



fig.1 Peter Redpath, 1871, coll. de la Musée McCord d'histoire canadienne, Montréal.
(Photo: Musée McCord, I-64451)

L'ART ASSOCIATION OF MONTREAL

Les années d'incertitude : 1863-1877

(Deuxième partie)

Cet article est la suite d'un exposé publié dans le numéro précédent des *Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* sur les activités peu connues de l'Art Association of Montreal dans les années qui ont suivi sa fondation, en 1860.

Bâtiment et locaux

Les règlements du 12 mars 1864 définissaient le rôle du comité du bâtiment L« whose duty it shall be to procure by lease or purchase, or by erection, such rooms, galleries or buildings, as may be needed for the purposes of the Association, and to see the same in order and repair, and properly insured¹ ». C'est d'abord au Mechanics' Hall loué au Board of Arts and Manufacture for Lower Canada qu'eurent lieu les expositions de 1864 et 1865. Le comité avait aussi reçu le mandat de louer un bureau pour l'Association, ce qu'il réussit à faire en 1864 au même endroit au coût de cent soixante dollars par an, et on y apposa une plaque sur la porte portant l'inscription *Art Association of Montreal*². Faute de moyens financiers, l'AAM dut quitter ce bureau en mai 1865³.

Le conseil de l'association était très préoccupé par la question d'obtenir des locaux qui lui soient propres et adaptés à ses besoins comme en fait foi le rapport annuel de 1865:

In that as in previous Exhibitions the Council felt that their best efforts to obtain satisfactory results either pecuniary or otherwise would necessarily fail in a greater or less measure until the Association is provided with a proper gallery. Fitting up a room temporarily hired for such a purpose with gas and [...rayé...] involves a very considerable annual outlay, and the impossibility of exhibiting pictures in a proper light by day in a room not built for a gallery robs any collection of much of its charm and usefulness and further deprives a considerable number of people of the opportunity of seeing it at all. May we not hope then that the enterprise and liberality of the lovers and patrons of art in Montreal will enable us to supply this most pressing want. With such a gallery provided, we might not only look for gifts of pictures from our own members, but might be enabled to procure either as gifts or at or below cost price from the Art and Science department of the Imperial government, or other public institutions in Britain [illisible] collection of copies of the great works of the sculptors [illisible] and other models for study, such as are now furnished to the Art Schools in the Mother Country. And we might hope to establish here a school of design in which the youths of the country may be taught art after satisfactory methods and their latent genius be thus developed⁴.

La construction d'un bâtiment approprié est donc liée très tôt au travail du comité de collection d'art et à celui d'une école d'art et de design. Dès avril 1865, le conseil de l'AAM avait envisagé l'acquisition d'un terrain au Phillips Square ainsi qu'un plan pour l'érection d'un édifice permanent et d'une galerie d'art⁵.

Le rapport annuel de 1865 mentionne une collaboration possible avec les Board of Arts and Manufactures in Canada établis en 1857 et destinés à favoriser la formation de l'ensemble de la population aux sciences et techniques par l'établissement, entre autres, de cours de dessin et d'expositions⁶. La loi modifiée en 1865 permettait à l'AAM d'y élire des délégués et d'espérer obtenir une partie des fonds alloués par le gouvernement pour acquérir « a site for the proposed gallery and school of design, this latter a work which the Board and the Association have been alike established to do and which they can most economically and effectively carry on in common⁷ ». Compte tenu de la situation financière des deux organismes, le projet ne se concrétisera pas, même si le conseil autorisa son secrétaire, en janvier 1866, à écrire à cet effet au président du Board of Arts and Manufactures⁸.

Les expositions de 1867 et 1868 eurent lieu à la Mercantile Library, rue Bonaventure, les directeurs de la Mercantile Library Association ayant gracieusement mis des salles à la disposition de l'AAM. Le conseil, qui avait tenu ses réunions au Mechanics' Hall jusqu'en mai 1865 et ensuite dans divers locaux (Literary Club House, Dawson's Gallery, bureau de Peter Redpath), utilisa ces espaces comme lieux de réunion. Lors du vernissage de 1867, le révérend Jenkins évoqua l'idée d'une galerie d'art nationale à Montréal:

First, it is desirable that there be established in Montreal a Public Gallery of Art. A building should be purchased for the object, if possible, not large or expensive at first, but of suitable character and dimensions, and in a suitable position. This building should be fitted for the reception of works of art, gifts to the country and to its future generations of men of wealth, men who take an interest in the elevation of taste in Canada. There must be such men amongst us, and elsewhere throughout the country; I speak of this scheme as national in its character, for in no other place in either United Canada, as it now is, or in Confederated Canada, as it is about to be, could such an institution be founded⁹.

L'idée fut reprise par Thomas Sterry Hunt lors de son discours au vernissage de l'exposition de 1868:

Montreal, above all, should aspire to take the lead in this matter, for she is really the Metropole of the Dominion. It has long been a reproach that there is no public library here, it ought to be felt as much so that there is no Art Gallery. In Buffalo there had been a wonderful increase in three years, during which they had obtained by purchase of gift as many pictures as are at present in these rooms, which were open all the year round and visited by hundreds,

and having a thousand subscribers. What Buffalo has done, Montreal could do, and if all the friends of art would subscribe their \$5, or \$50, or \$500, gifts would come in, and in a few years they might be able to point with pride to an art gallery, which would not only be a matter of pride to the Committee but to every citizen of Montreal¹⁰.

Il était évident à ce moment-là que l'AAM avec ses cotisations à cinq dollars n'arriverait jamais à construire sa propre galerie d'art, qu'on commençait à s'en désintéresser et que le conseil ne savait plus quoi faire tout en voulant toujours atteindre ses objectifs¹¹. C'est alors que le secrétaire honoraire de l'AAM, John Popham, convoqua par annonces dans les journaux au nom de l'association une réunion publique dans la salle de conférences de la Mercantile Library y invitant « all who are favourable to the formation of a picture gallery¹² ». L'importance de cette réunion fut soulignée par le journal *The Gazette* :

We are glad to see that the Association has called a public meeting for the purpose of discussing the possibility of establishing what would prove an honour to the esthetic tastes, and a credit to the wealth and intelligence of the city.... and that some of the wealthy men of this city will act on the motto that "Richesse oblige", and fairly set the ball rolling. Art galleries play an important part in the education and material welfare of the masses of the old world, and it is fully time that their elevating influences should be exerted on the perceptions of the artisans of the new¹³.

La réunion eut lieu le samedi après-midi 29 février 1868, le jour même où se terminait l'exposition de l'AAM. La réunion étant ouverte au public et n'ayant pas une activité formelle du conseil de l'association, les archives de celle-ci n'en font aucune mention et elle ne nous est connue que par les comptes rendus des journaux¹⁴.

It was quite evident that the Art Association dependent upon precarious subscriptions form year to year, was inadequate to meet the objects in view, and would not lead to the establishment of anything permanent and substantially useful. It had been thought desirable by the friends of Art to call upon those who take an interest in the subject to consider the advisability of adopting some mode for the purpose of establishing an Art Gallery, where there might be a collection, small at first, of course, but which being a nucleus, would gradually increase to something important and permanent and valuable¹⁵.

Le chanoine Balch expliqua d'abord les raisons de sa présence à la réunion: « The clergy were at this ecclesiastical season much occupied with their duties, and at all times were engaged in spiritual affairs suitable to their holy calling. Still they had their duties as good citizens to fulfil, and one of those duties related to the intellectual improvement of the community in which they dwelt, and the cultivation of a pure taste and just appreciation of art¹⁶ ». Balch expliqua ensuite les liens entre art et religion et, plus loin dans la réunion, tenta d'intervenir d'un point de vue plus pratique.

In London, in Paris, in New York, and recently in Baltimore by the noble philanthropy of that good man, George Peabody - there are such schools furnishing great facilities for the encouragement of female talent, and opening new channels for their energies. We know the limited fields in which women must labour to maintain themselves. The "Song of the Shirt" is, unfortunately, a true picture of the life of many. Let the liberal and philanthropic citizens of Montreal know that you propose giving the same advantages to our young women, which they enjoy in other cities of the world, and rely on it your appeal will not be made in vain. Not only will you be able to foster art, and encourage many an artist struggling with adverse fortune; not only will you provide an agreeable place of resort for strangers visiting our beautiful city, and also provide the means of elevating and refining the taste of our own community, but you will be doing a nobler work still - you will develop female talent and give employment of a high order to many daughter worthy of all praise¹⁷.

Le vice-président de l'association, Peter Redpath (fig.1), qui semble avoir été à l'origine de la convocation de cette réunion, commença à explorer les solutions possibles:

One suggestion he had heard was that subscriptions should be raised, the amount funded, and the interest applied in payment of the rent of proper rooms, which should be used for a School of Design and Art Gallery. That would give the Association a local habitation, and it might enable them to extend the interest, and get a much larger number of subscribers, and then they might apply a portion of the annual income towards the purchase of pictures. If a School of Design were established it would require a considerable sum for teachers, etc., and he did not know whether they could get sufficient to do both. There was another mode by which the object in view might be arrived at. They might establish a School of Design as the Victoria Rink and the Gymnasium were established, by forming shares of a certain amount and getting the subscribers to take a certain number of shares. Of course any dividends could not be promised, but they would always have a portion of the property¹⁸.

Le juge Charles Day, président de la réunion, poursuivit en ce sens mais fit passer la collection permanente en tête des priorités plutôt que l'école d'art et de design:

A Joint Stock Company, with a capital of \$50,000, in shares of \$30 each, would be the least burdensome mode of dealing with the question. This method would allow gentlemen who take a greater interest in art to subscribe more liberally, while those who were not able to contribute so much would still have an opportunity to take what they could. The school of design might be a

secondary matter. The first object would be some mode for establishing a fund, by which to get a beginning, and then those of the citizens who might be disposed to help the art gallery could send in a picture or two as a donation, and this once done, it would swell and grow until it assumed practical importance¹⁹.

Suivit l'intervention de Thomas Rimmer, membre du conseil de l'AAM depuis 1864, qui souleva plusieurs questions:

[He] did not favour the establishment of an art gallery by means of a joint stock company. It would doubtless be a collection of common paintings and people would visit it once and not come again. The genius of Canadian artists was conspicuous in the exhibition now being given, and he thought the artists of Montreal should first form themselves into a society and ascertain what could be done towards the proposed object. Mr. Rimmer spoke very highly of the sketches of the Montreal Drawing Club which had been in existence a short time, but whose sketches showed a very high order of excellence²⁰.

[He] called attention to the three days of studious neglect which the Association had received from the public on the occasion of the present exhibition, the receipts being only \$60. The Association could not be kept alive but for the efforts of two or three gentlemen, and of the Canadian artists. The latter should form themselves into an association, and point out how they might best be aided. He asked how many were likely to be attracted by a small gallery with perhaps thirty paintings in it, which had been exhibited before, when nearly two hundred new paintings only drew the small number they had had this year²¹.

Thomas Rimmer soulignait sa confiance dans les talents artistiques qui se développaient à Montréal et sa reconnaissance pour la participation des artistes canadiens sans laquelle l'AAM n'aurait pu maintenir ses activités. Percevant les différents entre les collectionneurs d'art européen qui exposaient pour se donner un statut social et les artistes canadiens qui exposaient pour se faire connaître et se créer une clientèle, il conseillait à ces derniers de créer leur propre association afin de mieux atteindre leurs buts. Cette suggestion allait être suivie quelques mois plus tard.

À ce point de la réunion, le peintre John Bell-Smith intervint avec une généreuse proposition concernant l'école d'art et de design: « offered to place at the disposal of the School of Design, should it be established, the services of himself and son [Frederic]. They would give two evenings a week for three months at the nominal fee of \$1 a week, merely for the purpose of keeping it as select as they could. This would give it a trial, and then, if successful, it might be extended²² ». Cette proposition fut fort bien reçue et mise en œuvre peu après comme en fait foi le rapport annuel de 1868, ce qui constitue les débuts de l'école d'art de l'AAM:

During part of last winter, and at the present time, an evening class has been opened under the superintendence of Mr. Bell Smith in the Gallery in which the exhibitions of the Association have been held. The room together with models and drawings have been temporarily placed at Mr. Smith's disposal. The Council feel that it should undertake this duty of providing suitable materials and, as it is not likely to be done in any other quarter, endeavor to establish, on a permanent basis, such a School in our midst²³.

La réunion se poursuivit avec une proposition de John Popham pour financer la constitution d'une collection permanente en s'appuyant sur la générosité de personnes bien nanties:

The Joint Stock Company scheme would fall through. He considered the best plan would be to rely on the beneficence of five or six individuals who had confidence in the Art Association and obtain their subscriptions for \$500 a piece, and until in all to about \$6,000, and that would purchase fifteen or twenty pictures for the foundation of a gallery, and then they could get pictures of donations from different parties, and by these means secure the commencement of a Gallery²⁴.

La réunion prit fin sur une proposition de formation d'un comité chargé d'établir « a scheme for the foundation of an Art Gallery and School of Design » dont l'adoption fut précédée de l'intervention du trésorier de l'AAM, FB. Matthews: « If the Association would take the matter up, he felt that in the course of twelve months they would have a very fine school; and if the lovers of the fine arts would subscribe, he felt that in a year or two they could have a very good picture gallery. The first necessity was at home. He thought that if the Association could raise a thousand pounds a year, the Government might be expected to contribute that much more²⁵ ». Même si on ne connaît pas de suite à la formation du comité, la réunion du 29 février 1868 allait avoir pour résultat la mise en place de cours d'art, la formation d'une association d'artistes et la relance de l'espoir de mesures de financement de la formation d'une collection permanente et d'une galerie d'art, à un moment où le désintéressement du public pour l'AAM mettait sa survie même en danger.

1868-1871: L'AAM sous la présidence de Peter Redpath

Depuis l'automne 1866, la présence du président Francis Fulford (fig.2) aux réunions du conseil de l'AAM se faisait de plus en plus rare. Tenu en haute estime par tous, son absence aux assemblées annuelles du 29 décembre 1866 et du 21 décembre 1867 n'empêcha pas sa réélection comme président. Peter Redpath (1821-1894) fut élu président de l'AAM lors de l'assemblée annuelle du 9 janvier 1869, mais il n'était pas présent à la réunion. Il ne présida que deux réunions du conseil (10 décembre 1870 et 1er décembre 1871) et l'assemblée annuelle du 17 décembre 1870. Membre du conseil d'administration en 1863 et 1864, vice-



fig.2 Monseigneur l'évêque Francis Fulford, 1863, coll. de la Musée McCord d'histoire canadienne, Montréal. (Photo: Musée McCord, I-8730.1)

président de 1865 à 1868, il était le fils aîné de John Redpath (1796-1869), immigrant écossais établi à Montréal, qui y devint un des hommes d'affaires les plus prospères. Peter Redpath fut associé aux affaires de son père, dont la raffinerie de sucre de Montréal fondée en 1854. Fervent presbytérien, Peter Redpath fut un mécène de l'université McGill dont il fit partie du bureau des gouverneurs de 1864 jusqu'à sa mort. Même émigré en Angleterre en 1880, il fit don cette année-là d'une somme de \$100,000 qui servit à la construction d'un musée de sciences naturelles inauguré en 1882, le Redpath Museum.

Society of Canadian Artists

À la suite de l'assemblée publique du 29 février 1868, les artistes canadiens mirent très rapidement en pratique la suggestion de se regrouper en association. Avec la collaboration de l'AAM, qui leur prêta sa salle d'exposition de la Mercantile Library et leur permit de faire un tirage de l'Art Union, ils tinrent leur première exposition du 22 au 29 décembre 1868. Sous la présidence de John Bell-Smith, le financement de l'opération fut assuré par la distribution gratuite d'une chromolithographie de Burland et Lafricain à tous les souscripteurs de l'Art Union. Le vernissage eut lieu le 22 décembre :

Yesterday evening the first exhibition of Canadian Art took place in the Art's Hall of the Mercantile Library Association. The attempt to get up an exhibition of this kind, depending exclusively on artists living in Canada, was looked upon as chimerical, and the result was considered as anything but hopeful. So few opportunities were afforded to the public of seeing what the productions of many of our younger artists really were, that they were scarcely known to exist, although established favourites, like Jacobi, Way, Duncan, Vogt and others who might easily be mentioned, had made for themselves a reputation. Some little curiosity was, therefore, naturally felt to see what Canada, better known for wheat, lumber and a little beadwork, could produce worthy of being called art. The present exhibition is a triumphant answer to the doubters and to those who were willing to help forward art, yet who had not the slightest idea in the help being of much use. There are about 140 specimens of oil and water colour paintings, which had to be hung to suit every taste, and it is only just to the hanging Committee, Messrs. Bell Smith, the President of the Society, Mr. Duncan, the Secretary, and Mr. Vogt, to give them full credit for the judgment they have shown in a difficult and often a thankless task²⁶.

Le catalogue comprenait des sections de peintures à l'huile (62 entrées), d'aquarelles (80 entrées) et de sculptures (3 entrées) et donnait la liste des vingt artistes anglophones faisant partie de l'association²⁷. Les propos du président Bell-Smith lors du tirage de l'Art Union le 29 décembre furent rapportés dans *The Gazette*.

In the first place he would refer to the Art Association, to whose endeavours any taste of Art in Montreal, or in the country generally, was attributable through their admirable exhibitions. But Canadian artists, and especially the young portion of them, felt that to place their own works in juxtaposition with such works was hardly fair. It was also necessary to place the best pictures in the best positions, and for this reason also Canadian artists felt that their works were not exhibited on equal terms. It was therefore suggested that Canadian artists should form an Association. A meeting was called, and it was decided to form a Society for Canadian artists. Their first idea was merely the protection of their own interests, but it was ultimately determined to have an exhibition of Canadian works. The idea was at first laughed at, but their hopes and expectations had not been deceived. Thinking the patronage would be somewhat limited, they desired to have an Art Union, and what they had liberally promised, they had fulfilled²⁸.

La seconde exposition de la Society of Canadian Artists eut lieu au même endroit du 7 au 12 février 1870. L'association n'avait pas encore de statut légal à ce moment-là et le conseil de l'AAM adopta à la fin de 1869 une résolution manifestant son désir de coopérer avec la SCA en vue de sa prochaine exposition et de permettre à celle-ci d'organiser un tirage de l'Art Union²⁹, seul moyen pour financer cette exposition qui fut bien accueillie.

The Society of Canadian Artists will, doubtless, promote what is much needed in this country, namely, a taste for the fine arts; and, to their credit be it said, there is not a picture in their present exhibition to which the most fastidious could object in point of moral character. Mr. C.J. Way, a painter of acknowledged talent, is President of the Association, and one of the chief contributors to the exhibition. Mr. Vogt's pictures are the largest in the gallery, and on that account and from their great beauty, probably attract the chief attention; but several of the other paintings are equally admired. Edson's forest scenes and Shawinigan Falls show decided talent, and Grant's small landscapes indicate a rising man. Ida Braubach's figures show genius. Her "Peep at an Artist" and news-boys at "Pitching" and "Tossing" are to the life, as also her "Return from Market". We admire the river scenes of Mr. Sandham, and Mr. Jacobi has some of the very best of his peculiar style of paintings in the Exhibition. Murphy's pigeons show extraordinary delicacy of finish, the changing colors on the neck of one of them being as perfect an imitation of nature as we have seen. Mr. Duncan gives an elaborate and accurate view of Montreal, and Raphael's "Habitants Attacked by Wolves" is one of the best pictures in the collection. Mr. Bourassa's portraits of ecclesiastics are very good, and we would rejoice to see more pictures exhibited by French-Canadian artists³⁰.

Le catalogue comportait 64 entrées pour les peintures et 61 pour les aquarelles³¹. Il donnait aussi la liste des vingt cinq membres de l'association sous la présidence de C.J. Way dont le secrétaire trésorier était W.L. Fraser. Un seul artiste francophone en faisait partie, Napoléon Bourassa. Depuis l'assemblée annuelle du 9 janvier 1869 de l'AAM³², deux artistes de la SCA, C.J. Way et O.R. Jacobi, avaient été élus comme membres du conseil de l'AAM. Ils y furent rejoints par F.M. Bell-Smith lors de l'assemblée annuelle du 11 janvier 1870³³. L'AAM et la SCA travaillaient donc en étroite collaboration.

La loi d'incorporation de la « Société des Artistes Canadiens » fut sanctionnée le 12 mai 1870³⁴. Elle lui donnait un très large mandat et lui permettait aussi d'organiser des tirages d'œuvres d'art selon le mode de l'Art Union (article 5). Le préambule de la loi était ainsi formulé:

Considérant que Charles J. Way, O.R. Jacobi, A. Vogt, Allan Edson et d'autres artistes, membres d'une association d'artistes canadiens, ont, par pétition, exposé que depuis deux ans ils sont constitués en association sous le nom de « Société des Artistes Canadiens », dans le but de stimuler le goût pour les beaux-arts en Canada, en élevant le niveau de l'art, en formant des artistes dans la Puissance et en les encourageant à produire des œuvres artistiques destinées à figurer dans des expositions publiques, d'après le mode suivi par les associations artistiques de la Grande-Bretagne, de la France et d'autres puissances européennes, et, à ces fins, d'établir des écoles d'art et de dessin, des bibliothèques pour l'étude des arts, des galeries de peintures, et des associations artistiques, tout en secourant en même temps les artistes indigents, leurs veuves et leurs enfants, dans les cas de maladie, vieillesse ou décès, au moyen d'une contribution annuelle de ses membres destinée à créer un fonds devant être réparti dans la mesure de leurs besoins et nécessités [...].

La troisième exposition de la Society of Canadian Artists se tint comme les autres dans les locaux utilisés par l'AAM à la Mercantile Library. Elle fut ouverte aux souscripteurs de l'Art Union le lundi 6 mars 1871 et au public le mardi 7 mars. Le catalogue de l'exposition n'a pu être retracé. Par contre, le contenu de l'exposition - 70 peintures, 30 aquarelles, 5 sculptures - nous est connu par les listes critiques publiées dans *The Montreal Herald*³⁵. Plus de vingt-huit artistes y participaient. Le catalogue rendait un vibrant hommage à Adolphe Vogt - dont six tableaux étaient exposés - décédé depuis peu³⁶.

Lithographie et concours

Lors de l'assemblée annuelle du 9 janvier 1869, il fut considéré « unadvisable » de tenir une exposition cette année-là. Par contre, le conseil fit rapport qu'il avait abandonné deux ans plus tôt l'idée de distribuer une chromolithographie aux membres, mais qu'aujourd'hui, « there are facilities here for having Chromolithography done in a very superior manner ». Il fut donc décidé de faire

l'acquisition d'une aquarelle propre à être lithographiée pour distribution aux membres en 1869³⁷.

À la réunion du conseil qui suivit l'assemblée, on forma un sous-comité chargé de sélectionner une œuvre qui fut soumise pour approbation le 16 janvier suivant:

In pursuance of the recommendation adopted at the last annual meeting, the Council purchased a Water Colour drawing by Mr. C.J. Way, representing a scene near Monte Rotundo, in Corsica, which has since been chromo-lithographed by Messrs. Burland Lafricain & Co., of this city, and a copy given to every member. This picture is the property of the Association, and forms part of a collection which it is forming from its surplus funds. It is hoped these efforts may be incentive to the public to extend more support to the Society than it has done of late³⁸.

L'objectif de cette opération, comme il n'y avait pas d'exposition en 1869, était d'inciter ceux qui étaient intéressés à maintenir leur participation à l'association en payant leur cotisation annuelle de cinq dollars, ce qui leur donnait droit à la lithographie. Le conseil avait espéré ainsi attirer de nouveaux membres et fait imprimer cinq cents exemplaires de la lithographie au coût de un dollar cinquante chacun en ne versant aux imprimeurs qu'un acompte. Mais l'opération ne connut pas le succès espéré lorsqu'on fit le bilan de 1869: « Of the number published, about 400 remain undisposed; but efforts will be made to sell them at the earliest possible opportunity³⁹ ». Une longue dispute s'ensuivit avec Burland Lafricain & Co sur le paiement en entier de la commande de 1869⁴⁰, dispute qui se résolut en 1873 par l'autorisation donnée aux imprimeurs de vendre eux-mêmes les lithographies dont l'AAM n'avait pas pu disposer⁴¹.

À la réunion du 16 janvier 1869, le conseil adopta aussi une autre approche pour la lithographie devant être distribuée en 1870:

That the sum of two hundred dollars be paid by the Art Association for an original Painting in oil or water colour, painted by an Artist born, or, at present residing in Canada, & which may be selected by the Council of this Association. That Artists desiring to compete shall deliver their pictures in the Gallery of the Association at the Mercantile Library building in this City on or before the thirty first of December 1869⁴².

In accordance with this a Circular was printed last spring and distributed among Canadian Artists, and advertised in some of the public Journals. In response to this invitation four pictures have been sent in for competition;-one by O.R. Jacobi in water colour representing a scene in the Thousand Islands; one by Mr. Fowler, in water colour, representing a group of Hollyhocks; one by Mr. Edson, in oil, Shawwanagen Falls; and one by Mr. Vogt, in oil, the Shepherd and his Flock⁴³.

Ce concours avait été décidé « with the view of encouraging Canadian Art », mais aussi sans doute pour éviter les accusations de favoritisme envers des membres du conseil, ce qui ne fut pas le cas, car O.R. Jacobi, tout en ayant soumis une œuvre, était membre du conseil. À l'assemblée annuelle tenue le 11 janvier 1870, un membre du conseil, John Popham, suggéra que l'œuvre la meilleure soit choisie lors de la prochaine exposition de l'AAM devant se tenir à partir du 8 mars suivant, et donc soumise à un choix public. Il ajouta que cela dissiperait le sentiment non fondé parmi les artistes que le conseil avait déjà décidé du choix, que plusieurs artistes n'avaient pas envoyé d'œuvres à cause de cela et que deux de ceux qui en avaient envoyé voulaient maintenant les retirer. Cette proposition mise au vote fut battue⁴⁴.

Lors de la réunion du conseil qui suivit, le 15 janvier, on procéda au vote des membres pour déterminer l'œuvre gagnante et Jacobi se retira de la salle de réunion. La décision nécessita deux ou trois votes et finalement c'est l'œuvre de Jacobi qui fut choisie par cinq voix contre quatre⁴⁵. Mais les choses n'en restèrent pas là à la réunion du conseil du 17 février suivant:

Mr F.B. Matthews reported that the prize of two hundred dollars offered by the Association for a Picture, had been awarded by the Council, at the last meeting, to that by Mr Jacobi, but that the latter had generously offered to allow the Association to become possessed of it for one hundred dollars provided Mr Fowler would allow his picture to be taken at the same price. This offer, had been accepted by Mr. Fowler, & now both pictures belonged to the Association at the cost of two hundred & eighteen dollars⁴⁶.

Lors de l'assemblée annuelle du 17 décembre 1870, le trésorier de l'association rapporta que le conseil possédait maintenant un début de collection permanente, soit les six œuvres suivantes:

- | | | |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. WaterColour | by O.R. Jacobi; | value \$50.00 |
| 2. do | C.J. Way | \$50.00 |
| 3. do | do | \$200.00 |
| 4. do | O. R. Jacobi | \$100.00 |
| 5. do | D. Fowler | \$118.00 |
| 6. Portrait in oil, of the late Lord Bishop of Montreal (Fulford, by Messrs Fraser and Notman, presented by W. Notman Esq. to the Council) ⁴⁷ . | | |

Exposition

La décision de tenir la sixième exposition de l'AAM fut prise à la réunion du conseil du 18 décembre 1869. Le prince Arthur, troisième fils de la reine Victoria, étant à Montréal à ce moment-là, on y décida d'en profiter pour lui demander de devenir le protecteur de l'association et d'être présent à la *conversazione*⁴⁸. Quelques jours avant la *conversazione*, qui eût lieu le mardi 8 mars 1870, le *Montreal Herald* publiait un long résumé de la conférence inaugurale d'une série de sept sur l'art

prononcée à Oxford le 8 février 1870 par John Ruskin, le critique d'art le plus influent du XIX^e siècle. Le résumé de la conférence était accompagné d'un article sur les progrès de l'art à Montréal.

We have now among us a number of professional artists, some of them just entering in their professional career, and others, whose years have been spent in the prosecution of their studies, and whose productions are considered among art collectors and consieurs [connoisseurs] as works worthy to be placed alongside of others eminent artists on this continent. These gentlemen have recently formed themselves into a society, for the purpose of having annual exhibitions; their last was a great success, and we believe a large portion of their products were sold at good prices, this is encouraging for the future. In a few days the Art Association of Montreal will hold its third [sic] *Conversazione* and Exhibition, at which His Royal Highness and suite have intimated their intention of being present. This exhibition will consist of oil paintings, water colours, and statuary, when an opportunity will be given to the public of witnessing how much the lovers of art have done in adding to their collections since the last exhibition. We know that a large number of very magnificent pictures have been added by private collectors, and have no hesitation in saying that, the approaching exhibition will be the best ever held in the city⁴⁹.

La conversazione, rehaussée de la présence du prince Arthur, fut très courue:

The string band of the P.C.O. Royal Rifle Brigade was in attendance, and one of the features of the evening was the presence of H.R.H. Prince Arthur, who arrived at a little before nine o'clock, and in company with the Vice-President, Dr. Sterry Hunt, and Mr. Way, (the President, Mr. Peter Redpath, being absent) examined attentively the pictures in both rooms. H.R.H. then, along with the Vice-President, ascended the dais, and the latter delivered a brief address, in which he alluded to the low state of art in Montreal, some ten years ago, when the Association was first established. He then traced the improvement in this respect to the present time, much of which was doubtless due to the exertions of the Art Association, whose object amongst other aims was to make the artisan more an artist⁵⁰.

Les commentaires sur la présentation et le contenu de l'exposition furent élogieux:

The attendance comprehended many patrons of art in the city, and the exhibition, taken as a whole, was perhaps superior to any heretofore held by the Association. The actual number of pictures on the walls may have been greater, but the general merit last night was higher, scarcely an inferior work being found. The hanging, too, was judicious, and no picture or other work of art seemed to have been thrust out of sight after having been admitted⁵¹.

L'exposition fut ouverte au public du mercredi 9 au jeudi 17 mars. On pouvait lire sur la page couverture du catalogue une citation de Ruskin: « Art gives force to knowledge, grace to utility, and a true heart to a dead age, in which materialistic



fig. 3 Thomas Sterry Hunt, 1863, coll. de la Musée McCord d'histoire canadienne, Montréal. (Photo: Musée McCord, I-7250.1)

machine work is omnipotent, and the photograph displaces the Painting⁵² ». Le catalogue comprenait 86 entrées pour les peintures, 108 entrées pour les aquarelles, 8 entrées pour les dessins et 13 pour la statuaire. L'AAM y exposait le portrait de Fulford par Fraser, ainsi que les aquarelles de Fowler, Jacobi et Way. On y trouvait 22 tableaux et 50 aquarelles d'artistes canadiens.

1872-1873: L'AAM sous la présidence de Thomas Sterry Hunt

Thomas Sterry Hunt (fig.3) fit partie du premier conseil d'administration de l'Art Association of Montreal en 1860 puis de 1864 à 1868. Il en fut élu vice-président de 1869 à 1871 et président en décembre 1871. Né en 1826 au Connecticut, dans un milieu familial puritain, il étudia la chimie en Nouvelle-Angleterre. Il entra en fonction à la Commission géologique du Canada à Montréal en 1847 en tant que chimiste et minéralogiste. Il fut aussi professeur à l'université Laval à Québec en 1856 et organisa les musées du séminaire avant de quitter ce poste en 1868. Il enseigna également au McGill College de Montréal de 1862 à 1868. Il avait atteint une grande réputation scientifique tant en Amérique qu'en Europe, lorsqu'en 1872 il fut nommé professeur de géologie et de minéralogie au Massachusetts Institute of Technology de Cambridge, poste qu'il occupa jusqu'en 1878. Vice-président de la Société royale du Canada en 1883-1884, puis président en 1884-1885, il mourut à New York le 12 février 1892.

Lors de la réunion du conseil d'administration du 15 janvier 1872⁵³, la dernière présidée par Hunt, le secrétaire de l'AAM rapporte qu'à la suite d'une résolution adoptée lors de l'assemblée annuelle du 23 décembre 1871 - et qui n'est pas consignée au procès-verbal - des discussions ont eu lieu avec la Society of Canadian Artists en vue de faire une exposition conjointe, une *conversazione* et un tirage de l'Art Union. Chaque association a formé un comité pour y travailler conjointement.

Des annonces conjointes sont publiées annonçant l'ouverture de l'exposition le lundi 8 avril 1872⁵⁴. On y mentionne que chaque souscripteur de cinq dollars aura droit à une chance de gagner un prix au tirage de l'Art Union, à l'admission gratuite à l'exposition d'un *Gentleman and Lady* et à quatre gravures originales (fig.4).

Each subscriber of five dollars will be entitled to receive the four Etchings, one "Amongst the Wharfs at Quebec" by Henry Sandham (an artist to the manner born); one by Allan Edson "All Alone," likewise a Canadian; "Young Canada" by Western [James Weston], an Englishman, a resident in Montreal; and "The Essex Ferryman," by Fowler, another Englishman, residing near Kingston⁵⁵.

Le bilan de l'opération fit état qu'il y eut 318 souscriptions à cinq dollars, 363 admissions à l'exposition (à vingt-cinq sous) et qu'on vendit 350 catalogues à dix sous. Une fois les coûts de l'exposition payés ainsi que les acquisitions d'œuvres pour le tirage, il resta un montant de cent dix dollars et dix sous qui fut partagé entre les deux associations⁵⁶.



fig.4 Henry Sandham, **Among the Wharves, Quebec** (*Sur les quais à Québec*), 1872, eau forte, 30 x 21 cm, Coll. Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. (Photo: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, 69.694)

L'exposition eut lieu au 12 rue Bonaventure « over Mr. McLaren's Saddlery Store (formerly occupied by the Mercantile Library) » et fut ouverte au public du mardi 9 au samedi 13 avril, le tirage de l'Art Union ayant lieu le 11 avril⁵⁷.

The exhibition includes a considerable number of the works of our Canadian artists, both those who have already achieved honour and reputation, and those who, as yet, are only aspirants for popular fame, and those of European artists of world wide celebrity. It is satisfactory to be able to state that our own productions bear a favourable comparison with those of the European artists that are here exhibited, who have far better opportunity of studying art, both theoretically and practically than Canadian artists have hitherto been able to command. Generally speaking, for tone and colour and purity of taste the European artists bear away the palm, but to the Canadians is certainly due the credit of boldness and originality of design, a keen eye to the beauties of nature in their own country, and very considerable artistic skill and feeling in depicting them. And the effect of such exhibitions as that which was opened yesterday, and of such a society as that under whose auspices the pictures have been collected, cannot but be to extend and diffuse a taste for art among people, and so, by increasing the demand for paintings, to improve our native artists. In the Catalogue of the Exhibition the paintings are arranged according to the usual division into oil and water colour drawings, but perhaps the most interesting mode of viewing the collection is that which has been adopted by the hangers, who have arranged all the Canadian works on two sides of the room, and those from Europe on the other two. By this arrangement a comparison is more easily arrived at between two classes, than would have been the case had the strict line of division into oil and water colours been adhered to⁵⁸.

La collaboration entre les deux associations semble avoir changé le mode d'accrochage habituel de l'AAM qui présentait les œuvres en suivant les divisions du catalogue et ne faisait pas de distinction entre les œuvres européennes et canadiennes: « The "hanging committee" have this year performed their very difficult and thankless task with an impartiality and discretion which must shield them from objurgations of disappointed artists who are apt to attribute the positions assigned to their works to personal caprice or professional spite⁵⁹ ». L'attention fut ainsi attirée beaucoup plus que par le passé sur les œuvres des artistes canadiens et sur leurs conditions de travail:

The artists who have been mainly instrumental in getting up this, as well as former exhibitions, have expended a great-amount of time and effort, to say nothing of talent and genius, in producing the works here brought together for the delight and edification of the public. In a young country like Canada, where the taste for high art is necessarily confined to a select few, the patronage ordinarily extended to the devotees of the palette and brush is of too

limited and precarious a nature to enable them to give their whole time to the legitimate business of their calling. With a few favoured exceptions, they are obliged to devote their best energies to the more mechanical and practical departments of their art, leaving only to odd moments of leisure, and those frequently snatched from the hours of repose, the working out of the more ideal conceptions of the artistic nature. Taking into account the comparatively small number of Canadian artists, and the difficulties under which they have been thus compelled to work, the display of really meritorious works they have been able to make in this exhibition, is all the more worthy of praise, and certainly gives them a stronger claim to the generous contenance and encouragement of the public⁶⁰.

Le catalogue de cette septième exposition de l'AAM comprend 59 entrées pour les peintures, 88 pour les aquarelles, 4 entrées pour des statuettes et une liste de 22 œuvres canadiennes pour les prix de l'Art Union⁶¹. Parmi les seize artistes canadiens exposant, aucun n'est francophone.

Après l'assemblée annuelle de l'AAM du 23 décembre 1871, il n'y en eut pas d'autre avant le 13 décembre 1877. Le conseil ne tint que deux assemblées en 1872 et deux autres en 1873. Ces deux dernières furent présidées par le vice-président George Frothingham. L'assemblée du 19 février avait été convoquée à la demande de conseillers « who were desirous of efforts being made for the erection of a Building for the exhibition of Works of Art⁶² ». Elle aboutit à la formation d'un sous-comité « to ascertain the possibility of procuring a lot of ground and the erection thereon of a building for a permanent Art Gallery ». À l'assemblée du 8 novembre 1873, les membres du conseil eurent une discussion sur la possibilité d'organiser une exposition à l'hiver 1874, décision qui fut liée à la possibilité d'obtenir « pictures for sale or exhibition from American Artists⁶³ ». Il n'y eut pas d'autre réunion du conseil avant le 9 juin 1877.

1874-1877: La suspension des activités

La crise économique qui frappa l'Amérique du Nord dans les années 1870 eut de sérieuses répercussions à Montréal. L'AAM cessa toute réunion et activité pour ne les reprendre qu'après la mort de Benaiah Gibb, membre fondateur de l'AAM décédé le 1er juin 1877, dont l'exécuteur testamentaire était R.W. Shepherd qui avait été élu trésorier de l'association à l'assemblée annuelle du 17 décembre 1870. Le testament de Gibb allait finalement permettre à l'AAM de construire le bâtiment qu'elle souhaitait depuis sa fondation en 1860.

Lors de l'assemblée annuelle du 13 décembre 1877 présidée par Peter Redpath, le secrétaire de l'association, John Popham, allait ainsi résumer la période d'inactivité:

The Association seventh and last Exhibition of Fine Arts was held in conjunction with that of the Society of Canadian Artists, in April 1872 ; and terminated very successfully. The commercial depression, and a lack of sufficient Pictures of merit, which had not already been exhibited, deterred the Council from having another exhibition in 1875 and in 1876. But a re-appearance of

Commercial prosperity, and the recent acquisition of several valuable works of Art, by some of our Citizens, lead the Council to believe, that the time has arrived, when another *Conversazione*, and Exhibition should be held ; and it is expected a most attractive display of Art can be presented. It is therefore proposed that it should take place in the month of January, and that the Exhibition should be kept open to the members and the public as heretofore, for a few days after the *Conversazione*⁶⁴.

De 1863 à 1877, l'Art Association of Montreal avait traversé une longue période d'incertitude. Elle avait quand même su créer et animer un milieu culturel artistique. Cependant, malgré toutes ses tentatives et discussions visant à construire un bâtiment qui pouvait lui donner sa permanence et lui permettre d'atteindre tous les objectifs qu'elle s'était fixés en 1860, elle n'avait pas trouvé les moyens financiers nécessaires à cette entreprise. Ses membres, pourtant bien nantis, ne s'étaient pas compromis au-delà des expositions temporaires de leurs propres collections.

Cette période est riche en renseignements de toutes sortes sur le milieu culturel montréalais. Elle pourrait permettre une analyse plus poussée du début des collections montréalaises et de leur contenu en œuvres européennes, américaines et canadiennes, de la façon de considérer la photographie, du peu de sculptures et de sculpteurs d'œuvres à caractère profane, de la situation précaire des peintres canadiens et de leur développement, des théories justifiant l'importance de l'art dans la société, du rôle des critiques d'art dans les journaux et de l'absence quasi totale de la participation des francophones à l'association.

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Notes

1 *The Art Association of Montreal. Incorporated 1861. Regulations, Approved by the Council, 12th March 1864*, Archives du Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal, p.1.

2 *Council Meetings*, 2 avr. 1864, p.29 et 12 nov. 1864, p.30.

3 *Ibid.*, 22 avr. 1865, p.38.

4 Document manuscrit sans titre conservé dans les Archives du Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal qui semble être le rapport annuel de 1865, p.4-5.

- 5 *Council Meetings*, 22 avr. 1865, p.38.
- 6 Voir Hélène SABOURIN, *La Chambre des Arts et Manufactures: les quinze premières années, 1857-1872*, Université du Québec à Montréal, mémoire de maîtrise en histoire, 1989.
- 7 Document manuscrit..., p.5.
- 8 *Council Meetings*, 12 jan. 1866, p.49.
- 9 *The Montreal Gazette*, 6 fév. 1867.
- 10 *The Montreal Herald*, 26 fév. 1868.
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 *Ibid.*, 28 fév. 1868.
- 13 *The Montreal Gazette*, 28 fév. 1868.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 2 mars 1868 ; *The Montreal Herald*, 2 mars 1868 ; *The Witness*, 2 mars 1868.
- 15 *The Montreal Gazette*, 2 mars 1868.
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 *Ibid.*
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 *The Montreal Herald*, 2 mars 1868.
- 22 *The Montreal Gazette*, 2 mars 1868.
- 23 *Annual Meetings-General Meetings...*, 9 jan. 1869, p.43-44.
- 24 *The Montreal Gazette*, 2 mars 1868.
- 25 *The Montreal Herald*, 2 mars 1868.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 23 déc. 1868.
- 27 Society of Canadian Artists. *First Exhibition 1868. Catalogue of Oil and Water Colour Paintings, Statuary. &c. Exhibited at the Gallery of the Art Association, At the Mercantile Library Building, Montreal, 23rd December 1868*, Montreal, Printed by John Wilson, 42 St. John Street, 1868, 12 p. Microfilm à la Médiathèque de l'Université de Montréal.
- 28 *The Montreal Gazette*, 30 déc. 1868.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 18 déc. 1869, p.80.
- 30 *The Daily Witness*, 10 fév. 1870.
- 31 Society of Canadian Artists, *Second Exhibition 1870. Catalogue of Oil and Water Colour Paintings exhibited at the Gallery of the Art Association at the Mercantile Library Building, Montreal, Tuesday, February 8th, 1870*, Montreal, Printed at the Montreal Printing and Publishing Company, 67 St. James Street, 1870, 9 p.
- 32 *Annual Meetings-General Meetings...*, 9 jan. 1869, p.46.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 11 jan. 1870, p.51.
- 34 « Acte pour incorporer la 'Société des Artistes Canadiens », *Statuts du Canada*, 33 Victoria, CHAP 59, 12 mai 1870, p.211-13.

- 35 *The Montreal Herald*, 6 et 7 mars 1871.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 6 mars 1871.
- 37 *Annual Meetings-General Meetings...*, 9 jan. 1869, p.44.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 11 jan. 1870, p.47-48.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 17 déc. 1870, p.54-55.
- 40 *Council Meetings*, 21 mai 1872, p.92.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 8 nov. 1873, p.94.
- 42 *Ibid.*, 18 jan. 1869, p.78.
- 43 *Annual Meetings-General Meetings...*, 11 jan. 1870, p.48.
- 44 *The Montreal Gazette*, 12 jan. 1870.
- 45 *Council Meetings*, 15 jan. 1870, p.81.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 17 fév. 1870, p.82.
- 47 *Annual Meetings-General Meetings...*, 17 déc. 1870, p.54.
- 48 *Council Meetings*, 18 déc. 1869, p.80.
- 49 *The Montreal Herald*, 1^{er} mars 1870.
- 50 *The Daily Witness*, 10 mars 1870.
- 51 *Ibid.*
- 52 Art Association of Montreal. *Sixth Exhibition 1870. Catalogue of Oil and Water Colour Paintings, Statuary, Bronzes, and other Works of Art, Lent for the occasion, and exhibited at the Gallery of the Association, at the Mercantile Library Building, Montreal, 8th March, 1870*, Montreal, Printed by John Lovell, St. Nicholas Street, 1870, 11 p.
- 53 *Council Meetings*, 15 jan. 1872, p.90.
- 54 *The Daily Witness*, 3 fév. 1872 ; *The Montreal Herald*, 27 mars 1872.
- 55 Archives du Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal, *Répertoire de coupures de journaux 1864-1882*, p.40, journal non identifié, mars 1872.
- 56 *Council Meetings*, 21 mai 1872, p.92.
- 57 *The Montreal Herald*, 12 avr. 1872.
- 58 *The Montreal Gazette*, 9 avr. 1872.
- 59 *The Montreal Herald*, 9 avr. 1872.
- 60 *Ibid.*, 10 avr. 1872.
- 61 Art Association of Montreal and Society of Canadian Artists, Seventh Exhibition. *Catalogue of Oil, and Water Colour Paintings, Statuary, &c. Exhibited at the Gallery, 12, Bonaventure Street, Montreal, Monday, the 8th April, 1872*, Montreal, 1872, 10 p. Archives du Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal.
- 62 *Council Meetings*, 19 fév. 1873, p.93.
- 63 *Ibid.*, 8 nov. 1873, p.95.
- 64 *Annual Meetings-General Meetings...*, 13 déc. 1877, p.61.

THE ART ASSOCIATION OF MONTREAL

The Years of Uncertainty: 1863-1877

(Part Two)

This article continues the discussion of the little-known activities of the Art Association of Montreal during the period shortly after its founding in 1860, published in the previous volume of the JCAH. In 1865, the AAM again resolved to find permanent premises for a gallery, an art school and other activities, possibly on Philips Square in downtown Montreal. It would only become a reality fourteen years later through a bequest by Benaiah Gibb. In 1864 and '65, exhibitions were held in the Mechanic's Institute and then at the Mercantile Library, which had also been one of the sites for the association's council meetings. In order to encourage the construction of a major public art gallery and to determine methods for obtaining funds for a permanent building as well as the intention to institute a permanent collection, a special meeting open to the public was held in late February 1868. There was also lengthy discussion on the merits of creating a school of art and design, which would expand upon the AAM's drawing class given by John Bell-Smith. The suggestion of the formation of an association of Canadian artists received a rapid, positive response.

From 1868 to 1871, the president of the AAM was Peter Redpath, a sugar merchant who was better known for his support of McGill University than as a dedicated leader of the art association. The AAM supported the first exhibition of the newly-founded Society of Canadian Artists in December 1868. Under its president, John Bell-Smith, the presentation of one hundred and forty-five works by twenty Anglophone artists was accompanied by a draw for a chromolithograph to Art Union subscribers. The second SCA exhibition took place two years later and again a print was offered as a means of financing the show. The catalogue listed the one hundred and twenty-five works on display (including a portrait by the sole Francophone, Napoleon Bourassa), along with the names of the twenty-five SAC members, including its president, C.J. Way. Collaboration between the society and the AAM was further solidified in subsequent meetings of the Art Association. The SAC was incorporated in May 1870 and within its broad mandate, it had the rights to operate an Art Union, similar to that of the AAM, in order to raise funds for its exhibitions. Although the catalogue for its third exhibition has not been traced, newspaper accounts state that its text rendered homage to the late Adolphe Vogt and that six of his paintings were included in the presentation of over one hundred works by almost thirty Canadian artists.

Meanwhile, the AAM had cancelled its own 1869 annual exhibition although it agreed to purchase a watercolour by C.J. Way, which would be lithographed and distributed to new members of the association. Because of a lengthy dispute with the printer, the project was unsuccessful; internal politics defeated a similar attempt to distribute a Canadian artwork the following year. However, during the annual meeting in December 1870, the AAM treasurer announced that the association had obtained six works by Canadian artists that would constitute the beginnings of a permanent collection. The sixth AAM exhibition had also taken place in March 1870 and was preceded by a *conversazione* or opening where Prince Arthur, the third son of Queen Victoria, was the guest of honour. The exhibition catalogue, which carried a quotation by John Ruskin on its cover, reflects a much larger exhibition than in recent years: two hundred and fifteen works of which one-third were by Canadian artists.

Under the presidency of Thomas Sterry Hunt in 1872-73, the AAM annual exhibition offered four etchings as part of its Art Union draw. Subscribers now numbered over three hundred at a fee of \$5.00. The exhibition at the former site of the Mercantile library was a further collaboration between the AAM and the SAC. It also demonstrated a significant change in the exhibition's installation as Canadian and European artworks were now arranged separately, even though they continued to be listed together in the catalogue, where the work was divided according to medium. However, the overall number of works was significantly lower and only sixteen Canadian artists participated in the exhibition.

From the time of the AAM's annual general assembly in late 1871, no other such meetings took place for the next six years and the council sessions were also infrequent. Little had been accomplished towards the achieving of a permanent art gallery and school of art and design. The economic crises that battered North America in the 1870s had serious repercussions for Montreal. The annual exhibitions were cancelled and no council meetings were held between 1874 and 1877. In essence, the AAM had ceased to function. The annual assembly of 1877 was prompted by the death of a founding member, Benaiah Gibb, and the announcement of his bequest of funds that finally ensured the construction of a major art gallery for Montreal, an objective that dated back to the founding of the AAM in 1860. While the period from 1863 to 1877 reflected a period of uncertainty, the activities of the Art Association of Montreal provide an important glimpse of the Anglophone cultural milieu and its attitudes toward the visual arts.

Translation: Sandra Paikowsky