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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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup> 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."<sup>4</sup> 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."<sup>5</sup> Prints were distributed to veterans' hospitals and exhibitions circulated to public institutions across the country, promoting interest and sales.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, Sampson-Matthews was marketing the prints directly to the public. Schools, however, remained the principal marketing target.<sup>7</sup>

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."<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup>

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."<sup>11</sup> The brochure described twenty-nine of the Sampson-Matthews images "representing typical aspects of Canada from coast to coast."<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup>

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."<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> 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."<sup>16</sup>

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.<sup>17</sup> 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."<sup>18</sup> Despite the Gallery's commitment to the project, it was two years before any new subjects were added to the series.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup>

### 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.<sup>22</sup>

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."<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup> 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."<sup>25</sup>

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."<sup>26</sup> 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."<sup>27</sup> Prints from the exhibition were ordered from the New York-based Silk Screen Group by individuals across Canada.<sup>28</sup> 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."<sup>29</sup>

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.<sup>30</sup>

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."<sup>31</sup> Jackson strongly endorsed the Federation's program, which reflected his own commitment to the potential of the silkscreen.<sup>32</sup> 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."<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup> 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*.<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup> Harris contributed *Algoma Lake* and *Island*, *Georgian Bay* and Jackson, *Smart River*.<sup>37</sup> 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.<sup>38</sup> 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.<sup>39</sup> 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."<sup>40</sup> 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."<sup>41</sup>

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.<sup>42</sup> 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.<sup>43</sup>

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

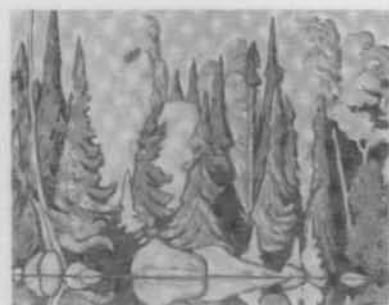
FEDERATION OF CANADIAN ARTISTS SERIES - (Size 20" x 27")



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



Roddy 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

fig.1 Federation of Canadian Artists Series, Catalogue of Canadian Colour Reproductions, Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, c.1948, p.10. (Photo: Clive Creteny)

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."<sup>44</sup>

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.<sup>45</sup>

### **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.<sup>46</sup> 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.<sup>47</sup>

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.<sup>48</sup> 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."<sup>49</sup> 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."<sup>50</sup>

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.<sup>51</sup> 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."<sup>52</sup> In September 1951 the Gallery ordered 2000 prints from this second series and they would often be marketed along with the National Gallery images.<sup>53</sup>

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*.<sup>54</sup> 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."<sup>55</sup> 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.<sup>56</sup> For Sampson-Matthews this was all in the line of business, providing a superb distribution system for one client through collaboration with another.<sup>57</sup> 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."<sup>58</sup> McCurry deemed Sydney Watson's *St. Lawrence Town, Quebec* too "dead" for student use.<sup>59</sup> 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."<sup>60</sup> It was also by June 1948 that Yvonne McKague Housser'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.<sup>61</sup>

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.<sup>62</sup> 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*.<sup>63</sup> 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.<sup>64</sup> 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."<sup>65</sup> 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.<sup>66</sup> 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.<sup>67</sup> (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.<sup>68</sup> At the same time, a second print by Albert Robinson (*Noontime in the Hills*) was recommended for reproduction but never published.<sup>69</sup>

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*.<sup>70</sup> 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; Panton, 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.<sup>71</sup>

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.<sup>72</sup> 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.<sup>73</sup> Binning and Pellan, 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.<sup>74</sup>

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."<sup>75</sup> 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*).<sup>76</sup> 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*.<sup>77</sup> It was probably Jackson who obtained Sarah Robertson's *Ice Cutting*, *Lake of the Two Mountains* for reproduction in late 1952.<sup>78</sup>

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*, Pantton'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.<sup>79</sup>

### 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.<sup>80</sup> 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."<sup>81</sup> 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.<sup>82</sup> 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.<sup>83</sup>

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.<sup>84</sup>

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.<sup>85</sup> 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.<sup>86</sup>

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."<sup>87</sup> 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.<sup>88</sup> 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 Coboconk* 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.<sup>89</sup> 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.<sup>90</sup> 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 Pellán'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.<sup>91</sup>

In 1954 and 1955 Sampson-Matthews documented sales on a monthly basis and almost all were individual works.<sup>92</sup> 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.<sup>93</sup> 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.<sup>94</sup> 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.<sup>95</sup>

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."<sup>96</sup> 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.<sup>97</sup>

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.<sup>98</sup> Although it had paid in full for all prints produced to date, it still owed Sampson-Matthews almost \$5000 for advertising and catalogues.<sup>99</sup> 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.<sup>100</sup>

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.<sup>101</sup> 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.<sup>102</sup> 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.<sup>103</sup> Their records of payment are informative and suggest that Ottawa sold relatively few prints by living artists during these years.<sup>104</sup> 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.

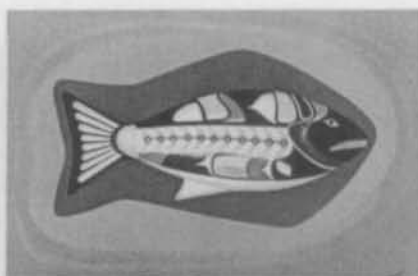
*100 Canadian Paintings* also included Casson's armorial bearings of Canada and the provinces and a group of six new prints commissioned by the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association, continuing the effort to favorably position the industry in the public consciousness. These prints were based on original 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).<sup>105</sup> 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.<sup>106</sup>

### **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.<sup>107</sup> 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, Scriabin, 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. Scriabin was the art of white scholars who carved bone and ivory while at sea. Reproductions are here original paintings by the well-known artist, Arthur Price, A.R.C.A.



NA-1 KING SALMON 30" x 20"



NA-2 TROQUAIS MASK 30" x 20"



NA-3 BEAVER AND STURGEON 30" x 20"



NA-4 SOAPSTONE LOON 30" x 20"



NA-5 SCRIBIN ENGRAVING 30" x 20"



NA-6 PLAINS HORSEMAN 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.<sup>108</sup> 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."<sup>109</sup> 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.<sup>110</sup> 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 RED SNOW HOUSE  
40" x 30" and 27" x 20"

Ted Roberts, R.C.A.



28 EXTENDING SAILS  
40" x 30" and 27" x 20"

Wilcox Macdonald, S.S.A.



53 EMERALD LAKE, YOHU PARK  
40" x 30" and 27" x 20"

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 RIVER  
40" x 30" and 27" x 20"

Stan Thomson



5 ISLES OF SPRUCE  
40" x 30" and 27" x 20"

Arthur Jopson, L.L.D., R.C.A.



3 CAPE BRETON HARBOUR  
40" x 30" and 27" x 20"

J. S. Hallen, R.C.A.



6 WHITE PINE  
40" x 30" and 27" x 20"

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

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 Comfort, L.L.B., R.C.A.



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



45 WESTERN HEMLOCK  
40" x 30" Franklin Artzner, 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.



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



51 AUTUMN WOOD INTERIOR  
30 1/2" x 20" Franklin Carmichael, R.C.A.



41 SPRUCE  
40" x 30" Thomas MacDonell



23 WINDSWEEP  
80" x 50" L. A. C. Poirier, R.C.A.

fig. 5

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

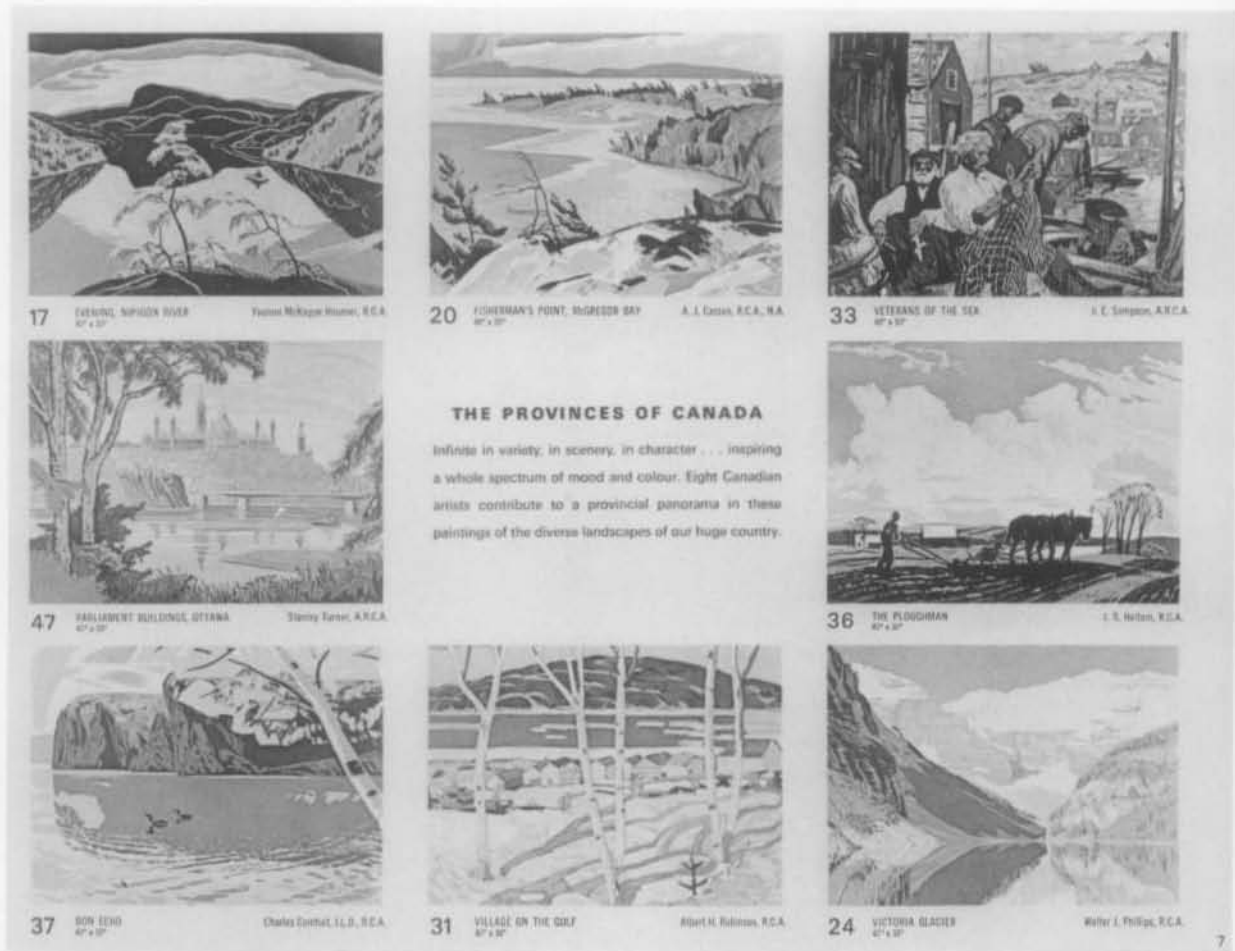
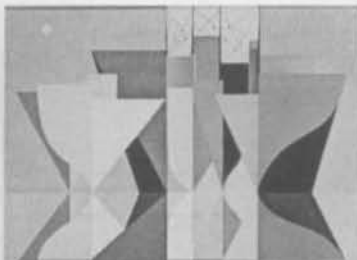


fig. 6 Sampson-Matthews, *Canadian Paintings*, catalogue, c.1963, p.7, Toronto Public Library, Fine Art Reference Section. (Photo: Jeff Nolte)



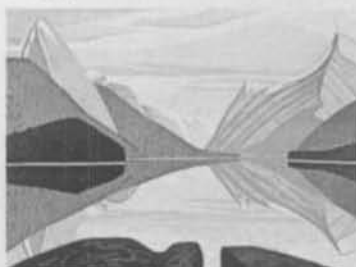
9 ST. LAWRENCE TOWN, QUEBEC  
40" x 50" Sydney Watson, R.C.A.



10 SHIPS IN CLASSICAL CALM  
40" x 50" B. C. Binning, A.R.C.A.



13 LE POT A TABAC  
30" x 50" Alfred Pellan



2 BALDWIN LAKE  
40" x 50" 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 50" A. J. Casson, R.C.A.



11 ALGOQUIN LAKE  
40" x 50" Charles Comfort, L.L.B., R.C.A.



14 POTATO PICKERS  
40" x 50" Fritz Brandler



12 BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN VILLAGE  
40" x 50" J. W. G. MacDonald, 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."<sup>111</sup>

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.<sup>112</sup> 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

##### FEDERATION OF CANADIAN ARTISTS (1945-1948)

|                     |                                            |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 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>                      |

##### PULP AND PAPER PRINTS (1947)

|                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 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>        |

##### PULP AND PAPER PRINTS (1950)

|                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 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>    |

##### 60 CANADIAN LANDSCAPES (1947-1953)

|                 |                                           |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 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>Fisherman'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 Pellam  
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*  
*Roosts, 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 ont 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 offrait 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