that it is possible to make which conspicuously rejects the conditions of authenticity, uniqueness and scarcity necessary for a work of art to be relevant to a theory of commodities, while at the same time declaring an identity . . . as both a commodity (on the metals market) and a token of all commodities in the profane world.¹³

The formal configuration of *1,000,000 Pennies* is radically different from the rationalised economy of the paintings that preceded it. Indeed, although the history of minimal art is full of other examples of piles of various materials randomly arranged (for example, Robert Morris's *Untitled (254 pieces of felt)* in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada), in looking back at 1980 the arrangement seems precisely to symbolize the irrational forces of the economy driving the art market's rabid consumption of new art. It is not only the randomness but also the excessiveness of the million pennies that draws it into the irrational. From here it is not an impossible leap to the unconscious connections between money and shit theorized by psychoanalysis (and confirmed by popular expressions like "to drop a penny.") Unlike John Heartfield's famous montage of Hitler's belly full of coins, Ferguson maintains an ironic neutrality in his comments on the pile as an investment, but the lowly placement of the pile on the floor — a meaningful rejection of hierarchy in the superceded context of minimalist sculpture — reinforces associations with a digestive accident. Is the entrancing spectacle of the pennies therefore mere fetishistic illusion? *1,000,000 Pennies* suggests at the very least that as art approaches the status of a commodity, the autonomy from which came its critical authority is illusory.

Ferguson continued to address the problem of commodification, but as a painter the salient issue for him was the impact on painting of the return to the image, which only a decade or so earlier would have been viewed as retrogressive in high art circles but now provided ample sustenance for middlebrow appetites and had the blessings of the market. In a body of paintings called *Nova Scotia Landscapes*, made in the early eighties, he continued to question the authority of painting by adopting a new sort of template, the picture postcard. The views he chose were conventionalized depictions that owed their familiarity to nineteenth-century landscape painting, with titles like *Sun and Surf*, *Panoramic View* and *The South Shore*. To bring this association to the fore, "reconstituting its photographic dehydration,"¹⁴ he hired a painter in Saint John, New Brunswick, Gerard Collins, who did the actual execution of the paintings from rudimentary drawings that Ferguson had made on the canvases by projecting the postcard images. Collins's painterly style served the subject well. The resulting paintings, realized through an extensive series of mediating deferrals, have the lively immediacy of *plein air* painting.

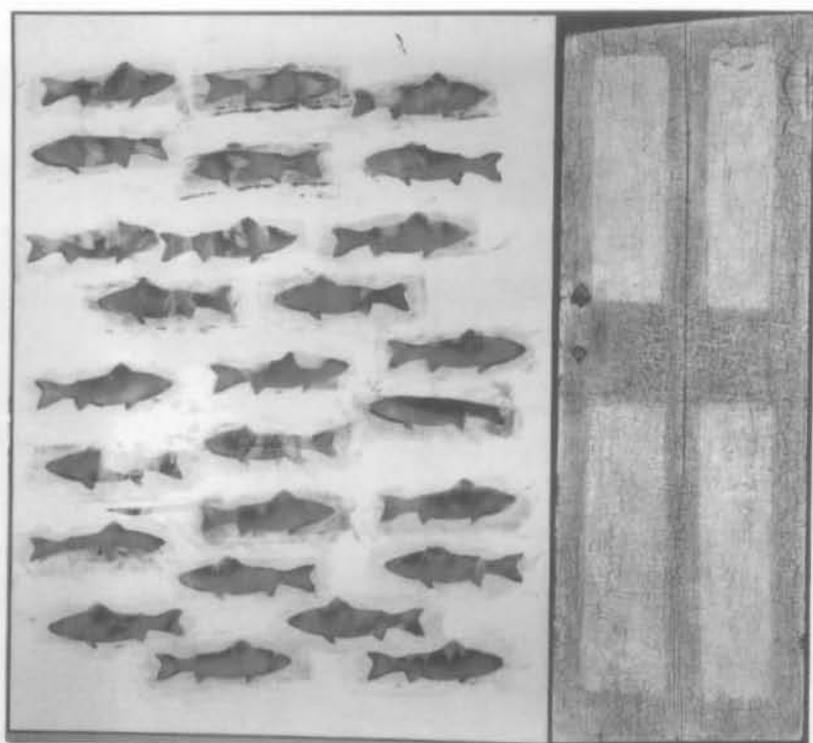


fig.5 Gerald Ferguson, *Fish and Door*, 1992, enamel on canvas, painted wood, 213 x 224 cm, coll. of Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. (Photo: Art Gallery of Nova Scotia)

The paintings become meaningful as one realizes they are not what they seem. Free self-expression turns out to be formulaic rehash; the valued touch of the painter belongs to another; nature imitates art because experience itself is subject to the mediation of conventions of seeing; conceptual art masquerades as *plein air* painting; and in spite of all this, the images prove capable of arousing emotion. As Ferguson observed drily, "You feel cheated — maybe even guilty — for liking them."¹⁵ It is the semblance of subjectivity that gives the paintings their critical force, opening up questions on the affirmations of the neo-expressionists. Their complex series of mediations become a way of undercutting any sense of "false immediacy."¹⁶ To use the terms of Adorno's negative dialectics, by inverting the "inverted world" of the commodity form, the paintings win their authenticity, even while being obviously inauthentic by ordinary criteria of authorship.

As successful as the landscapes were in terms of their critical intent (Ferguson went on to apply the same formula to postcard views of landscapes in

other parts of Canada, rendering the paintings specific to the location of several other exhibitions), the evidence of the work that followed suggests that having questioned the authority of the artist's hand, he needed to find a way of bridging the detachment he had imposed on himself, while still dealing critically with subject-matter. By adopting the methods of nineteenth-century "theorem painting" he was able to build a series of still-life paintings that combined stencilled motifs from local popular culture with quotations of still-lives by modern masters such as Cézanne and Picasso, as well as Marsden Hartley, an American painter whose work in Nova Scotia Ferguson had studied closely. The logic these paintings draw out of their multiple sources is that of the fragment, reinforced by stylistic dissonance. The hand of the artist is present, but it is and is not his hand. The paintings equivocate, gradually revealing the illusory nature of the pleasurable wholeness that they seem at first to offer. At the same time, they introduce a new symbolic complexity. Not only is the still-life the most artificial of painterly conventions, it is also quite literally of the past, a hollowed form bereft of its living contents. Where once it symbolized the organic continuity of humanity with nature, subject to the same cycles of growth and decline, in Ferguson's hands it is an allegory of the impossibility of such unity. The disintegration of the work, emptied of its former meaning, is the reason for the often remarked-upon ghostliness of these still-lives from the end of the eighties.¹⁷

Traces of History

In his article on Beethoven's late style, Adorno takes issue with the usual view that late style is marked by the uninhibited expression of subjectivity breaking free from formal constraints. Referring to the "expressionless," distanced character of Beethoven's late music, he states that "the formal law of late works, however, is, at the least, incapable of being subsumed under the concept of expression."¹⁸ He stresses the importance of conventions, which are no longer absorbed and transformed by the subjective dynamics of the music, as well as the fragmentation and sudden discontinuities that characterize the late style. For Adorno, it is the relationship of the conventions to subjectivity that constitutes the formal law from which the content of the late works emerges, a formal law that "is revealed precisely in the thought of death." However, mortal subjectivity cannot be the substance of the late work, as is often claimed: "Death is imposed only on created beings, not on works of art, and thus it has appeared in art only in a refracted mode, as allegory." Thus:

The power of subjectivity in the late works of art is the irascible gesture with which it takes leave of the works themselves. It breaks their bonds, not in order to express itself, but in order, expressionless, to cast off the appearance of art. Of the works themselves it leaves only fragments behind, and communicates itself, like a cipher, only through the blank spaces from which it has disengaged itself.¹⁹

Thoughts of mortality appear, too, to be on Gerald Ferguson's mind from the late eighties onward. They are manifest especially in the sense of loss that pervades his appropriations of vernacular Nova Scotian culture: the urn and wreath decoration of a firescreen, paired with a cod jig and two iron flowers of his own making, arranged in a diagonal cross that symbolically cancels out the fisherman's tool (*Neoclassical Still Life with Two Flowers and Cod Jig*, 1993); or the crazed and faded paint of an old door, out of true and knobless, a literal remembrance of time past placed next to a field of stencilled fish, half of them swimming away from it and the others swimming towards it as in *Fish and Door* (fig.5). They can be read, also, in the more oblique reference to time in a series of twelve canvases covered in a sea of black paint engulfing a school of stencilled fish, Roman numerals below them like paintings of the Stations of the Cross (*Times Roman*, 1993).

Coming after the deconstructive works of the eighties, these later works are surprisingly devoid of irony. They appear to emerge from a desire to express in his art the connection to place he lived in his day-to-day life. Ferguson has been an important collector of Nova Scotia folk art in his personal life, showing an outsider's awareness of the significance of this rich vernacular tradition; yet this is the first time he set himself to representing something of it in his own art. Perhaps his work on the two seasons Marsden Hartley spent in a Nova Scotia fishing village, which gave rise to powerfully symbolic paintings by the earlier artist, strongly inflected with love and respect for the people and their harsh but beautiful environment, suggested the possibility of a symbolic dimension in his own art.²⁰ Or perhaps the objects he incorporated into his paintings simply provided an objective correlative to the values of diligence and fitness he brought to his work. I do not know whether any of these explanations are correct. What is clearly communicated by the works themselves, however, is an understanding of the passage of time that is both retrospective and static, quite different from the sense of time as the duration of labour embodied in the early works. For all their metaphoric richness, there is a feeling of impasse here.

In his latest works, Ferguson has not so much removed but buried the overt symbolism of the pieces of the early nineties. For the hundred canvases of *1,000,000 Grapes*, he retains the stencilled reference to vernacular culture — the clusters of grapes that might have decorated a wall or piece of furniture. But in painting over them so many times he obscures their legibility and their origin. His repeated gesture cancels any immediate thematic potential and distances them from the constructed metaphors of the works of the early nineties. In so doing, he comes back to the abstraction of the dot paintings, via the *1,000,000 Pennies*. Like the pennies, the grape paintings are constructed from a logic of excess, the surplus paint all but obscuring the formal motif. In this way an intimation of the irrational force of the objective world that overwhelms subjectivity is permitted. However, their arrangement in a grid imposes an external order that

was absent in the pennies (although it is not a progressive order, but merely one that fills the room in a regular fashion, as the dots of paint had previously filled the canvas), so that an uneasy oscillation is created between order and disorder, or reason and emotion in the ensemble.

Blackness is the compelling fact of these paintings, and the mortuary symbolism of the colour is an undeniable aspect of late style in these works. In the context of Ferguson's oeuvre, black is the colour of restraint and an almost puritan refusal of pleasure, yet it has never been so absolute until now. One is reminded that, in the larger adjacent context of modernist painting, black — like white — is the colour of the absolute, a declaration of painting's autonomy and the separation of its logic from everyday reality. It is thus a sign of a late moment in the history of painting, marked not only by the end of representation but also by the subjugation of subjective expression to the objective order of painting itself.

Yet although one may understand these paintings as late works in a historical lineage of reductive painting, from Malevich to Reinhardt and beyond, the *1,000,000 Grapes* paintings are neither absolutely black nor absolutely abstract. The stencilled grapes, rendered in layer after layer of black paint, gleam here and there, flattened and desiccated, like crystalline fragments of coal that have lost all trace of their organic origin. Random spots of white canvas, missed by the roller, break up the blackness of the paintings and destroy their unity, allowing the contingent to re-enter them and, with it, the world. But these late paintings are devoid of melancholy and remote from the sweet sadness of the allegories of death in those that preceded them. They have not escaped from time. However, it is time stilled, caught in the grip of the inexorable rule of repetition, that is the law governing them. Like the musical conventions that "are no longer penetrated and mastered by subjectivity, but simply left to stand,"²¹ in Adorno's description of Beethoven's late music, repetition becomes the expressive substance of Ferguson's art, independent of his subjective will.

1,000,000 Grapes: the title establishes the finitude of the subject of the paintings. A first look confirms the objective ordering power of the grid. By a curious reversal, however, they provoke the deeper subjective experience of infinitude. Immersed in contemplation of their flickering blackness — literally, because the paintings fill the walls of the room — one understands them to be about limitlessness precisely because of the inability of the eyes to distinguish boundaries within them. The dissolution of the subject opens them to the imaginary, offering intimations of transcendence out of plain fact. Or, as Gerald Ferguson would say, allows "beauty through the back door."²²

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Notes

- 1 Theodor ADORNO, "Late Style in Beethoven," *Raritan* XIII, no. 1 (Summer 1993): 102.
- 2 Dennis YOUNG, "Gerald Ferguson: Task-Oriented Art," *Gerald Ferguson: Paintings* (Halifax: The Dalhousie Art Gallery, 1977), 8.
- 3 Cited in Gerald FERGUSON, "The 1968-1969 Works," *Dufour, Gary, Gerald Ferguson: The Initial Alphabet* (Vancouver: The Vancouver Art Gallery, 1994), 13.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 13.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 15.
- 6 Eric CAMERON, "System & Sensibility: The Art of Gerald Ferguson," *Studio International* 189, no. 974 (Mar/Apr 1975): 125.
- 7 Rose Rosengard SUBOTNIK, *Developing Variations: Style and Ideology in Western Music* (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minneapolis Press, 1991), 25.
- 8 Sherry Weber NICHOLSON, *Exact Imagination, Late Work: On Adorno's Aesthetics* (Cambridge, Mass and London: The MIT Press, 1997), 33. Nicholson is discussing an essay from 1930, "Reaction and Progress," in which Adorno is referring to the composer. I have taken the liberty of extending his comments from music to art in general.
- 9 FERGUSON, *Gerald Ferguson: The Initial Alphabet*, 15.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 11.
- 11 Nancy TOUSLEY, "Canadian Painting: Aspects of the 70s," *Vanguard* IX, nos. 5/6 (Summer 1980): 33. The article is a review of the exhibition *Canadian Painting in the Seventies* organized by the Glenbow Museum which included the work of nineteen painters, among them Gerald Ferguson.
- 12 Gerald Ferguson quoted in Jeffrey SPALDING, *1,000,000 Pennies: Gerald Ferguson* (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1980), n.p.
- 13 Dennis YOUNG, "Speculate to Appreciate," *Vanguard* XIII, no. 10 (Dec 1984/Jan 1985): 12.
- 14 Gerald Ferguson quoted in Linda MILROD, *Gerald Ferguson: Landscapes* (Saskatoon: Mendel Art Gallery, 1986), 6.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 10.
- 16 Stephen BRONNER, "Dialectics at a Standstill: A Methodological Inquiry into the Philosophy of Theodor W. Adorno," www.uta.edu/huma/illuminations/bron2.htm, p.3.
- 17 See, for example, Susan GIBSON GARVEY, "Degrees of Appropriation," *Uses of the Vernacular in Contemporary Nova Scotian Art* (Halifax: Dalhousie Art Gallery, 1994), 3.
- 18 Theodor ADORNO, "Late Style in Beethoven," 103.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 105.
- 20 Ferguson's research on this aspect of Marsden Hartley's career resulted in an exhibition at Mount Saint Vincent Art Gallery in Halifax and a publication with essays by him and two contributors as well as a selection of Hartley's writings. See Gerald FERGUSON, ed., *Marsden Hartley and Nova Scotia* (Halifax: Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery in association with The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and the Art Gallery of Ontario, 1987).
- 21 ADORNO, "Late Style in Beethoven," 106.
- 22 Gerald Ferguson, email communication with the author, 26 Jan. 2000.

LE DERNIER STYLE DANS L'ŒUVRE DE GERALD FERGUSON

Cet article est une analyse de l'œuvre de l'artiste de Halifax Gerald Ferguson fondée sur le concept de «dernier style» du philosophe et critique d'art de l'école de Francfort, Theodor W. Adorno. La première partie de l'article examine le dernier style en rapport avec la période du modernisme tardif auquel appartiennent les premières œuvres de Ferguson. Elle souligne les principales caractéristiques de son style, dont l'apparence impersonnelle est le résultat de l'usage qu'il fait de structures modulaires et de procédés systémiques typiques de l'art minimal et conceptuel. Plusieurs des premières œuvres sont étudiées en fonction des tensions entre cette esthétique mécaniste et rationaliste et la liberté subjective.

La deuxième partie de l'article identifie un changement dans l'œuvre de Ferguson parallèle au retour à la peinture figurative et à l'influence croissante, dans les années quatre-vingts, du marché de l'art qui remettait en question l'esthétique réductionniste du modernisme tardif. On voit que l'œuvre de Ferguson se dégage du souci de maintenir une perspective critique sur ces développements. Il abandonne ses procédés rationnels pour s'interroger sur les questions interreliées de l'authenticité, de la médiation de l'expérience et de la commercialisation de l'art. L'œuvre clé de cette période de transition est *1,000,000 Pennies*, un *ready-made* dont l'excès même aborde la question des valeurs artistiques par rapport à la valeur d'échange du produit.

La troisième partie de l'article examine l'évidence du dernier style dans les œuvres des années quatre-vingt-dix. Elle s'ouvre sur un exposé de la théorie d'Adorno sur le dernier style de Beethoven. Pour Adorno, la caractéristique principale du dernier style est une véritable loi qui se révèle par des pensées de mort. Cela fournit le contexte d'une discussion sur les tableaux allégoriques que Ferguson a peints au début des années quatre-vingt-dix, où les références à la perte et à la mort sont indirectement présentes. L'influence de la culture populaire de la Nouvelle-Écosse ainsi que des tableaux néo-écossais de Marsden Hartley sur ces œuvres métaphoriques inhabituelles est étudiée. On y montre cependant que le dernier style, dans le sens qu'Adorno lui donne, trouve sa pleine expression dans les cent toiles de la série *1,000,000 Grapes* que Ferguson a peintes entre 1996 et 1997. Ces œuvres tardives délaissent les allégories primitives de l'artiste pour présenter un symbolisme complexe, souterrain, qui dépend en partie du noir. L'artiste retourne aux procédés répétitifs des premières œuvres, mais remplace leur logique rationnelle par une logique de l'excès qui laisse place au désordre et à l'émotion. Ici,

la répétition ne symbolise pas seulement la durée du travail, comme dans les premières œuvres, mais le passage du temps en marche vers la mort. En dépit de la finitude que laissent supposer leurs titres, les tableaux appellent paradoxalement une expérience subjective de l'infinitude et laisse la beauté entrer par la porte de service.

Traduction: Élise Bonnette