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The idea of art history as a collective endeavour is much in the air these days. Some scholars resist, not because they are anti-social, but because their every accomplishment, every recognition by their field, has seemed, at least on the surface, to be the result of individual effort – sifting the evidence and seeing things in a new, or singular, way. Still we are thinking about networks: how they have and continue to shape our work.

At a recent gathering of Canadian art historians, Kristina Huneault pointed out that research and writing, however solitary in aspect, have always been conducted in virtual networks, the voices of other researchers and theorists, alive or dead, intermingling conversationally in our thoughts.[1] But as I think Huneault would also admit, a single author's hearing can be quite selective. If this is productive in strengthening the walls of a room of one's own, it can be fatal to the harmony of team research or co-authorship. And the issue of who signs, or whose name appears first on a book or article, is only part of a sometimes thorny question.

Team research was the theme of a panel organized by Karla McManus for the Universities Art Association of Canada (UAAC) conference in 2012. Discussion was lively. Ruth Phillips made the point that however forcefully Canadian researchers are being encouraged to work as teams, a hierarchy persists in the way that funding applications are structured and evaluated. The lead author mind-set is in place before the team even leaves the gate. Phillips had just heard a paper by Carolyn Butler-Palmer on art history as "social knowledge," which chronicled Erwin Panofsky's vain attempts to situate his work within a net of contributions. As Butler-Palmer develops her argument in this issue, the model of 'big art history' can be applied to projects big and small, and it is not simply a matter of accommodating or acknowledging the input of others, but building a participatory apparatus from the ground up.

Museum curators have long known that there are other specialists in the house. The conservation unit or consultant brings performative interpretation of a work into play; it is remade before one's eyes, and dialogue ensues. Claude Payer and Gérard Lavallée's co-signed report on their rediscovery of a tabernacle should not be taken as unusual, and that's the point. Museums are sites of collective research, a structure that used to be honoured in exhibition catalogues – the museum signed – before the curator took on the role of author. Anne Whitelaw's fine-grained analysis of the new Canadian and Quebec pavilion of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts treats the hang as a process, the visitor following a path laid out, as we might imagine, in innumerable meetings between architects, designers, curators, and technicians.

This is not a thematic issue of *JCAH/AHAC*, but taking the network proposition seriously inflects my reading of every contribution. The

L'idée voulant que l'histoire de l'art soit une entreprise collective est en vogue ces temps-ci. Certains érudits s'y opposent, non pas parce qu'ils sont de nature asociales, mais parce que chacune de leurs réalisations, comme chaque marque de reconnaissance de leurs pairs, semble résulter des efforts qu'ils déploient de manière individuelle, triant les preuves et examinant les choses sous un angle différent, voire singulier. Néanmoins, les réseaux – plus précisément la façon dont ils ont modelé notre travail et continuent de le faire – nous occupent tout de même l'esprit.

Lors d'un récent rassemblement d'historiens de l'art canadiens, Kristina Huneault a souligné que nos travaux de recherche et de rédaction, bien que solitaires en apparence, sont toujours réalisés dans le cadre de réseaux virtuels où d'autres chercheurs et théoriciens, passés ou présents, se croisent et conversent dans notre esprit[1]. Toutefois, Huneault conviendrait sans doute avec moi qu'un auteur a parfois l'oreille très sélective. Même si ce phénomène réussit à renforcer les murs de la pièce dans laquelle chacun s'enferme, il peut détruire l'harmonie de la recherche collective ou de la rédaction en collaboration. Quant à savoir quelle signature ou quel nom figurera en premier sur un livre ou dans un article, cela ne représente qu'une facette d'une question parfois épineuse.

Ce sujet a donné lieu à de vives discussions lors d'une récente table ronde sur la recherche collective organisée par Karla McManus, dans le cadre du colloque 2012 de L'Association d'art des universités du Canada. Ruth Phillips a fait valoir que, peu importent les mesures de persuasion employées auprès des chercheurs canadiens pour qu'ils travaillent en équipe, une hiérarchie perdure quant à la façon dont les demandes de financement sont structurées et évaluées. L'état d'esprit de l'auteur principal est établi avant même que l'équipe ne prenne place sur la ligne de départ. Ruth Phillips venait d'entendre un exposé de Carolyn Butler-Palmer sur l'histoire de l'art à titre de « connaissance sociale », qui décrivait les vaines tentatives d'Erwin Panofsky de situer son travail au sein d'un réseau de contributions. Tandis que Butler-Palmer expose ses arguments sur cette question, on peut appliquer le modèle de « méga histoire de l'art » à des projets de toutes tailles. Il ne s'agit pas simplement de prendre en compte ou de reconnaître l'apport des autres, mais aussi de bâtir un instrument de participation de bout en bout.

Les conservateurs de musée savent composer depuis longtemps avec d'autres spécialistes. L'unité de conservation, ou un expert-conseil dans ce domaine, intervient pour faire l'interprétation performative d'une œuvre; celle-ci se transforme alors sous nos yeux, et un dialogue s'ensuit. Ainsi, le rapport cosigné par Claude Payer et Gérard Lavallée sur leur redécouverte d'un tabernacle ne devrait pas faire figure d'exception. Les musées sont des lieux de recherche collective, une structure autrefois mise en valeur dans les catalogues d'expositions, ceux que signaient les musées, avant que les conservateurs ne s'attribuent le rôle d'auteur. Dans son analyse exhaustive du nouveau

interdisciplinary approaches of cultural historians are necessarily networked, even when findings are repossessed by the discipline in charge. As Andrew Horrall shows us in his study of the Dorothy Cameron "obscenity" trial, an appreciable amount of Canadian art history can be found in judicial transcripts as positions are hardened and interpretations fixed like bayonets. Erin Morton's investigation of J. Russell Harper's correspondence brings out his consultative process as he imagines a pan-Canadian community of folk artists. There is much more to Morton's article, of course, but even in her focus on this renowned art historian's solo curatorial project, it is clear that institutional dynamics mattered. This message also bubbles up from Lorne Huston's lively reconstruction of the critical reception of the 1913 Spring Exhibition of the Art Association of Montreal, a collective event *par excellence*, as a group exhibition assembled by a jury appointed by an association. A cacophony of voices, none of them disinterested, are brought into dialogue; they riff off each other, as an old hipster might say.

Polyphonic intellectual activity is not a new thing, but clearer, more reflexive statements of collective methodology might be required of us in future. This issue offers a few examples in text and by its very existence as a bound volume of essays heading out into the world. In his silent film *So Is This* (1982), Michael Snow projects a string of words that form the following question: When was the last time you and your neighbour read together?

So here we go, all together now …

Martha Langford

NOTES

1 Mark Clintberg, Pablo Rodriguez, and Sarah Watson, "A Room of One's Own and/or Global Networks?" *Knowledge & Networks: Canadian Art History, circa 2013*. Accessed 14 July 2013, http://knowledgeandnetworks.concordia.ca/2012/en/a-room-of-ones-own-and-or-global-networks.

pavillon d'art québécois et canadien du Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal, Anne Whitelaw décrit la disposition des œuvres comme un processus : le visiteur suit un tracé déterminé et, comme nous pouvons l'imaginer, formé d'innombrables rencontres entre architectes, concepteurs, conservateurs et techniciens.

Si le présent numéro de *JCAH/AHAC* ne comporte pas de thématique particulière, le sérieux que j'accorde à la proposition de réseau infléchit ma lecture de chacun des articles. Les approches interdisciplinaires des historiens de la culture se déroulent obligatoirement en réseau, même lorsque le domaine dont elles relèvent s'en approprie les résultats. Comme l'illustre Andrew Horrall dans son étude sur le procès de Dorothy Cameron pour « obscénité », une part non négligeable de l'histoire de l'art au Canada se retrouve dans les transcriptions judiciaires à mesure que les positions se durcissent et que les interprétations se figent. Selon l'examen de sa correspondance réalisé par Erin Morton, J. Russell Harper utilise un processus consultatif alors qu'il imagine une communauté pancanadienne d'artistes populaires. Bien entendu, l'article de Morton ne s'arrête pas là, mais le regard qu'elle pose sur le projet de conservation mené en solitaire par cet historien de l'art renommé témoigne hors de tout doute de l'importance de la dynamique institutionnelle. Ce message ressort également lorsque Lorne Huston décrit, de façon très vivante, l'accueil critique de l'exposition organisée par l'Art Association of Montreal au printemps de 1913, activité collective par excellence, puisqu'il s'agit d'une exposition de groupe mise en place par un jury lui-même nommé par une association. Une cacophonie d'opinions discordantes, toutes intéressées, présentées sous forme de dialogue où chaque voix essaie d'enterrer l'autre.

L'activité intellectuelle polyphonique n'est pas une nouveauté, mais une formulation claire et réflexive d'une méthodologie collective pourrait être exigée de nous à l'avenir. Le présent numéro en donne quelques exemples, dans ses textes et par son existence même à titre de recueil d'essais publiés. Dans son film muet intitulé *So Is This* (1982), Michael Snow projette une suite de mots qui posent la question suivante : quand votre voisin et vous-même avez-vous lu ensemble pour la dernière fois ?

Alors voilà, tous ensemble maintenant …

Martha Langford

NOTES

1 Mark Clintberg, Pablo Rodriguez, et Sarah Watson, « Une chambre à soi ou des réseaux planétaires ? », *Savoir et réseaux. Histoire de l'art canadien vers 2012*, http://knowledgeandnetworks.concordia.ca/2012/fr/une-chambre-a-soi-ou-des-reseaux-planetaires, consulté le 14 juillet 2013.

The Montreal Daily Star.

Weather Forecast: COLDER. MONTREAL, TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 1913.

WILL SPEND FOUR MILLIONS ON A NORTH-END PARK

Will Be Situated on the Back River Near New Route of the C. N. Ry.

WORKING ON PLANS TO START VERY SOON

Stadium for Hockey is Included, Also a Race Course—Money is Raised for Venture.

Also a Hockey Stadium.

Foreign Investors.

DR. MOLLOY GIVES GOVERNMENT VERY STRONG ARGUMENT

THE WEATHER

ART ASSOCIATION EXHIBITION SHOWS NOTABLE FEATURES

Canadian Artists Have at Last Realized Possibilities of Canadian Art School.

OIL PAINTINGS ARE SUPERIOR SECTION

Recognition of Painters Who Have Waited Long for Honors Here.

FIRST PHOTOS OF CAPT. SCOTT IN THE ANTARCTIC

CAN UNDERSTAND IMPROVEMENT IN MISS DUBOIS CASE

Dr. Richer Believes Friedmann Treatment Good for Tuberculosis of Bones.

What Was Done First?

FRIEDMANN CASE ENDS FATALLY, BUT SERUM NOT BLAMED

Special to The Montreal Star.

IS NO SPLIT LOCALLY AMONG SUFFRAGETTES

THE TRAMWAYS QUESTION

FIRST BODY IS TAKEN FROM CANAL THIS YEAR

WATER IN HARBOR IS NINE INCHES HIGHER

The 1913 Spring Exhibition of the Art Association of Montreal: Anatomy of a Public Debate

LORNE HUSTON

The 1913 edition of the Spring Exhibition at the Art Association of Montreal (AAM) provoked a flood of commentary in the newspapers, both by critics and by readers, on a scale never seen before in Canada (See Appendix 1).[1] The show, which opened on 26 March and lasted until 19 April, presented nearly 500 works by 182 artists and was the first to be held in the luxurious new premises on Sherbrooke Street West.[2] It was the thirtieth to have been sponsored by the AAM since it opened its first galleries on Philips Square in 1879.[3] Provocative headlines and occasional front page coverage led the readers into long articles and numerous photographs of the works on the inner pages of the papers. Readers responded with passion, challenging and defending the critics' judgements. The latter, in turn, angrily replied to their detractors. Over twenty letters to the editors were published in seven of the dailies (three French- and four English-language publications) that sold in Montreal at that time. All observers agreed that attendance broke new records; by the most conservative estimates, over 15,000 people visited the show during the twenty-two days that the galleries were open.[4]

Contemporary observers were very conscious of the extraordinary nature of the event. A review which appeared in the *Montreal Daily Witness* just after closing states: "The spring exhibition at the Art Gallery, which closed on Saturday night, proved, as was anticipated, by far the most successful ever held under the auspices of the Art Association of Montreal."[5] In his year-end summary of the visual art scene in Montreal, the critic of *The Montreal Star*, Samuel Morgan-Powell (1867–1962), claimed that, "The thirtieth Spring Exhibition of the Art Association of Montreal will be remembered as marking a distinct departure from the old routine, the old styles, the old traditions."[6]

For the most part, this critic was wrong. The 1913 Spring Exhibition (SE1913) has not been remembered as marking a distinct departure. In general surveys of Canadian art history, when the show is mentioned at all, it is

1 | *The Montreal Daily Star*, 25 March 1913, p. 1. *The Star* gives front page coverage to the Spring Exhibition following opening night but makes no mention of the controversial paintings until the issue is raised by the smaller newspapers. (Photo: author)

not seen as a turning point but rather as proof of the generally conservative attitudes that prevailed in Montreal (and in Canada as a whole) at the turn of the century.[7] More specific thematic studies, such as Joan Murray's work on Post-Impressionism in Canada, elaborate this perception of the situation: "In Montreal, the Spring Show was reviewed with angry ferocity." She goes on to provide a series of snippets of inflammatory prose by the critics and an excerpt from the "feisty response" of one of the most criticized painters, John G. Lyman (1886–1967).[8] Ross King adopts a similar approach in his recent essay on the "modernist revolution" in Canada. In his view, the press reaction to the Montreal show confirms that Montreal (and Canada in general before the advent of the Group of Seven) was "conservative and unadventurous in its tastes."[9] An interesting exception to this general view is provided by Jean-René Ostiguy in his essay in the catalogue for the exhibition *Modernism in Quebec Art 1916–1946* held in 1982 at the National Gallery in Ottawa. He mentions the SE1913 only in passing, though not as proof of conservative taste in Quebec, but as foreshadowing the modernist decades to come.[10]

To date, the most detailed study of this exhibition is found in the catalogue for a major retrospective exhibition on the career of John Lyman held in 1986. Louise Dompierre examines the critical reception of the exhibition, listing thirty-five articles and letters which appeared in the press at the time. While noting that Lyman was "one of the central figures of the debates," she explains the critical reaction as follows: "To understand the critics' attitude it is important to note that, at that time, many Montrealers, critics included, still cherished inoffensive allegorical subjects, well observed and accurately rendered landscapes and the 'sane impressionism' of such Canadian artists as Maurice Cullen."[11]

I will argue here that, in order to properly understand the critics' reactions, the concept that the art world in Montreal was entrenched in tradition needs to be examined more closely. Controversy is a paradoxical phenomenon. If the art world in Montreal was so conservative, why did the critics pay so much attention to these young artists? Why would critics choose to make John Lyman a central figure of debate? He was just twenty-six years old and had only begun his career. Surely a truly conservative milieu would not even generate a controversy. The jury could have rejected these paintings or stuck them in a dark corner somewhere. The newspapers too, could have simply ignored these works, as they did so many others which they judged incompetent. The relative neglect into which the massive outburst of public opinion in 1913 has fallen indicates the degree to which the event has not been integrated into a "founding myth" of artistic modernism in Canada. Yet the attention it generated in its own time belies the view of a world entrenched in tradition.

The Spring Exhibition of 1913 provides a particularly fruitful way of investigating the dynamics at work in the Montreal art world. Over the years, the Spring Exhibitions had become a highlight of the art scene and as such, elicited various reactions from artists, critics and the public. The first part of this article looks at the Spring Exhibition as an institution and gives a broad overview of its evolution as part of the Montreal art world since its inception in 1880.

A second part of the analysis looks at the Spring Exhibition of 1913 as a specific event. The emphasis is on the dynamics at work for that particular exhibition. I will examine the scope and the nature of the polemical comments in the newspapers. What place did they occupy within the overall newspaper coverage? How did the character of the coverage compare to previous years? As we shall see, the 1913 exhibition did include some unusual features and these are examined in more detail.

The final section suggests a few ways in which the preceding analysis can contribute to our understanding of the dynamics at work in the Montreal art world in 1913. Two aspects of the context are examined in particular: the relationship between the art critic and the public, as manifested in the numerous letters written to the editor about opinions expressed in the newspapers, and the extent to which the public debate was related to the issues of modernism and tradition.

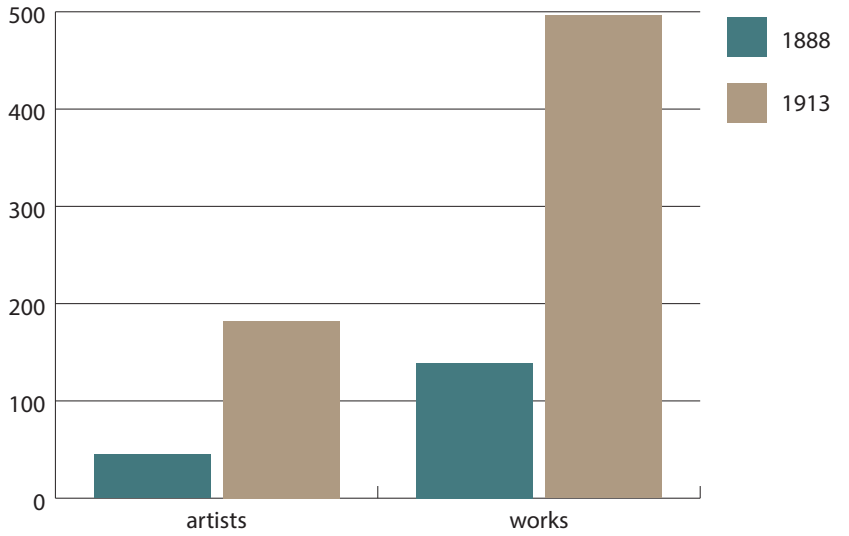
PART 1: THE SPRING EXHIBITION AS AN INSTITUTION

The Spring Exhibition could hardly be considered a traditional institution in Montreal in 1913. A generation earlier artists had no such annual occasion to show their works to the public. In 1879, the AAM had built the first hall in Canada specifically designed for housing art exhibitions and shortly afterwards it announced its intention to hold annual exhibitions mainly devoted to contemporary Canadian art. The first such exhibition opened its doors on 12 April 1880 just a few weeks after the inaugural exhibition of the Royal Canadian Academy (RCA) held in Ottawa. By 1913, the Spring Exhibition had succeeded in becoming the highlight of the art season in Montreal.[12]

A comparison between the 1913 Spring Exhibition and a relatively typical year in the 1880s provides some feeling for the changes that have occurred. The scale of the show had more than tripled (see Table 1).

By 1913, an increasing number of women and French-Canadian artists were sharing the exhibition space with the men of British origin who had monopolized the shows at the outset. No French-Canadians participated in

Table 1 | Number of artists and works shown at Spring Exhibitions AAM



Source: Catalogues of the Spring Exhibition at the Art Association of Montreal in 1888 and 1913

the Spring Exhibition in 1888. Women artists accounted for a little over a quarter (27%) of the artists that year whereas they represented 32% in 1913. The types of works shown were also increasingly diverse. While the early shows were composed almost exclusively of oil paintings and water colours, by 1913, pastels, drawings, sculpture, architectural plans, and ceramics were included in the exhibition.[13] By all accounts, the works on view comprised a fairly representative cross-section of the diversity of contemporary art in Canada at that time. A wide variety of works were shown by artists of all ages from established artists of the time such as Homer Ransford Watson (1855–1936) and Robert Harris (1849–1919) who had developed their painting styles in the 1880s, all the way down to the young promising painters in their twenties, many of whom, such as Emily Coonan (1885–1971) and Randolph Hewton (1888–1960), had studied at the school of the Art Association. In addition to these professional or aspiring professional artists, a number of amateur artists, often members of the AAM or from families that were benefactors, showed their works at these art shows. As one reviewer of the 1910 Spring Exhibition put it: "A picture finds its level there as the individual finds his place in the society of his fellowmen."[14]

Clearly then, on an institutional level at least, there is nothing to indicate that the art world in Montreal was a bastion of tradition. Over this same

period (1880–1913) which saw the growth of the Spring Exhibitions, the AAM had founded an art library and an art school for training artists and had presided over two major expansions of its installations. In fact, this period (1880–1913) corresponds to one of the most dynamic eras in the economic history of Montreal and to a period of rapid growth of cultural institutions.[15]

The Niche of the Spring Exhibition in Relation to Other Major Art Exhibitions at the AAM

Further, it should be noted that the spring shows, unlike other exhibitions held regularly in the galleries of the Art Association, were oriented toward the idea of showing how the art world was evolving. They were not like the Loan Exhibitions, which were held from time to time to allow the public to discover some of the prestigious works held in private collections of the city. The paintings shown there were usually from earlier periods and of European origin. Nor were they like those of the Royal Canadian Academy, held in Montreal every two or three years. The RCA shows were composed solely of works sent by full and associate members of the institution whereas the spring show was, by its very nature, more diverse and contemporary. In 1913, the Spring Exhibition attracted twice as many visitors as the RCA exhibition, held in Montreal a little later in the year.[16] One contemporary observer compared the RCA exhibition to the Spring Exhibition of the AAM in the following terms:

> In one way it is more important to know where we stand in art as a people than to know that we have individuals who excel as painters, and one Spring Exhibition teaches us more about the former than half a dozen Academy Exhibitions can. The latter are, largely and rightly the more or less happy hunting grounds of the professional and the amateur expert, while the Spring Exhibition fulfills its mission best when it displays a fair average of the country's serious aspirants.[17]

It is not surprising then that the more tolerant, pluralist attitude shown by the jury of the Spring Exhibition would come under fire by some critics. *The Montreal Herald* led the charge in this respect. In 1912, it opened its coverage of the Spring Exhibition with a provocative headline: "Art Show Looks As If the Hanging Committee Slept." The critic went on:

> The hanging committee has completely abdicated all its functions as a director of public taste, as a critic of the work of young artists and experimental schools, as Montreal's chief artistic authority.[18]

The critic of the *Montreal Daily Witness*, on the other hand, defended the hanging committee and noted how many works of art had actually been refused by the jury. This critic seems to have benefited from inside information on the way the committee worked since no public accounting of the jury's deliberations was available.

> Nearly three hundred pictures failed to find their way into this year's exhibition [377 were admitted], and some others were entered with hesitancy where, in spite of defects, decided ability was shown. It is the policy of the association to be much severer upon the work of those who intend to make a living by their art both as a protection to the public, and to discourage them as early as possible from a calling in which they could never meet success. If no improvement is shown in the work of artists whose canvasses are given admittance one year on trial after one or two seasons it is no longer admitted.[19]

The critic of *The Montreal Star* too, defended the policy of the hanging committee in the name of encouraging public debate:

> Everyone should visit the Spring Exhibition now on at the Art Gallery and decide for himself whether it is or is not a good exhibition. Some critics have been blamed for praising, others praised for blaming. The chief thing to remember about this much discussed Spring Exhibition is that it is an exhibition which aims to give everyone a chance to show his or her work and to obtain from the public an opinion on the same work.[20]

Because its mandate was to highlight what was new, it is clear that the Spring Exhibition of the Art Association was not dedicated to celebrating traditional art forms. It was an exhibition of contemporary art and the jury was sensitive to the fact that there would be little interest in an annual exhibition if it showed essentially the same thing from year to year. One of the members of the hanging committee in 1913 said just this in response to a challenge by a reporter from *The Montreal Herald*:

> It seems to me that they [those who criticize the hanging committee for a lax attitude on admission of art work] take a wrong point of view with regard to pictures at an annual exhibition. You'd think that everything would have to be a masterpiece to get in. There wouldn't be many in there in that case, and I think they'd bore people to death

into the bargain. I don't know what they expect of us as a hanging committee. It's not only what one likes oneself that matters.[21]

Evolution of Newspaper Coverage of the Spring Exhibition

The storm of articles and letters which appeared in 1913 presupposes the existence of a newspaper market which reaches out to a mass circulation audience. In contrast, when Impressionism was introduced to the Canadian public in the 1880s, it was much more difficult to obtain an idea of the paintings under discussion. Public exhibitions of art were sporadic, photo reproductions were not published in the newspapers, the number of Canadian students studying abroad was much smaller, and the big private art collections in Montreal had not yet been built up.[22]

The growth in the newspaper coverage of the Spring Exhibition parallels the increase in the number of works and artists involved. The anonymous critics of the 1880s barely devoted a few hundred words to the show in the inner pages of the newspapers and their comments were meant to encourage art patrons to attend the exhibition rather than to comment on specific works: "It is to be hoped that none will miss seeing this really estimable collection of paintings" concludes the review appearing in *The Gazette* during the Spring Exhibition of 1883.[23] By contrast, at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, newspaper coverage was prominently placed and often involved a preliminary article about opening night and then one or two more articles in the following days.

In this general sense then, one can see that the debates that ensued in 1913 took place in a modern framework, but this says little about the specific nature of the discussions. To what extent were they exceptional?

PART 2: THE SPRING EXHIBITION OF 1913 AS AN EVENT

The writer in the *Witness* began his article by describing the gasps of astonishment, indignation and derisive comment caused by the Post-Impressionists at the opening of the exhibition. "Immensity of canvas, screamingly discordant colors and execrable drawing are the methods they have employed to jar the public eye," he wrote.[24]

In *The Montreal Daily Star,* Samuel Morgan-Powell attacks his [Lyman's] canvases as examples of the dreaded Post-Impressionism, haughtily dismissed as "A fad, an inartistic fetish for the amusement

of bad draughtsmanship, incompetent colourists and others who find themselves unqualified to paint pictures."[25]

These two excerpts are typical of how present-day art historians Murray and King focus on the purported sense of outrage of the Montreal public in 1913. This section attempts to outline the context within which the original polemical comments occurred and to question the way they are interpreted today. The first question one might ask is to what extent were comments such as these typical of the press coverage? Were similar comments present in all the newspapers? What importance was given them in the newspaper as a whole? Even within a given article, to what extent did they set the tone for the entire review? And how typical were comments such as these compared to years gone by? This first set of questions seeks to establish the boundaries which delimited the polemical comments noted above.

Once the shape of the polemical commentary is defined, once we know more about where it begins and stops, it becomes possible to suggest factors that are behind it. This is the focus of the second part of this section.

The Shape of the Newspaper Coverage of the Spring Exhibition of 1913

1. It was extensive

The first thing to recognize is that the newspaper coverage was huge. The Montreal newspapers, both French and English, were analyzed from the period of 17 March (nine days before opening night), until 2 June 1913 (six weeks after closing).[26] Taken as a whole, this press coverage is far greater than any other exhibition previously held at the Art Association. This type of systematic analysis of press coverage of art exhibitions is rare in art history, so it is difficult to make comparisons. A rough estimate can be gathered from the scrapbooks which were compiled by the Art Association on the press coverage of their shows.[27] These records do not necessarily include all the press reaction to any given exhibition. They are notably weak, at least for the early history of the Art Association, on articles published in the French-language press. Nevertheless, they do give a general idea of the amount of reaction, which can be compared from year to year. There were twice as many press clippings included in the AAM scrapbooks for SE1913 as compared to SE1912 (15 densely packed pages as compared to 7.5) and four or five times that of earlier years (1906, 1907, 1908). The 1911 Spring Exhibition (11 pages) and the 1909 Exhibition of Modern French Art held at the Art Association (7 pages) were the next biggest years.

Only two Montreal dailies, *Le Canada*, closely aligned with the Liberal party of Wilfrid Laurier at the time, and the Yiddish-language *Keneder*

Table 2 | Newspaper coverage of the 1913 Spring Exhibition

Newspapers	*# articles*	*# words*	*circulation*[28]
La Patrie	1	450	48,237
La Presse	2	2,400	114,365
Le Devoir	1	1,600	20,000
Le Pays (weekly)	2	1,050	n/a
The Gazette	5	5,600	20,754
The Montreal Herald	5	3,450	26,033
The Mirror (weekly)	1	2,200	n/a
The Montreal Star	26	19,000	83,352
Montreal Daily Witness	9	6,250	29,178
TOTAL	52	42,000	

Adler,[29] made no mention of the 1913 exhibition, but all other dailies, Liberal, Conservative, and independent, in French and in English, covered the show. The coverage in the weeklies was much less widespread. Articles were found only in *The Mirror*, a fashionable English-language publication, and *Le Pays*, a left-wing French-language newspaper.

2. It was in English

A summary reading of Table 2 shows the huge discrepancy (8:1) in the coverage by English- and French-language newspapers. Put simply, the 1913 Spring Exhibition at the Art Association provoked little controversy in the French-language press. The coverage in the mass-circulation dailies (*La Presse* and *La Patrie*) was remarkably similar to previous years. The authors of these articles did not see the show as controversial and did not join in the discussion launched in the English-language press. It was a non-issue. This is not to say that they didn't comment on the same paintings. *La Presse*, in particular, gave a generally favourable review of the show and lauded some of the very artists that were denounced in the English-language press. The French-language press, however, did not see these works as a radical break with the past and, on the contrary, they emphasised the continuity with past work. Writing in *La Presse*, Albert Laberge[30] focused his attention on the work of the "colourists," commending "Suzor-Coté, Maurice Cullen, A.Y. Jackson et Randolph Hewton" as true artists who are taking up the struggle launched by Manet and his followers forty years earlier in Paris: "Ils triompheront un jour, mais à l'heure actuelle, ils reçoivent à part un ou deux, qu'un maigre

encouragement et leur seule satisfaction est d'être fidèles à leurs convictions et de peindre suivant leur idéal."[31]

La Patrie, for its part, gave a routine review of the Spring Exhibition, emphasizing the diversity of styles on view. The reviewer repeated mantras of previous years when he mentioned a general improvement in the level of painting.

If any controversy is evident in the French-language press it appears in Godfroy Langlois's small left-wing weekly, *Le Pays*. On the very last day of the spring show, *Le Pays* published a letter from a reader denouncing the review written by Léon Lorrain in Bourassa's newspaper, *Le Devoir*. In particular, this reader criticized the excessive praise showered upon Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté's (1869–1937) sculpture of *Le Vieux Pionnier Canadien*. Where Lorrain sees an example of healthy nationalism, the writer in *Le Pays* sees evidence of the critic's crass mercantilism in promoting the career of Suzor-Coté.[32]

As we shall see, this difference in the newspaper coverage between the French and English-language press provides a clue to understanding the nature of the controversy.

3. It was taken over by The Montreal Star

The Montreal Star provided by far the most coverage, almost as much as all the other newspapers combined. This is largely due to the fact that it became the principal forum for debate. *The Montreal Star* usually supported the Conservative Party in Federal elections but it was first and foremost a mass-circulation daily, with the largest readership in English Canada. It was the only newspaper that could afford to hire a journalist, Samuel Morgan-Powell, who specialized in the arts.[33]

It is interesting to note, however, that the polemical nature of the newspaper coverage began with the smaller newspapers which were generally associated with the Liberal Party: *Montreal Daily Witness* and *The Montreal Herald*. The *Witness* was a self-appointed mouthpiece for Protestant opinion. It supported struggles for social reform: for temperance, for social hygiene, and against what it perceived as the generally reactionary tendencies of the Catholic Church, both French-Canadian and Irish. *The Montreal Herald* was more of a muckraker newspaper at this point; it would print almost any copy that would sell newspapers, especially local news, crime stories, and natural disasters all over the world.[34] These papers began their coverage by focusing on the gasps of astonishment purported to have been emitted by viewers on opening night. They were the ones that printed screaming headlines such as "Post-Impressionists Shock Local Art Lovers at the Spring Art Exhibition" (*Montreal Daily Witness*) and "Futurist Pictures Cause Stir at Spring Art

Exhibit. Does Committee Endorse 'Infanticist School' Patrons Want to Know" (*The Montreal Herald*). *The Montreal Star* and *The Gazette*, which had both supported Borden's Conservatives against Laurier's Liberals in the 1911 federal elections, made no mention of such outraged reactions on opening night and gave relatively standard reviews of the show to begin with. The Conservative newspapers also devoted a special article to the Spring Exhibition as a social event, giving long lists of the names of the local celebrities who made an appearance at the opening night of the exhibition while the Liberal-leaning *Witness* and *Herald* did not concern themselves with such formalities. The outrageous character of the SE1913 was not mentioned in *The Montreal Star* until the weekend edition following opening night (Fig. 1). From then on, however, the mass-circulation newspaper would keep stoking the fires of debate for the next two months.

4. It was central

As can be gathered from the previous comments, the controversy was central to the coverage in the English-language newspapers. It is striking to note how the very same opinions on the very same paintings were treated in completely different ways in the French- and English-language newspapers. Like Morgan-Powell in *The Montreal Star,* Lorrain writing in *Le Devoir* was highly critical of Lyman and Hewton but this criticism was not a central feature in his coverage of the exhibition. Lorrain's comments were tucked away in a short paragraph towards the end of his review and did not define his overall perception of the show.[35] Morgan-Powell, on the other hand, became involved in a very personal and heated exchange of letters with Lyman. In general, the English-language newspapers put the controversy at the very heart of their coverage of the exhibition. Only *The Gazette* maintained an even keel. It recognized the controversy but declined to participate actively. *The Montreal Herald* and the *Montreal Daily Witness* devoted almost half of their coverage of the opening of the show to the young artists whose works were creating such a sensation. The writer in the *Montreal Daily Witness* wrote, "These 'Sans-Culottes' have actually managed to dominate the whole exhibition."[36] The letters to the editor which appeared in *The Montreal Star* in sympathy or in reaction to the numerous articles written by Morgan-Powell were overwhelmingly concerned with the controversial paintings, usually referred to as Post-Impressionist but also Futurist, Cubist, Infanticist, amongst other epithets.

5. It was unique

Comments such as these are what the 1913 Spring Exhibition is remembered for today. Yet there is something rather curious about the violence of these

remarks. They were not at all typical of reviews of the spring show published in previous years which tended to be very indulgent and benign. The contrast is all the more surprising in light of the fact that A.Y. Jackson (1882–1974), Hewton, and Lyman, the three most criticized artists in 1913, had been sending works to the Spring Exhibition for two or three years. The first two painters had elicited a few minor, but encouraging, remarks in passing.[37] The remarks on Lyman's paintings were more cautious but the critic in *The Montreal Star* deemed them worthy of notice, and suggested they should be well studied before they were too hastily condemned.[38] In 1912, there was only one mention of Post-Impressionism and that was in a special contribution to *The Gazette*, written by the art dealer, William R. Watson (1887–1971).[39] What had happened during the interval?

Exploring the Boundaries of the Newspaper Coverage

The preceding analysis of the newspaper coverage would thus seem to contradict the generally held notion that the violent criticism directed towards the young artists was a knee-jerk reaction on the part of a conservative public to radically new paintings. How can we explain the drastic change in tone between 1912 and 1913? There may have been incremental changes in the style of painting of the artists over the year but there had been no major break. In 1913, Morgan-Powell admitted that it was between 1909 and 1911 that Lyman's style of painting underwent a radical change.[40] So why did similar paintings not elicit similar reactions?

How could the violent criticism be a simple response to radically new paintings if no such response was forthcoming in the French-language newspapers? It would be difficult to argue that the French-Canadian public was more accustomed to modern trends in painting, and thus less infuriated by them. In fact, as we shall see, the explanation of the polemical nature of the English-Canadian reaction was more for the opposite reason. It was not because the critics were unaware of international trends in contemporary art that they were hostile; it was rather their perception of these trends that shaped their attitudes. What the most vociferous members of the English community were reacting to was not so much the paintings in front of their eyes in Montreal but the debates on Post-Impressionism in London and New York.

The Issue of Post-Impressionism

The term 'Post-Impressionism' was new in 1913. It came into prominence when the British critic, Roger Fry, used it as a title for an art exhibition

he organized at the Grafton Galleries in London in November 1910. The reaction of the British press to this first exhibition of Post-Impressionism was enormous and much more polemical than it had been when they were first confronted with Impressionism.[41] In many ways, public reaction to Post-Impressionism in England can be seen as a prefiguring the reception in Montreal two and a half years later. All the daily London newspapers and many of the more specialized periodicals carried articles, photographs, and letters to the editor about the exhibition. After an initial period of almost unmitigated hostility, the articles in support of the paintings shown became more frequent.

If the Post-Impressionist exhibitions in London constituted the initial reference point that influenced reactions to the phenomenon in Montreal, the more immediate influence was most certainly the famous Armory Show which had closed in New York City just ten days before the opening of the Montreal Spring Exhibition. The London exhibitions had also had an effect on the New York show. Two of the instigators of the Armory Show, Walter Kuhn and Arthur B. Davies, had in fact attended the Second Post-Impressionist exhibition held in London in 1912 and many of the artists represented there were also part of the New York show.[42]

Heralded as a turning point in the critical reception of modern art in the United States, the Armory Show presented, for the first time in North America, the most current works by the European avant-gardes. It included over four hundred paintings by artists such as Matisse and Picasso, Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia, as well as the spiritual fathers of Post-Impressionism: Cézanne, Van Gogh, and Gauguin. The exhibition comprised about 1,300 works of art, two-thirds of which were by American artists. In terms of public interest, the show was a resounding success. Over 70,000 people visited the exhibition and the press coverage was immense. In New York, as in London, there was a real controversy. The violent criticism and mocking reviews of some critics were met with passionate and lengthy defences of the new schools of art in other quarters. At the time of the Montreal Spring exhibition, a reduced edition of the Armory Show, comprised mainly of the European paintings, was on its way to Chicago and would later be shown in Boston.[43]

That critics and the public in Montreal were interested in the Armory Show is in no doubt. As the Spring Exhibition in Montreal and the Chicago version of the Armory Show were winding down, at least two articles appeared in the Montreal papers indicating that there had been an attempt to bring a version of the Armory Show to Montreal. The idea fell through however, according to *The Gazette*, because Montreal had no venue capable of showing the 1,300 works involved.[44] *The Montreal Star* published a lengthy

article on Picasso's paintings at the Armory Show; it was written by Marius de Zayas, a close collaborator of Alfred Stieglitz at the time.[45] John Lyman also made reference to the Armory Show when he accused his tormentor, Morgan-Powell in *The Montreal Star*, of "nourishing his pen with the sensational inaccuracies that appeared in the New York yellow press."[46] Morgan-Powell acknowledged that he had read a major article on Post-Impressionism published by Royal Cortissoz, the dean of art criticism in New York.[47] This was hardly published in the yellow press however, but in the April issue of *The Century Magazine*, a serious literary monthly.

Thus it appears that opinion in Montreal was being developed in relation to the debates on Post-Impressionism in London and New York. However, it is important to realize that our understanding of the term 'Post-Impressionism' is not identical with the way it was understood a century ago when the concept was being forged. Today we tend to see it simply as a convenient label to designate modern trends in French painting which occurred after the death of Manet (1883) and before the development of Cubism (1910). Murray describes it as an attempt to "create a more expressive and individual kind of art, partly through bolder, abstracted forms, partly through decorative elements of line and composition, partly through the use of bright, sometimes arbitrary colour."[48] This description emphasizes the formal concerns of Post-Impressionism but it leaves out a very important element which, as we shall see, dominated the discussion of the movement in Montreal in 1913. For most observers of the day, and indeed for the critic who coined the term, Post-Impressionism was a form of primitivism.

In an article published in the British periodical, *The Nation,* shortly after the London show opened, Fry explained his view of Post-Impressionism.

> [It is a] revolt against the photographic vision of the nineteenth century, and even against the tempered realism of the last four hundred years … At once the question is likely to arise: Why should the artist wantonly throw away all the science with which the Renaissance and the succeeding centuries have endowed mankind? Why would he wilfully return to primitive, or, as it is derisively called, barbaric art? The answer is that it is neither wilful nor wanton but simply necessary, if art is to be rescued from the hopeless encumbrance of its own accumulations of science; if art is to regain its power to express emotional ideas, and not to become an appeal to curiosity and wonder at the artist's perilous skill.[49]

The formal concerns (bolder abstracted forms, decorative elements of line, and colour), which are paramount to our understanding of Post-

Impressionism today, were not the primary focus of this doctrine in 1913. To the extent that these considerations were mentioned, they were considered as the *means* by which emotional ideas could be expressed.

So what did the term mean to observers in Montreal in 1913? It would seem that the polemical charge that exploded in Montreal with the introduction of the term 'Post-Impressionism' was substantially related to its anti-intellectual, "anti-civilizational" message. Here too, much as in Britain and the United States, when Post-Impressionism was not considered simply a hoax, it was perceived as a form of primitivism. This is certainly the interpretation given to the movement by the art dealer William Watson, writing in *The Gazette* in 1912. He claimed that he had studied the movement and had visited galleries in Paris which showed the works of Gauguin and Cézanne. However, he suggests that the goal of these artists is not progress but rather "to go back to the art of very early peoples, to bring back their simplicity and innocence of vision; but with it comes cold crudity and a technique of retrogression."[50]

This vision of Post-Impressionism as a form of primitivism was also expressed by painter Maurice Cullen (1866–1934) when the journalist from *The Montreal Herald* asked him to share his views on the doctrine. The Post-Impressionist, says Cullen, is "a man who tries to get before impressions and to paint things as a child would."[51]

These observers assuredly recognized Post-Impressionism as something new, but the call for primitivism in art was not generally recognized as progress in much the same way as observers of all periods of history, including today's progressive observers of contemporary society, do not see all emerging trends as positive, or even modern.

This context can help us understand the reactions to Post-Impressionism at the SE1913. The paintings of Lyman, Jackson, and Hewton were viewed against the backdrop of an international polemic on Post-Impressionism in London and New York, and the Montreal critics were eager to weigh in for this fight. Or more precisely, the English-language critics felt called upon to give their opinions. For them, it could be argued, the struggle against the primitivism of Post-Impressionism was analogous to the defence of the British Empire waged by the Canadian imperialists of the day.[52] It was a struggle for civilization and progress against tribalism in which Canada had a vital role to play.

The debate on Post-Impressionism as a form of primitivism had little resonance with French-Canadian opinion. The debate had not been framed in these terms within the French-language press of the time. Post-Impressionism as a label for current trends in art belonged exclusively to the international English-speaking art world. Apollinaire, for example, the famous poet and

frequent writer on modern art currents in Paris, did not use the term. Even in an article written a few months after the first London exhibition on exactly the same artists and from a very similar perspective as that adopted by Fry, Apollinaire made no reference to Post-Impressionism.[53] Apollinaire spoke of the disciples of Cézanne, Van Gogh, and Gauguin, or extolled the merits of the Fauves, but he did not group them together under the heading of Post-Impressionism. In the English-language press however, Post-Impressionism had become a highly-charged polemical issue which served to galvanize critical opinion against some of the new trends in art.

PART 3: ISSUES IN DEBATE AT THE 1913 SPRING EXHIBITION

What can we learn from this study of the SE1913? In this final section, I attempt to identify some of the dynamics at work in the Montreal art world that have been obscured by the exclusive focus on the sensational nature of some of the art criticism. The first dynamic studied here concerns the relationship between the art critic and the public. The Spring Exhibition initiated a very lively debate concerning the role of the critic and this has not received the attention it deserves. The second aspect tackles the question of the opposition between modernism and tradition. To what extent does this study of SE1913 confirm or modify our perception of the nature of the art world in Montreal at that time?

The Role of the Critic

Studies of early art criticism in Canada tend to focus on the points of view expressed by critics and the role they played in influencing, or at least reflecting, public opinion.[54] This is the principal reason that articles on young audacious artists at the turn of the century (Lyman, Jackson) cite in detail the violent abuse that these artists endured at the hands of the critics. This approach tends to obscure the fact that such criticism is, in itself, modern and this recent characteristic of the art world did not exist even a single generation earlier.

What is most interesting about the newspaper coverage of the SE1913 is not so much its conservative or traditional point of view but the awkward and ill-defined way in which it was expressed and the readers' challenges to this new public voice. The newspapers of the period are full of fascinating letters that attempt to critically assess the points of view expressed in the ongoing controversy surrounding the SE1913. Over twenty letters were written to the newspapers of the day. When trying to make sense of this correspondence,

a word of caution may be useful. There were no formally recognized art critics writing for daily newspapers in Montreal in 1913. The editor assigned generalist reporters to cover the art shows or printed articles written by special contributors who often had more detailed knowledge of the art world than the regular journalists.

Not a lot is known about the men who wrote on art issues for the daily newspapers. Nothing is known about the journalists who covered the SE1913 in *The Gazette*, *The Montreal Herald*, or the *Montreal Daily Witness.* The most prolific writer of the day was undoubtedly Samuel Morgan-Powell.[55] He only started signing his articles in 1913 but he had apparently been working at various Montreal newspapers since 1905. At 45 years of age, Morgan-Powell was no longer a mere cub reporter but in fact his career at *The Montreal Star* would last another forty years. His position was unique in Montreal. He basically took control of the cultural pages of the main English-language newspaper, writing tirelessly and at great length, not only on the visual arts but also on literature, music, and especially theatre.

It is possible to identify some of the special contributors. *The Gazette* carried an article by William R. Watson, an up-and-coming young art dealer at the time.[56] One of the most articulate contributors to *The Montreal Star*, who took violent issue with Morgan-Powell, was Harold Mortimer-Lamb (1872–1970), an avid member of the Pictorialist movement in photography and an active member of the Art Association.[57] Some of these special contributions were no doubt solicited by the newspaper; others were volunteered. In almost all cases, however, the special contributors, whether they were art dealers or collectors, aspiring writers or painters, had specific interests they wished to defend in addition to their role as art critic.

The exact definition of an art critic and what authority this voice carried was thus relatively nebulous at the time. The same can be said about the reader. Quite clearly, some of the letters to the editor were written by very knowledgeable people who backed up their points of view with specific examples of paintings seen at exhibitions in London, New York, and Paris, as well as by references to international art historians of the day.[58] Some of the painters or members of their families sent letters to the editor.[59] A reader who signed his letter "H.R.W." claims to have inside knowledge on the deliberations of the "Art Club." This reader was most likely Homer Ransford Watson who was a founding member of the Canadian Art Club in Toronto and first president from 1907 until 1911.[60] Another reader signs his/her letter "ARCA" (Associate member of the Royal Canadian Academy). As citizens, these contributors had an inherent right to speak their mind but they were obviously trying to support their point of view by citing a legitimate authority. The fuzzy frontier between critic and reader practically disappears when we

discover that the most outspoken art critic, Morgan-Powell, was not content to simply write his regular articles in the newspaper but felt he must write letters to his own editor in rebuttal of the criticism he received from other readers. Morgan-Powell was thus both critic and reader in this exchange.[61]

The impression that one is witnessing an uncharted form of public debate is heightened by the fact that there was no specific place and no specific format within the newspaper which framed the discussion. Half the letters were relatively standard letters to the editor, published under a general heading which identified them as such. Most were concise comments (less than 200 words) headed up by a short title in bold print which summarized the point of view. These were rarely signed with a name, usually only initials or some kind of a pseudonym.

The other half of the letters was comprised of longer articles displaying a headline. Usually, these were signed by the author, but not always. These contributions began with the address: "To the editor," and sometimes they were published alongside the more standard letters to the editor but their place in the newspaper was ill-defined. Newspapers published literary pages in the weekend editions and dedicated pages to the performing arts; regular theatre seasons and musical concerts were now assigned to specific pages in the paper and featured regular banners. However, the visual arts had no standardized place in the newspapers of the day and this is reflected in the relatively unstructured character of the public debate on the SE1913.

Challenging the Critic

The first line of attack on the critics was launched by Frederick Gold Lyman, father of the young painter who was most severely criticized.[62] It should be mentioned that the painter himself was apparently still in Paris during the Spring Exhibition and would only return to Montreal in time to prepare for his solo exhibition to be held at the Art Association in May. It is also useful to know that the Lyman family was closely associated with the AAM. An aunt in the family had been a serious amateur artist; others had been collectors[63] and members of the board. Cleveland Morgan, who was just beginning his long involvement with the AAM, was John Lyman's cousin. There is no indication that the Lyman family was acting as a united clan in support of their prodigal son in his dealings with the AAM in 1913. It is more likely that most of this extended family had little more understanding of his artistic interests than the general art public of the day. Nevertheless, John G. Lyman was not an unknown quantity when he sent his works to the Spring Exhibitions. The hanging committee at the AAM knew who he was, even if no special pressure

was applied in favour of accepting his work or placing it favourably. His works had been accepted since he began sending them two years earlier.

The substance of Lyman Sr.'s attack was based on the poor track record of critics in the past. Frederick Gold Lyman warned readers against putting too much faith in the opinions of critics and recalled the famous quarrel between the Ruskin and Whistler in 1879; Whistler's paintings, then so criticized, had since become collector's items. This theme of the fallibility of critics was subsequently echoed both by John Lyman and Mortimer-Lamb.

Morgan-Powell however, was not impressed with this argument. He replied, quite logically, that the past record of critics in general was a specious argument when it came to defending the works on view at the Spring Exhibition. It is not because a work is fiercely criticized today that it necessarily has any particular merit.[64]

Nevertheless, readers were anxious to check the opinions of the critics against other sources. One reader, for example, called upon the press to publish the opinions of some of the artists:

> How interesting it would be, could we have the opinions of Delacroix, Millet, Manet and Whistler – especially Whistler – as to this recent Art Movement. But could you not somehow, for the benefit of your readers, let us know what such well-known artists as Mr. Brymner, Mr. Suzor Cote and Mr. Morrice think of it, who could speak with authority in Canada, and without incurring any accusation of ignorance and Philistinism? I know very little of the movement, and should be glad to understand it better.[65]

In fact, *The Montreal Herald* had published just such an article, in which William Brymner, president of the Royal Academy and director of the art school at the Art Association, had come out in clear support of his former pupils, Jackson and Hewton. Other artists consulted were Laura Muntz (1860–1930) (who cautiously supported the young artists, "if they are sincere") and George Horne-Russell (1861–1933) who was non-committal. Maurice Cullen, on the other hand, was positively vicious in his attack on them and treated the paintings as a hoax.[66]

Mortimer-Lamb formulated a second line of attack on the critics. Since critics are fallible in their judgement of art, he argued, they should concentrate on explaining the aims of the artists. "There is but one excuse for art criticism, that of guiding public opinion to a clearer conception of the significance of art … In short [the critic], must be a man of the broadest sympathies and of extraordinary catholicity of taste, capable of disregarding

his own personal predilections in favour of any one school of expression, in order to determine conscientiously and impartially the art value of any work on which he is called upon to pass judgment."[67]

This position elicits a sarcastic reaction on the part of another reader (H.R.W. – Homer Ransford Watson). The only things missing from Mortimer-Lamb's portrait of the ideal critic, he suggests, "are his wings." Watson calls upon the knowledgeable observer to have the courage of his convictions and not to allow himself to be intimidated by "fear that posterity may possibly vote him a dunce for his misjudging of contemporary masterpieces."[68] Watson is clearly struggling with the fact that art historical judgment can no longer be considered in terms of immutable standards of beauty and truth. Standards change and an art critic lives in the fear of being seen as a "dunce" by future generations. This is a particularly significant argument because it not only tends to confirm Watson's own conservative tastes, but also acknowledges the existence of contrary modernist views.

Mortimer-Lamb wanted the critic to be an objective reporter, someone who could explain the work of art on its own terms. This goal was supported by another reader in a letter written in reaction to the newspaper coverage of the solo exhibition of John Lyman in May 1913. This letter, signed simply "A Reader," expressed surprise that *The Montreal Star* had published two very different reviews of the show. The first one to appear was signed by a new critic (M.C.J.)[69] and the other by the regular critic (Morgan-Powell). The second was not technically, as the reader believed, a review published by the newspaper. It was in fact a letter to the editor written by Morgan-Powell. Apparently, he had not been assigned to cover this solo exhibition of Lyman's paintings and could only make his opinion felt by sending a 1,600-word letter to the editor.[70] Why two reviews, this reader asks? Either the first critic did a good job and it should not be necessary to cover the show again or he did a bad job and it should not have been published.[71] The publication of two reviews was inconsistent with the idea that an objective critic should transmit an authoritative viewpoint.

The debate entered into its third and final round when it attempted to define the limits of legitimate art criticism. Mortimer-Lamb finally declared that art criticism was at best "futile," because it does not help the public appreciate art, and at worst "wicked," since it can prejudice the public against discovering new forms of art.[72] Visibly stung by this criticism, Morgan-Powell heatedly replied: "Sir, I would be the last person in the world to wish to prejudice anybody against any work of art. What I am interested in doing is in warning the public against fakirs who invite them to pay good Canadian money for daubs that have no relation to art, that possess no taste, value, or

significance, and that are judged by the leading figures in the art world of today as having no right to be considered works of art."[73]

Lyman now joined directly in the debate. He argued that, because it is valued by art journals and collectors of fine art all over Europe, the very criteria invoked by Morgan-Powell, Post-Impressionism constitutes a recognized school of art:

> Anyone who consults the articles that appeared in many London journals during the Post-Impressionist exhibitions of the last two years can assure himself that there are many who intend to laugh last and best. Many pictures from these shows were bought for English collections; and as for Paris – scarcely a remaining work of the dead Post-Impressionists can be found on the market at any price. This week is being held a show of eleven paintings by Matisse [at Bernheim-Jeune in Paris], just brought back from Tangier, eight of which were bought before they could be exhibited at prices between $2,000 and $4,000. His works are to be found in many of the great private collections of France, Austria, Germany, Russia, etc. I may also add that if S.M.P. had gone a little deeper into his New York journalistic literature, he would know that over two hundred Post-Impressionist works were bought at the first exhibition held there recently.[74]

And so this unprecedented public debate on the role of the critic draws to a close.

Modernism and Tradition in the English-Montreal Art World of 1913

It is interesting to note that this debate on the role of the critic did not lead anyone to the point of actually defending Post-Impressionism. There was no equivalent among the Montreal critics, collectors, or dealers who could, like Roger Fry or C. Lewis Hind in London, John Quinn or Clara Davidge in New York, or Arthur Jerome Eddy in Chicago, take up the crusade for the modern European art movements. Even the most severe critics of Morgan-Powell hesitated when it came to an outright defence of the ideas underlying Post-Impressionism. Mortimer-Lamb took pains to distinguish between the paintings of Hewton and Jackson on the one hand and those of Lyman on the other: "[B]y no stretch of fancy can these efforts [by Hewton and Jackson] be classified as 'post-impressionistic.' Mr Lyman alone represents the more advanced tendencies … I do not propose for a moment, however, to pose as

an apologist for Mr. Lyman."[75] It is not certain that Lyman appreciated being singled out in such a fashion. He stated flatly in one of his letters to the editor of *The Montreal Star*: "As to the MERITS of Post-Impressionism, those who will refer to my first letter can assure themselves that I said NOTHING, and I persist in saying nothing."[76]

One might conclude that this lack of outright support for Post-Impressionism and modernist painting in general is proof enough of the traditional nature of the Montreal art world at the time. I would admit that it is an indication of the provincial nature of Montreal as compared to the major centres of Paris, London, and New York but I would argue that it is not particularly useful to analyze the conflicts at the SE1913 in terms of the opposition between modernism and tradition. Esther Trépanier has argued against the idea of seeing the European experience as a sort of "ideal type" against which the evolution of the art world in Quebec should be measured.[77] Her arguments appear to me to be valid for North America in general at this time. The dynamics of the situation in Montreal at the turn of the twentieth century were quite different from those in a country like France with a strong academic tradition and a state which traditionally played an important role in the process of consecration of artists. In current studies of the period, the perception of the forces of resistance to modernism in the arts is often far from clear. It is rare, in fact, that these adversaries are examined closely. Most of the time, they have a purely negative existence, as foils to the protagonists of modernism. They are seen as conservative, traditional, or academic but the terms are used almost interchangeably with little conceptual content.[78] For example, the expression 'Academic painting' never has anything to do with a concept of painting officially endorsed by the RCA. Any attempt to portray its influence in this early period of its history as a force of tradition or conservatism would be problematic since the president, William Brymner (1855–1925), was also the most influential art teacher in Montreal and he actually defended the works done by his former students, Hewton and Jackson.

In an interview published in *The Montreal Herald* during the controversy about the Post-Impressionist paintings, Brymner stated:

> I think that Hewton is a most promising young fellow, and I think the same of Jackson. I don't like those things of what-you-call-ems, [oblique reference to Lyman who had not studied in Montreal but had gone directly to Europe] I don't know what he's driving at; but Jackson and Hewton are extremely promising men. I tell you it would be a pretty tame exhibition if you had everything the same.[79]

In fact, the term 'academic' is generally used as a rhetorical device to designate paintings, of various styles, which were highly esteemed by an older generation of collectors, critics and dealers. Interestingly enough, the commentary surrounding the SE1913 has never been examined to see what it had to say about this type of painting.

We find that the painting hung in the place of honour at the exhibition was a work by Homer Watson (one of the authors of a letter to the editor as noted above and a future president of the RCA). It was entitled *Stumpers at Nightfall* and was, as usual, a variation on the Barbizon school of painting which Watson himself had helped to popularize in Canada during the 1880s. This would certainly tend to confirm the idea that conservative tastes dominated in Montreal. However, it is worth noting that this painting was flanked by two other paintings: one by Cullen, *Spring Thaw*, which won the prestigious Jessie Dow Prize for the best oil painting of the show, the other *Morning* by William Henry Clapp (1879–1954). At that time Clapp was working on canvases with highly saturated lighting and a divided brush stroke, as evidenced in his painting entitled *The New Church* (1910) in the National Gallery collection.[80] These are three very different paintings by three generations of painters.

More importantly, we find that the Watson painting did not enjoy a warm reception in the press of the time. *The Gazette* simply mentions his paintings without favourable or negative comment. *The Montreal Star* does not even mention his *Stumpers* but criticizes his execution in another of his paintings on view, *Rolling Surf, Louisburg*. "The rocks are altogether too spongy and amorphous," complains Morgan-Powell.[81] *The Montreal Herald* does not mention Watson's work at all. As for the *Montreal Daily Witness*, the review is quite critical:

> The place of honour in the main gallery is given up to a picture by Mr. Homer Watson – "Stumpers at Night-Fall" … There is nothing new either in subject or treatment. The picture is painted well, but without inspiration. It is a studio picture – an excellent variation of a hackneyed theme and that is all.[82]

It is hardly surprising in this context that Watson would heap sarcasm on Mortimer-Lamb's description of the critic as someone who should explain a painting in terms of the goals the painter set for himself. Certainly no one seemed to be concerned about explaining his concept of painting.[83]

The first part of this paper tried to show that the art world in Montreal and the Spring Exhibitions, in particular, were part of a general modernizing

process of society, characterized by annual art exhibitions and newspaper coverage focusing on how things were changing. Read from this perspective, there is much evidence to indicate that the organizing forces behind the SE1913 were more concerned about educating the Montreal public about new trends in painting than they were with defending traditional concepts of art.

First of all, it should be noted that the Art Association provided prime exhibition space for the three young artists whose work was most representative of the new trends in painting coming out of Paris. Jackson and Hewton had a joint show just before the Spring Exhibition (17 February – 1 March 1913) and Lyman had a solo exhibition just after (21–31 May 1913). The exhibition space was provided free of charge, with only a small commission charged on the sale of paintings. Since, in both cases, sales were practically non-existent, this meant that the entire cost of the exhibitions was borne by the AAM. At the very least, offering such a venue to these artists clearly shows an open attitude towards new trends in art and a desire to bring them to the light of public discussion.

Secondly, if we look beyond the general tirades against Post-Impressionism, we see that the critics were willing to try to understand the visual experiments of young artists whom they felt were sincere. The criticism of Jackson and Hewton, two artists who had studied at the school of the Art Association, was more nuanced than it was in the case of Lyman who had left Montreal to study directly in Europe. This is also true of the reaction to Emily Coonan's paintings which generally received favourable and, in some cases, enthusiastic reviews[84] in spite of the fact that her work was obviously concerned first and foremost with "painterly" issues rather than any significant subject matter.[85]

The point here is not to argue that these critics were in favour of modernism but simply that the art world, at this time and place, was not primarily structured by the battle between modernism and tradition. It is true that there were critics and readers who were upset by the lack of fine drawing or the eccentric use of colour in the paintings shown by Lyman, Hewton, and Jackson, but on the whole, what the critics wanted was an art of their day, an art that was in synchrony with a changing world.

For most of the critics in the English-language press, this meant the birth of a truly Canadian art. His commentary on SE1913 makes it clear that the critic of the *Montreal Daily Witness*, a newspaper dedicated to social and political reform, would have been horrified to see himself portrayed as a conservative:

> Our younger artists are well abreast of the times. They are bound to no traditions of the "old masters." Overdrawn figures in hard and

> waxen atmosphere are being relegated to museums, photography is driving them away, and in their place is coming luminosity and life. A revolution is coming over art, and, if the many talented young artists whom we have among us are encouraged, that revolution will flame up in Canada, and Canadians will bring their intelligence to bear on art, as they have already done on science, industry and commerce. To encourage the growth of art is a necessary step in national self-development.[86]

In other cases, the emphasis on defining a Canadian art may be considered conservative but only if the term is clearly separated from the notion of defending well-established practices, inherited from the past. At the turn of the twentieth century, many of the most powerful conservative forces were associated with industry and Empire. Their most cherished hopes involved transforming the world, not keeping it as it was. Tradition was to be banished to the realms of folklore.

William R. Watson, who had been writing reviews for *The Gazette* since 1910, could perhaps be understood in this light. His interest in the show was precise: Have Canadian artists been able to capture the Canadian soul in their paintings? He wanted to find someone who could do for Canadian art "what Pissarro does for the streets of Paris, what Franz Thaulow does for Norwegian rivers, and what William Maris does for Dutch meadows." Watson awards the highest marks on his chart to Cullen for the skill he manifested in rendering snow scenes. This painter "puts character into the snow, tight as a drum under the rod of zero, and soft in the state of thaw. He gives the clear, cold outlines of a zero day without hardness, and we feel that they are Canadian winters and none other."[87]

The public debate surrounding the Spring Exhibition at the Art Association in Montreal in 1913 was not primarily about modernism against tradition. It was a spectacular moment in an ongoing debate about how artists should reconcile the influence of developments in the international art world with an art that reflected the specific realities of time and place in Canada.

NOTES

The author wishes to thank Joan Roberts and Laurier Lacroix who made helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.

1 Over fifty articles appeared in the newspapers of the day. A list in chronological order of the contemporary press coverage can be found below in *Appendix 1: Press*

coverage of the Spring Exhibition and the John Lyman solo exhibition at the Montreal Art Association in 1913.

2 *The Thirtieth Spring Exhibition of Oils, Water Colours, etc. To be Held in the Art Gallery From March Twenty-sixth Until April Nineteenth, Nineteen Hundred and Thirteen* (Montreal: Art Association of Montreal, 1913).

3 The public was admitted from Monday to Saturday from 10.00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. for an admission price of 25 cents. The exhibition was closed on Sundays and admission was free on Thursdays. The galleries were also open on Tuesday and Friday evenings from 8:00 to 10:00 pm for ten cents.

4 Art Association of Montreal, *The Fifty-Second Report Being for the Year Nineteen Hundred and Thirteen* (Montreal: Art Association of Montreal, 1914), 8.

5 "Art Exhibition Attracted 28,000," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 21 Apr. 1913, 1.

6 *The Year Book of Canadian Art, 1913, compiled by the Arts & Letters Club of Toronto: Literature, Architecture, Music, Painting, Sculpture* (London and Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons, Limited, 1913), 233.

7 It is not mentioned in J. Russell Harper, *Painting in Canada: A History*, 2nd edition (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1977). Brian Foss sees the "virulent press reaction" to the 1913 Spring Exhibition as demonstrating the degree to which impressionist art had achieved establishment status in Montreal. See Brian Foss, "Into the New Century: Painting, c. 1890–1914," in *The Visual Arts in Canada: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Anne Whitelaw, Brian Foss and Sandra Paikowsky (Don Mills, on: Oxford University Press, 2010), 30.

8 Joan Murray, *The Birth of the Modern: Post-Impressionism in Canadian Art, 1900–1920* (Oshawa, on: Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 2001), 15–16.

9 Ross King, *Defiant Spirits: The Modernist Revolution of the Group of Seven* (Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 2010), 80. See also 103–104.

10 Jean-René Ostiguy, *Modernism in Quebec Art, 1916–1946* (Ottawa, on: National Gallery of Canada, National Museums of Canada, 1982), 18.

11 Louise Dompierre, *John Lyman, 1886–1967* (Kingston, on: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1986), 37.

12 No comprehensive study of the history of these exhibitions exists. Evelyn McMann has compiled an invaluable reference work on the Spring Exhibitions from the annual catalogues which were printed each year. See E. McMann, *Montreal Museum of Fine Arts formerly Art Association of Montreal: Spring Exhibitions 1880–1970* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988). For the early history of the Art Association of Montreal, see Jean Trudel, "L'Art Association of Montreal. Les années d'incertitude : 1863–1877, Première partie," *Journal of Canadian Art History/Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* 29 (2008): 117–43, and "Deuxième partie," *JCAH/AHAC* 30 (2009): 92–113. For a more general summary, see Georges-Hébert Germain, *A City's Museum: A History of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts* (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 2007) and Pierre Leduc, "Les origines et le développement de l'Art Association de Montréal (1860–1912)" (ma thesis, Université de Montréal, 1963).

13 These numbers are drawn from an analysis of the catalogues of the Spring Exhibition at the Art Association of Montreal in 1888 and 1913.

14 "Art and the Association," *Montreal Daily Witness,* 22 Apr. 1910.

15 The population of the island of Montreal almost tripled (287%) between 1881 and 1911. Paul-André Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal depuis la Confédération*, 2nd ed. (Montreal: Boréal, 2000), 40 and 160. For an overview of the rapid development of commercial culture in Montreal during this period, see Yvan Lamonde "Naissance et affirmation de la culture commercialisée," in *Histoire de Montréal et de sa région*, ed. Dany Fougères (Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2012), 775–99.

16 Art Association of Montreal, *The Fifty-Second Report*, 8. 7,728 visitors attended the RCA exhibition as compared to 15,266 at the Spring Exhibition.

17 "Art and the Association," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 22 Apr. 1910.

18 "Art Show Looks As If the Hanging Committee Slept," *The Montreal Herald*, 15 Mar. 1912.

19 "Sold Many Pictures – Spring Art Exhibition has been a financial help to artists," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 22 Mar. 1912, 16. According to the catalogue, 377 works were shown in 1912. If it is true that 300 works were rejected by the hanging committee in 1912, this would mean that over 40% of the works submitted were refused. By way of comparison, 496 works were accepted in the 1913 exhibition.

20 "The Fine Arts," *The Montreal Star*, 15 Mar. 1912. This article is not signed but it was most likely written by Samuel Morgan-Powell who was already covering cultural events at *The Montreal Star* at that time. He only began signing his articles in 1913.

21 "Artists Divided Over 'Art' Shown by the Futurists," *The Montreal Herald*, 28 Mar. 1913, 6.

22 See Laurier Lacroix, "The Surprise of Today Is the Commonplace of Tomorrow: How Impressionism Was Received in Canada," in *Visions of Light and Air: Canadian Impressionism, 1885–1920*, ed. Carol Lowrey (New York: Americas Society Art Gallery, 1995), 41–53.

23 "Art Matters," *The Gazette* (Montreal), 18 Apr. 1883, 2.

24 Murray, *The Birth of the Modern*, 15.

25 King, *Defiant Spirits*, 103.

26 The length of the period covered after the closing of the exhibition is due to the fact that the Art Association held a solo exhibition devoted to the works of John Lyman (21–31 May 1913), shortly after the Spring Exhibition closed on 19 April. Lyman's work was at the heart of the debate during the Spring Exhibition and the newspaper coverage reads as a continuous conversation over the whole period. Articles published during the Lyman exhibition commented on articles written during the Spring Exhibition.

27 Fortunately, these scrapbooks have been digitized by the Canadian Women Artists History Initiative. Accessed 22 Mar. 2013, http://cwahi.concordia.ca/sources/resources/MMFA-scrapbooks.php.

28 Circulation figures were obtained from *The Canadian Newspaper Directory* (Montreal and Toronto: A. McKim Ltd., 1913).

29 My thanks to Pierre Anctil for the time he spent poring over the *Keneder Adler* to help me on this point.

30 For more information on Albert Laberge (1871–1960), see Esther Trépanier, "Deux portraits de la critique d'art des années vingt. Albert Laberge et Jean Chauvin," *Journal of Canadian Art History/Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* 12:2 (1989): 144–51.

31 Unsigned [Albert Laberge], "Ouverture de l'exposition de peintures à la galerie des arts," *La Presse*, 26 Mar. 1913.

32 Léon Lorrain, "Le Salon," *Le Devoir*, 31 Mar. 1913, 1; Un amateur, "Le Dernier Salon. Autour de la critique faite à ce sujet," *Le Pays* (Montreal), 19 Apr. 1913, 2. *Le Pays* was a left-wing weekly staunchly opposed to the nationalism of Henri Bourassa's daily newspaper, *Le Devoir*.

33 See infra note 55.

34 John Irwin Cooper, *Montreal, A Brief History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1969), 118. According to Cooper, "For about a year, 1913–1914, the ownership [of *The Montreal Herald*] appears to have been under no political domination whatsoever."

35 "Le Salon," *Le Devoir*, 31 Mar. 1913, 1.

36 "Post-Impressionists Shock Local Art Lovers at the Spring Art Exhibition," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 26 Mar. 1913, 5. See also: "Futurist Pictures Cause Stir at Spring Art Exhibit," *The Montreal Herald*, 26 Mar. 1913, 3.

37 Jackson and Hewton are mentioned together, with encouraging remarks, in *The Montreal Star*, 15 Mar. 1912.

38 *The Montreal Star,* 19 Mar. 1912. It is likely that the reviewer in *The Montreal Star* is Morgan-Powell but the articles are not signed at this date.

39 William R. Watson, "Post-Impressionism," *The Gazette*, 30 Mar. 1912. See infra note 56.

40 Samuel Morgan-Powell, "Essays, Fugues Adventures and Improvisation," *The Montreal Star,* 25 May 1913, 2.

41 J.B. Bullen, *Post-Impressionists in England: The Critical Reception* (London: Routledge, 1988), xv.

42 Milton W. Brown, *The Story of the Armory Show* (New York: Abbeville Press, Joseph H. Hirshhorn Foundation, 1988), 72–73. It should be remembered that Roger Fry was curator of paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York from 1906 until 1910.

43 Ibid., 108.

44 "Big Crowds at Art Gallery. Cubists Exhibition Next?," *Montreal Daily Witness,* 11 Apr. 1913, 5. "Pictures Seen by Twelve Thousand," *The Gazette*, 17 Apr. 1913. The Armory Show closed in Chicago on 16 April, while the Spring Exhibition closed in Montreal three days later. The idea that Montreal had no venue capable of accommodating the Armory Show exhibition should probably be taken with a grain of salt. In fact, the shows in Chicago and especially Boston were drastically reduced versions of the show held in New York. The Boston version comprised around 300 works, entirely European, which was actually smaller than the Spring Exhibition in Montreal. One can well imagine however, that there would have been major logistical problems (with insurance companies and custom brokers at least) in bringing the paintings to Montreal.

45 Marius de Zayas, "Art Criticism and Picasso," *The Montreal Star*, 3 June 1913, 11.

46 John G. Lyman, "To the Editor: Mr. John G. Lyman Writes in Defence of Post-Impressionism," *The Montreal Star*, 1 May 1913, 10.

47 Samuel Morgan-Powell, "To the Editor: Some Post-Impressionistic Thoughts on the Post-Impressionist Movement," *The Montreal Star*, 10 May 1913. See also Royal Cortissoz, "The Post-Impressionist Illusion," *Century* 85 (April 1913):

805–10, 812, 814, 815. Also available on the internet. Accessed 22 Mar. 2013, http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5567/. Royal Cortissoz, who was art critic at the *New York Tribune*, came to Montreal to lecture at the Art Association in January 1911. *Montreal Daily Witness*, 26 Jan. 1911.

48 Murray, *The Birth of the Modern*, 11.

49 Roger Fry, "The Grafton Gallery – Part 1," *The Nation,* 19 Nov. 1910. Reprinted in Bullen, *Post-Impressionists in England,* 120.

50 William R. Watson, "Post-Impressionism," *The Gazette*, 30 Mar. 1912.

51 "Artists Divided Over 'Art' Shown by the Futurists," *The Montreal Herald*, 28 Mar. 1913, 6.

52 Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

53 Guillaume Apollinaire, "Le dernier état de la peinture," *L'intransigeant* (Paris)*,* 14 Feb. 1911, reproduced in Apollinaire, *Chroniques d'art 1901–1918* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), 186–87. The exhibition entitled "Manet and the Post-Impressionists," was held in the Grafton Galleries in November 1910.

54 See Esther Trépanier, "Les enjeux artistiques à Montréal. Le discours critique dans la presse montréalaise de 1915 à 1930," in *Peindre à Montréal, 1915–1930 : les peintres de la Montée Saint-Michel et leurs contemporains*, ed. Laurier Lacroix (Montreal: Musée du Québec, 1996), 87–107; Hélène Sicotte, "Walter Abell, Robert Ayre, Graham McInnes : aperçu de la perspective sociale dans la critique d'art canadienne entre 1935 et 1945" (ma thesis, uqam, 1992); Paul H. Walton, "Beauty My Mistress: Hector Charlesworth as Art Critic," *Journal of Canadian Art History/Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* 15:1 (1992): 84–107.

55 No systematic study of his place in the Montreal art world has been attempted to date. According to contemporary biographical sources, Morgan-Powell was born in England and worked as a journalist, first in Yorkshire, then in British colonies in Africa and British Guyana before coming to Montreal in 1905. He was first hired at *Montreal Daily Witness* and later moved over to *The Montreal Star.* His first and lasting passion was for the theatre and he was a founding member of the Montreal Repertory Theatre in 1929. He did little art criticism after 1930. See Henry J. Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time: A Handbook of Canadian Biography*, 2nd edition (Toronto: W. Briggs, 1912); Anon., "Our Speakers and Why," *Bulletin of the Special Library Association* 27:5 (May–June 1936): 148.

56 William R. Watson, "Canadian Spirit in Local Pictures," *The Gazette*, 16 Apr. 1913, 14. For more information on Watson, see his memoirs: William R. Watson, *Retrospective: Recollections of a Montreal Art Dealer* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974).

57 Harold Mortimer-Lamb was born in Surrey, England, and settled in British Columbia in 1889 where he worked in journalism and eventually was hired as Secretary Treasurer of the Provincial Mining Association. He also became interested in photography and when he transferred to Montreal in 1905 he became involved in the Pictorialist movement. Together with Sidney Carter, he organized the International Canadian Pictorialist Exhibition, held in 1907 in the rooms of the Art Association. It was through his association with the aam that he became acquainted with A.Y. Jackson. Mortimer-Lamb subsequently became a regular correspondent for the British magazine *Photograms of the Year.* After 1913, he wrote art criticism and

he curated an exhibition of Tom Thompson's paintings in Montreal in 1919. For biographical information on Lamb, see Ann Thomas, "Between a Hard Edge and a Soft Curve: Modernism in Canadian Photography," *Journal of Canadian Art History/ Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* 21 (2000): 74–92.

58 See Appendix 1: nos. 12, 19, 21, 25, 51. Julius Meier-Graffe and Haldane McFall were amongst the names of international art historians mentioned.

59 See the letters written by John G. Lyman as well as those by his father and by the mother of the painter Randolph Hewton (see Appendix 1: nos. 17, 26, 39, 43).

60 H.R.W., "To the Editor: Behind the Scenes," *The Montreal Star*, 16 Apr. 1913.

61 See Appendix 1: nos. 30, 36, 40, 42, 48.

62 F. Gold Lyman, "To the Editor: Mr. J.G. Lyman's Paintings," *The Montreal Star,* 1 Apr. 1913, 10.

63 Henry Lyman and Frederick Styles Lyman are listed among the major Montreal art collectors during this period. See Janet M. Brooke, *Discerning Tastes: Montreal Collectors 1880–1920* (Montreal: Museum of Fine Arts, 1989), 243. The painter's father, F.G. Lyman, had come to Montreal from the United States around 1879 to work in the firm of Henry Lyman. His sister, Anna Elizabeth Lyman, later joined him and subsequently met and married James Morgan Jr. Other members of the various branches of the Lyman family were members of the Art Association as well.

64 Samuel Morgan-Powell, "To the Editor: Some Post-Impressionistic Thoughts on the Post-Impressionist Movement," *The Montreal Star*, 10 May 1913, 12.

65 G.W. "To the Editor: Remembers the 'Horrible Woman'," *The Montreal Star*, 16 Apr. 1913, 22.

66 "Artists Divided Over 'Art' Shown by the Futurists," *The Montreal Herald*, 28 Mar. 1913, 6.

67 H. Mortimer-Lamb, "Post-Impression Creates Much Discussion Locally," *The Montreal Star,* 7 Apr. 1913, 10.

68 H.R.W., "To the Editor: Behind the Scenes." *The Montreal Star*, 16 Apr. 1913, 22.

69 M.C.J., "Mr. Lyman Shows Clever Pictures at the Gallery but His Art Lacks Distinction and is Largely Imitative," *The Montreal Star*, 21 May 1913, 2.

70 Samuel Morgan-Powell, "To the Editor: Essays, Fugues, Adventures and Improvisation," *The Montreal Star*, 23 May 1913, 2.

71 Reader, "To the Editor: Art Criticisms," *The Montreal Star*, 2 June 1913, 10.

72 H. Mortimer-Lamb, "To the Editor: Art Criticism and the Public," *The Montreal Star*, 14 May 1913, 10.

73 Samuel Morgan-Powell, "To the Editor: Is An Art Critic a Necessary Evil?," *The Montreal Star,* 16 May 1913, 12.

74 John G. Lyman, "To the Editor: Mr. John G. Lyman Writes in Defence of Post-Impressionism," *The Montreal Star*, 1 May 1913, 12. This same argument is made in more detailed fashion in his reply to Morgan-Powell's statement on the limits of acceptable art on 16 May. The reference to a recent exhibition of Post-Impressionist paintings shown in New York is of course the Armory Show of 1913.

75 H. Mortimer-Lamb, "To the Editor: Art and Art Critics," *The Montreal Star*, 21 Apr. 1913, 10.

76 John G. Lyman, "To the Editor: John G. Lyman: In Defence of Post-Impressionist Painting," *The Montreal Star,* 17 May 1913, 12. The emphasis is Lyman's.

77 Esther Trépanier, *Peinture et modernité au Québec, 1919-1939* (Montreal: Éditions Nota bene, 1998), 11.

78 Esther Trépanier's article on the French-language critics in Montreal between 1915 and 1930 constitutes an exception in this regard: Trépanier, "Les enjeux artistiques à Montréal," 87–107.

79 "Artists Divided Over 'Art' Shown by the Futurists," *The Montreal Herald*, 28 Mar. 1913, 6.

80 The paintings by Watson and Clapp can no longer be located. For the information on the hanging of the paintings, see "Post-Impressionists Shock Local Art Lovers at the Spring Art Exhibition," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 26 Mar. 1913, 5.

81 Samuel Morgan-Powell, "Art and the Post-Impressionists," *The Montreal Star*, 29 Mar. 1913, 22.

82 See "Spring Exhibition at Art Gallery," *The Gazette,* 26 Mar. 1913, 13; Samuel Morgan-Powell, "Art and the Post-Impressionists," *The Montreal Star*, 29 Mar. 1913, 22; and "Post-Impressionists Shock Local Art Lovers at the Spring Art Exhibition," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 26 Mar. 1913, 5.

83 H.R.W., "To the Editor: Behind the Scenes."

84 The reviewer in *The Gazette* lauded Coonan's paintings at the 1913 Spring Exhibition. "Spring Exhibition at Art Gallery," *The Gazette,* 26 Mar. 1913, 13. *The Montreal Herald* writes: "Miss Emily Coonan, the Point St. Charles prodigy of a year or two ago, has a group in her highly characteristic style and a portrait which shows a distinct advance in the sense of forum." "Futurist Pictures Causes Stir at Spring Art Exhibit," *The Montreal Herald*, 26 Mar. 1913, 3.

85 Karen Antaki and Emily Coonan, *Emily Coonan 1885–1971* (Montreal: Concordia Art Gallery, 1987), 25.

86 "Spring Art Exhibition: Native vs Foreign Talent," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 17 Mar. 1913, 2.

87 William R. Watson, "Canadian Spirit in Local Pictures," *The Gazette*, 16 Apr. 1913, 2.

Appendix 1: Press coverage of the Spring Exhibition and the John Lyman solo exhibition at the Montreal Art Association in 1913[1]

Ref	*Date, day*	*Newspaper, page*	*Author*	*Title*	*Words*	*Other information*
1	1913-03-17 Monday	*The Witness* p.2 of 12	C.L.S.	Spring Art Exhibition Native vs Foreign Talent	800	
2	1913-03-25 Tuesday	*The Herald* p.6 of 14		APRONED ARTISTS VARNISH TO-DAY ON EVE OF SHOW Step-ladders and Pots Out at Gallery To-Day For Last Touches CURIOUS TANGLE OVER STATUARY Mr. Laliberte's Extra Work Rejected After He Had Been Asked For It	250	
3	1913-03-25 Tuesday	*The Star* p.1 of 24	S.M.P. [Samuel Morgan-Powell]	Art Association Exhibition Shows Notable Features Canadian Artists Have at Last Realized Possibilities of Canadian Art School Oil Paintings are Superior Section Recognition of Painters Who Have Waited Long for Honors Here	1,000	

1 All of the Montreal daily newspapers were examined. The only dailies which had no coverage at all were *Le Canada* and the fledgling Yiddish-language newspaper *Der Keneder Adler*. The only weeklies I was able to find that commented on the event were *Le Pays* and *The Mirror*. I decided to include in this corpus the articles and letters that were written about the solo exhibition of John Lyman, which was also held at the Art Association shortly after the Spring Exhibition. The writings on the two events form a single stream of commentary. Articles purportedly on the Lyman exhibition make frequent reference to earlier articles published on the Spring Exhibition. The period covered here begins then with the first articles announcing the upcoming Spring Exhibition (17 March 1913) through the period of the Spring Exhibition (26 March – 19 April) and the Lyman solo exhibition (15–31 May) up until 3 June 1913 when the last letter to the editor commenting on the recent exhibitions was published.

4	1913-03-26 Wednesday	*The Gazette* p.13 of 20	SPRING EXHIBITION AT ART GALLERY Opened For Private View Last Night with Many Meritorious Works SOME POST IMPRESSIONS Over Four Hundred Exhibits with Standard Generally Higher Than in Past Years	2,200
5	1913-03-26 Wednesday	*The Gazette* p.2 of 20	Exhibition is Worthy of its Home Formal Opening of Spring Exhibit at New Art Gallery Post Impressionists A Few Examples of New School of Art – Work as a Whole Shows Improvement	600
6	1913-03-26 Wednesday	*The Star* p.2 of 24	Pretty Dresses Vied With Color at Art Opening Spring Exhibition Called Together a Fashionable Gathering – Pictures are Excellent HIGHER STANDARD OF OIL PAINTINGS Many Disappointed With Post-Impressionistic Work — Artists Disapprove.	600
7	1913-03-26 Wednesday	*The Witness* p.5 of 12	Post-Impressionists Shock Local Art Lovers at the Spring Art Exhibition Screaming Colours and Weird Drawing Cause Much Derisive Comment – General Standard of Exhibition is a High One – Marked Advance in Rendering of Typical Canadian Scenes by Native Artists – Younger Men of Impressionist School Now Taking the Lead	2,400

Ref	*Date, day*	*Newspaper, page*	*Author*	*Title*	*Words*	*Other information*
8	1913-03-26 Wednesday	*La Patrie* p.4 of 14		Ouverture du Salon de Printemps à la galerie des arts hier soir	450	Photo of exhibition room. Quality of reproduction does not allow for works to be identified.
9	1913-03-26 Wednesday	*The Herald* p.3 of 16		Futurist Pictures Cause Stir at Spring Art Exhibit Does Committee Endorse "Infanticist School?" Patrons Want to Know Pictures in Nude Create Discussion Peculiar Color Effects in "The Bath" Lead to Many Speculations at Private View	1,250	Photo reproductions Title: At the Art Gallery Legend: Frau Werner Selbach, by Mr. E. Hodgson Smart (portrait)
10	1913-03-26 Wednesday	*La Presse* p.8 of 18		Ouverture de l'Exposition de Peintures à la Galerie des Arts	1,500	Photo reproductions: *Étude de femme* by Joseph Saint-Charles, *Paysage d'hiver, The Stray Calf* by Arthur D. Rosaire, *Bust of col. Jeff Burland* by O.E. (sic) Léger.
11	1913-03-28 Friday	*The Herald* p. 6 of 16		Artists Divided Over "Art" Shown by the Futurists ''Promising Efforts," Say Some, "Lack Art," Declare Others Variety is Needed, Says the President Mr. Wm. Brymner Says Discussed Pictures Represent Phase of Modern Work	800	
12	1913-03-29 Saturday	*The Herald* p.16 of 32	"Truth"	To the Editor: Primal Academism as Best Name for Futurist School Correspondent Quotes From McFall in Attack on Post-Impressionist Pictures Now Being Shown at Spring Exhibition – Likely to Mislead Public	550	Letter to the editor

13	1913-03-29 Saturday	*La Presse* p.16 of 40		Au Salon de Peinture à la Galerie des Arts	900	Photo Reproductions: *Bagatelle* by John G. Lyman, *Le Retour, l'hiver* by J.-Ch. Franchère, *Ancien hotel Dillon, 1790* by Georges Delfosse, *Portrait de Mme Selkirk Cross* by Clarence Gagnon.
14	1913-03-29 Saturday	*The Mirror* p.12 of 16	Palette	The Spring Exhibition at the Montreal Art Gallery	2,200	Photo Reproductions: View of the South-West Room Showing Arrangement of Pictures on Exhibition.
15	1913-03-29 Saturday	*The Star* p.22 of 40	S.M.P.	Art and the Post-Impressionists	1,300	Photo Reproductions: Four works are reproduced: *A Brunette*, by John Lyman is juxtaposed with a *self portrait* by Robert Harris. *Picnic under the Trees* by Randolph S. Hewton is put in comparison with *A Country Road, Berthier* by Edmond Dyonnet. The caption underneath the photos reads as follows: "The pictures reproduced above afford a sufficiently striking comparison between the Post-Impressionist style and the sane style of painting. The two portraits, side by side, illustrate the difference. That on the left, *A Brunette*, is a so-called Post-Impressionist portrait. Note in particular the distorted hands. That on the right is Mr. Harris's splendid portrait of himself. The two landscapes are equally informing. Mr. Hewton's *Picnic Under the Trees* is—what it is. Mr. Dyonnet's *Country Road, Berthier* is a fine example of modern landscape painting."
16	1913-03-31 Monday	*Le Devoir* p.1 of 8	Léon Lorrain	Le Salon	1,600	

Ref	*Date, day*	*Newspaper, page*	*Author*	*Title*	*Words*	*Other information*
17	1913-04-01 Tuesday	*The Star* p.10 of 24	F. Gold Lyman	To the Editor: Mr. J.G. Lyman's Paintings	300	Letter to the editor
18	1913-04-02 Wednesday	*The Star* p.8 of 24	A.C.	Pleasure from Art	400	Addressed to women readers
19	1913-04-02 Wednesday	*The Witness* p.4 of 12	A lover of truth and beauty	To the Editor: The New Style of Painting	500	Letter to the editor
20	1913-04-02 Wednesday	*The Witness* p.4 of 12	ZILLAH	To the Editor	450	Letter to the editor
21	1913-04-07 Monday	*The Star* p.10 of 22	H. Mortimer-Lamb	To the Editor: Post Impression Creates Much Discussion Locally An Exhibitor at the Spring Exhibition Gives His Idea of the New Movement – Believes That Traditions, Conventions and Academic Teaching Should be Disregarded – Last Word Not Yet Said	600	Letter to the editor
22	1913-04-08 Tuesday	*The Witness* p.9 of 12		Picture Show Popular Gratifying Attendances at Spring Exhibition of Local Artists	50	
23	1913-04-11 Friday	*The Witness* p.5 of 12		Big Crowds at Art Gallery Cubists Exhibition Next?	600	
24	1913-04-12 Saturday	*Le Pays* p.2 of 10	Le Rapin	Dans le monde des beaux-arts	600	

25	1913-04-16 Wednesday	*The Gazette* p.14 of 24	William R. Watson	Canadian Spirit in Local Pictures Personal Views on Works Now Being Shown at Art Association The Lure of Winter Much Merit in Many Canvases at 30th Annual Spring Exhibition – Attendance Has Been Large	1,300	
26	1913-04-16 Wednesday	*The Star* p.12 of 28	Marion Hewton	To the Editor: The Artist Doesn't Mind	100	Letter to the editor
27	1913-04-16 Wednesday	*The Witness* p.1 of 12		Art Exhibition Soon to Close Last Free Day To-morrow of Most Successful Display in the Association's History	300	
28	1913-04-16 Wednesday	*The Star* p.22 of 28	H.R.W. [Homer Ransford Watson?]	To the Editor: Behind the Scenes	300	Letter to the editor
29	1913-04-16 Wednesday	*The Star* p.22 of 28	G.W.	To the Editor: Remembers the "Horrible Woman"	400	Letter to the editor
30	1913-04-16 Wednesday	*The Star* p. 22 of 28	Samuel Morgan-Powell	To the Editor: Post-Impressionism: What Julies Meier-Graffe Really Thinks Of It	1,200	Letter by the art critic to the editor of the newspaper for whom he works in response to letter by H. Mortimer-Lamb of 7 April 1913. Photo reproduction: Title above picture: "A Sample of Montreal Post Impressionism" Legend below picture: "'Wild Nature' by John G. Lyman. This is supposed to represent a scene in the Laurentians."

Ref	*Date, day*	*Newspaper, page*	*Author*	*Ttile*	*Words*	*Other information*
31	1913-04-17 Thursday	*The Gazette* p. 11 of 20		Pictures Seen By Twelve Thousand Largest Attendance at Art Gallery in History of Spring Exhibitions Some Future Plans Impossible to Get Cubist, Post-Impressionist and Futurist Works Being Shown in Chicago	500	
32	1913-04-19 Saturday	*Le Pays* p.2 of 10	Un amateur	Le Dernier Salon Autour de la critique faite à ce sujet	450	Letter to the editor
33	1913-04-21 Monday	*The Witness* p.1 of 12		Art Exhibition Attracted 28,000 Continuous Attractions Being Arranged for Art Gallery – Royal Canadian Academy Show Here This Year	350	
34	1913-04-21 Monday	*The Star* p.10 of 22	H. Mortimer-Lamb	To the Editor: Art and Art Critics	1,000	Letter to the editor
35	1913-04-21 Monday	*The Star* p.10 of 22	"Manchester Guardian"	To the Editor: Post Impressionism	150	Letter to the editor
36	1913-04-24 Thursday	*The Star* p.12 of 28	S. Morgan-Powell	To the Editor: A Few Post-Impressionistic Thoughts	400	Letter by the art critic to the editor of the newspaper for whom he works
37	1913-04-25 Friday	*The Star* p.10 of 28	A.R.C.A.	To the Editor: Opinions, Not Personalities	120	Letter to the editor

38	1913-04-30 Wednesday	*The Star* p.12 of 24		To the Editor: The Very Latest "Issue"	250	Letter to the editor
39	1913-05-01 Thursday	*The Star* p.10 of 28	John G. Lyman	To the Editor: Mr. John G. Lyman Writes in Defence of Post-Impressionism	1,000	Letter to the editor
40	1913-05-10 Saturday	*The Star* p.12 of 40	S. Morgan-Powell	To the Editor: Some Post Impressionistic Thoughts on the Post Impressionist Movement	2,800	Letter by the art critic to the editor of the newspaper for whom he works
41	1913-05-14 Wednesday	*The Star* p.10 of 24	H. Mortimer-Lamb	To the Editor: Art Criticism and the Public	600	Letter to the editor
42	1913-05-16 Friday	*The Star* p.12 of 24	S. Morgan-Powell	To the Editor: Is An Art Critic a Necessary Evil?	450	Letter by the art critic to the editor of the newspaper for whom he works
43	1913-05-17 Saturday	*The Star* p.12 of 40	John G. Lyman	To the Editor: John G. Lyman: In defence of Post Impressionist Painting	1,200	Letter to the editor
44	1913-05-21 Wednesday	*The Gazette* p.11 of 20		Pictures Will Revive Strife Post-Impressionistic Canvases by Mr. John G. Lyman on View Early Style Promising Color and Form Abandoned in Odd Compositions, but the Titles are Interesting	1,000	
45	1913-05-21 Wednesday	*The Herald* p.2 of 16		Advanced Art Has Many Crudities and Is Simple in Form No Doubt of Effect That Impressionistic Paintings Displayed at Art Gallery To-Day Have on Some of the Visitors Though – Yellow Ladies Cause a Stir	600	

Ref	*Date, day*	*Newspaper, page*	*Author*	*Title*	*Words*	*Other information*
46	1913-05-21 Wednesday	*The Star* p.2 of 24	M.C.J.	Mr. Lyman Shows Clever Pictures At The Gallery But His Art Lacks Distinction and is Largely Imitative	1,000	
47	1913-05-22 Thursday	*The Witness* p.2 of 12		More Post-Impressionism at the Art Gallery Mr. John G. Lyman Shows Weird Collection of Pictures in the New Style – Maintains That Art Which Has a Natural Air is Nonsense	800	
48	1913-05-23 Friday	*The Star* p.2 of 28	S. Morgan-Powell	"To the Editor: Essays, Fugues, Adventures and Improvisation" Extraordinary Display of Crudities and Offensive Things at the Art Gallery	1,600	Letter by the art critic to the editor of the newspaper for whom he works
49	1913-05-23 Friday	*The Star* p.12 of 28	Ben Taplin	To the Editor: Post-Impressionism		Letter to the editor
50	1913-06-02 Monday	*The Star* p.10 of 24	"Reader"	To the Editor: Art Criticisms	75	Letter to the editor
51	1913-06-03 Tuesday	*The Star* p.11 of 24	E.B.W. Scott	To the Editor	100	Letter to the editor
52	1913-06-03 Tuesday	*The Star* p.11 of 24	Marius de Zayas	Art Criticism and Picasso	1,800	Photo reproduction: Picasso, *The Woman with a Pot of Mustard*

Le Salon de printemps de l'Art Association of Montreal en 1913 : anatomie d'un débat public

LORNE HUSTON

Le Salon de printemps à l'Art Association of Montreal, en 1913, a provoqué dans la presse montréalaise un tollé tel qu'on n'en avait jamais vu jusque-là. Plus de cinquante articles ont paru dans les journaux, y compris une vingtaine de lettres des lecteurs. La majorité de ces textes dénonçait de manière violente quelques toiles jugées « postimpressionnistes », et un nombre record de visiteurs se sont rués dans les nouvelles galeries de la rue Sherbrooke pour se faire leur propre opinion. Certains critiques de l'époque affirmaient même que l'exposition marquait un changement de cap dans la vie artistique montréalaise.

Avec le recul toutefois, force est de constater que les critiques d'antan se sont trompés. L'exposition est tombée dans l'oubli et, loin de marquer un point tournant, elle n'est mentionnée aujourd'hui que pour illustrer l'esprit conservateur qui dominait alors à Montréal. C'est cette contradiction entre les perceptions de l'époque et le jugement historique actuel qui est au cœur des réflexions dans ce texte.

Pour bien comprendre cette impression d'un tournant aux yeux des observateurs de 1913, il faut d'abord comprendre l'institution que fut le Salon de printemps, organisé annuellement à l'Art Association depuis 1880. On y découvre une vie artistique qui ne cesse de se déployer au rythme d'une période particulièrement dynamique de la vie culturelle et économique de la métropole. Le nombre d'artistes impliqués et d'objets exposés a triplé depuis les années 1880. Les styles esthétiques en vue se sont diversifiés. Les femmes artistes et les Canadiens français côtoyaient désormais leurs confrères d'origine britannique. Et tous les quotidiens parlaient, images à l'appui, de cet événement annuel qui rythmait désormais la vie artistique à Montréal.

Mais même dans le contexte de cette progression constante du salon, l'édition de 1913 reste exceptionnelle. Non pas tant par le nombre d'œuvres exposées ou d'artistes qui y participaient, mais par la réaction du public telle qu'elle s'est manifestée par le nombre de visiteurs, l'ampleur de la couverture de la presse et le nombre de lettres des lecteurs. La spécificité de cette réaction, en 1913, peut être résumée en cinq caractéristiques : 1) elle était

énorme; 2) elle était en anglais; 3) elle était prise en main par le *Montreal Star*; 4) elle était centrale; 5) elle était unique.

L'analyse présentée ici démontre que la violence de la réaction observée lors du Salon de 1913 ne pouvait être la conséquence inéluctable d'une confrontation entre des œuvres audacieuses et une opinion publique conservatrice. D'une part, les mêmes œuvres ne suscitaient pas les mêmes réactions du côté francophone et, d'autre part, des œuvres semblables avaient été exposées par les mêmes artistes controversés au cours des années précédentes sans provoquer un tel tollé. En fait, il semble que le facteur déclencheur de la réaction du public n'était pas tant les œuvres en vue à Montréal, mais les débats à Londres et surtout à New York, à l'occasion de l'Armory Show, qui se sont déroulés juste avant le salon de Montréal.

La dernière partie du texte tente, à la faveur de cette explosion de la parole publique, de mieux cerner les différentes dynamiques qui traversent la vie artistique montréalaise à cette époque. Ce sont les rapports entre le critique et son public qui retiennent d'abord l'attention. C'est la violence des propos des critiques qui jusqu'ici a frappé les historiens d'art. Toutefois ces feux d'artifices verbaux cachent, en vérité, une prise de parole publique sur l'art qui est toute nouvelle, balbutiante, et qui sera vivement contestée par des lecteurs. La présence du critique d'art dans les quotidiens est très récente en 1913. Les journalistes qui s'y frottent sont peu spécialisés et leurs textes n'ont ni une place, ni un statut précis dans le journal. Les lecteurs qui écrivent à la rédaction du journal, en revanche, ont souvent des qualifications précises dans le domaine des arts et ils n'hésitent pas à remettre en question l'autorité des critiques. Celle-ci est vivement contestée par les lecteurs qui somment les critiques d'expliquer les œuvres plutôt que de les juger de façon sommaire. Enfin, ces lecteurs rebelles invoquent l'existence d'instances de légitimation internationale (expositions, critiques, ventes à l'étranger) pour refuser à la critique montréalaise l'autorité de définir ce qui est légitime en art ici.

Après cette analyse des rapports entre le critique et son public, ce texte tente d'examiner l'opposition entre la modernité et la tradition. Contrairement à Londres, New York ou Chicago, personne à Montréal ne défend le postimpressionnisme en 1913, même pas ceux qui fulminent contre les critiques des journaux. Faut-il conclure de ce fait que le monde artistique à Montréal est enfoncé dans la tradition ? En fait, on découvre que l'opposition entre modernité et tradition à Montréal n'est pas ce qui donne le plus de sens aux débats de l'époque. Certes, il y a des critiques qui dénoncent la faiblesse du dessin ou l'usage excentrique de la couleur mais ils ne sont pas particulièrement attachés à la défense de la tradition. Il suffit de lire ce qu'ils écrivent sur les œuvres plus traditionnelles au salon de 1913, comme celles d'Homer Watson (1855–1936), pour s'en convaincre. Les organisateurs

des expositions à l'Art Association semblent beaucoup plus intéressés à initier le public montréalais aux nouvelles tendances en art canadien que de défendre des conceptions traditionnelles de l'art en général. Sinon comment comprendre la place qu'ils font aux jeunes artistes les plus controversés en leur accordant des expositions particulières juste avant et juste après le Salon de 1913 ? Comment comprendre aussi les prises de position beaucoup plus nuancées chez certains critiques sur des artistes comme A.Y. Jackson (1882–1974), Randolph Hewton (1888–1960) et Emily Coonan (1885–1971), dont ils ont pu suivre l'évolution au cours des années ?

Somme toute, cette analyse permet de jeter un nouvel éclairage sur le débat public qui eut lieu dans le milieu artistique anglophone lors du Salon de printemps de 1913. Il ne portait pas principalement sur le modernisme ou la tradition. Il constituait plutôt un moment spectaculaire dans un débat en cours sur l'affirmation d'un art national, en lien avec les réalités du lieu et de l'heure au Canada.

"Adult Viewing Only": Dorothy Cameron's 1965 Trial for Exhibiting Obscene Pictures

ANDREW HORRALL

Toronto's Dorothy Cameron Gallery was bathed in pink light as about two hundred guests packed its long narrow room on the evening of 20 May 1965 for the opening of *Eros 65*, an eagerly anticipated exhibition of representational works about love. A romantic atmosphere was created by pink champagne, roses, red candles in white sconces, and heart-shaped stickers marking purchased works. As usual, Cameron's party attracted Toronto's *beau monde* including her sister Anna who was a popular CBC television personality, journalists Pierre Berton, Robert Fulford and June Callwood, and many artists, patrons, and collectors.[1] They bantered happily, unaware that the police would raid the gallery in the morning, charge Cameron with exhibiting obscene pictures and set off a protracted and very public legal battle that has been touched on in memoirs and histories of the era without ever being critically analysed.[2] As a result, its important role in defining the boundaries of acceptability in Canadian art, bringing state censorship powers under scrutiny, and exposing the fragility of women's social position remains unexplored.

But on this happy evening, the party's ebullient centre was forty-one-year-old Dorothy Cameron, the only woman amongst Toronto's thirty-four commercial art dealers and one of the most vocal champions of Canadian art. She had been raised in northern Ontario and Italy, studied English at the University of Toronto, and pursued graduate work at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art. She had then married a Toronto doctor, started a family and, like many educated upper middle-class wives, channelled her professional ambitions into the socially-exclusive Junior Women's Committee of the Art Gallery of Toronto.[3]

Toronto was changing dramatically as Cameron settled in the city. New immigrant groups were altering the ethnic dynamic and suburbs were pushing out in all directions, while a generation of young artists challenged the complacent cultural values and Protestant moralizing which

Detail, Robert Nelson Markle, *Lovers II,* 1963, tempera, 59 x 89 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario. (Photo: Art Gallery of Ontario)

had earned the city the sobriquet "Toronto the Good." Painters 11 touched off the revolution by introducing abstract expressionism at their February 1954 show. Critics lauded this dramatic challenge to cosy conservatism, though many Torontonians clung to earlier ideals. For instance, in a widely reported 1955 incident, Mayor Nathan Phillips called an exhibition of young Toronto painters "something I wouldn't want my children to see," especially a depiction of a nude couple embracing.[4] The painting's creator, Graham Coughtry (1931–1999), complained that "every damn tree in the country has been painted," by which he meant that young artists found that the iconic status of the Group of Seven's wilderness motifs were hampering their ability to promote a new, urban aesthetic.[5] Nonetheless, affluent art lovers began taking notice and by Painters 11's final show in 1960, "painting contemporary with its times" had gripped Toronto, a city that artists were opening "all the way up to the art of their time."[6] They mined images from popular culture, Canada's First Nations, lingerie catalogues, and men's magazines, they hosted uninhibited parties in their studios, and galleries staged irreverent Dada-inspired "happenings" at which artists played extempore jazz and guests created spontaneous art from random objects.[7]

When Cameron's marriage failed she threw herself into this bohemian milieu by apprenticing with a couple of dealers before opening the Here and Now Gallery in Yorkville in 1959. Its name and location proclaimed her allegiance to the art rebels, but like many romantic ventures, it began foundering within a year. So Cameron persuaded thirty friends, including her sister, Bay Street lawyers, the collector Samuel Zacks, and the socialite Signy Eaton, to finance a new gallery at 840 Yonge Street where the staid business district intersects with Bloor Street's fashionable shops, the university's academic enclave, and Yorkville's coffee houses.[8] Cameron tirelessly promoted the gallery as a meeting place for people interested in modern Canadian art in order to "impress the importance of this field upon the public and its officials."[9] Despite her passion and energy, the market was small, and the gallery was never very profitable and was losing money consistently by the mid-1960s (Fig. 1).

Then, in early 1965, signs pointed to a mellowing moral climate: the venerable Art Gallery of Toronto staged a "happening" in February and the Av Isaacs Gallery, which was close to Cameron's, exhibited Dennis Burton's erotically charged "Garterbeltmania" series in April.[10] This convinced Cameron to ask twenty-two artists to submit intimate, erotic, private works for a three-week exhibition about love.[11] At the crowded *vernissage* Pierre Berton made a short, pointed speech recounting the decade that had elapsed since Mayor Phillips's disapproving comments about art, before concluding that the sixty or so works amid which he stood proved that Toronto had

1 | Dorothy Cameron in her gallery at the time of the police raids. On the wall behind her can be seen two works of art that were included in the *Eros 65* show. *Toronto Telegram* Photo Collection, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, York University. (Photo: author)

outgrown its dour heritage.[12] But at least one guest quietly disagreed and, the following morning, complained to the police.

Just after noon on 21 May – the exhibition's first day – two detectives entered the gallery and asked the receptionist to clear the twenty or so visitors and lock the door. She then telephoned Cameron at home, who in turn called Meredith Fleming QC, a gallery shareholder.[13] Inspector William Pilkington had arrived by the time Cameron and Fleming reached the gallery. Although only four years older than Cameron, Pilkington embodied traditional Toronto ideals as a Freemason and Sunday-School teacher who collected English hunting prints and kept the Bible in his office. He and his wife of twenty

years enjoyed hearty German meals, epic war movies and the RCMP's annual ball; he confessed that "modern art escapes me," as did a wide swathe of 1960s culture from the Beatles to Brigitte Bardot and calls for the legalization of marijuana.[14] As the morality squad's head, he was responsible for judging whether the pictures were obscene.

Many of the patrons expelled from the gallery milled about outside, along with curious pedestrians and a few journalists, to whom Pilkington declared he would "make a decision" about whether the pictures showed an "undue exploitation of sex," the *Criminal Code* test for obscenity. The gallery's lights were lowered, but the crowd still watched as detectives, Cameron, and Fleming examined and photographed each work. Pilkington's confident public demeanour masked the morality squad's uncertainty about judging images in an uptown art gallery whose effusive middle-class proprietor and her eminent lawyer were unlike individuals encountered on routine vice raids. One detective admitted to worrying "about being a square" in the eyes of the arts community while the painter Dennis Burton (1933–2013) described what he witnessed from the sidewalk in the countercultural vernacular as "a wild scene," and a cynic pointed out that "Eros" spelled backwards is "sore," a word that seemed to encapsulate the motives behind this raid.[15]

The drama had no climax. As Pilkington left in mid-afternoon he equivocated to journalists, who had been joined by at least one television camera, that, apart from a single picture, the exhibition "possibly meets contemporary community standards."[16] The gallery reopened with a blank space where *Lovers 1*, a dark, explicitly sexual charcoal drawing of two reclining women by Hamilton artist Robert Markle (1936–1990), one of Canada's best young painters, had hung. Markle's work was both sensual and critically observed. He had spent the previous couple of years producing his *Burlesque* series, in which he depicted "the naked female body as seen in the harsh single spotlight of the burlesque theatre."[17] It was odd to censor *Lovers 1* though, since it had been exhibited and sold without incident two years earlier at the Av Isaacs Gallery and was being reproduced in C*anadian Art* magazine.[18] Singling out the drawing possibly reflected Pilkington's unease in trying to reconcile his legal and moral authority over Cameron with his professional need to appear decisive in the face of unprecedented public scrutiny. So he allowed the show, which he reasoned would never draw large crowds, to continue so long as Markle's picture was locked in a storeroom.

Cameron and Fleming agreed to the deal, but soon felt that sequestering the picture after such an arbitrary assessment seemed unjust. So the following day Cameron told the *Globe and Mail* that she intended "to make a stand against censorship of art" and her determination was buttressed by the reaction of middle-class Toronto.[19] The paper then published a supportive

editorial on Monday, 24 May decrying the censorship of a picture that had offended detectives and a single member of a large crowd. This was accompanied by a long spoof article about a raid on an exhibition of brown paper Liquor Store bags, in which alcohol had to be concealed in public according to a long-established Ontario law. The satire cast the police as humourless prudes intent on crushing the nose-thumbing attitude of the city's young artists; it described how detectives named after renowned seventeenth-century Puritans Praisegod Barebones and John Calvin spotted all manner of lewdness in bags that had been shaped by artists such as Genghis Cohen, Natalie Attired, and Peter Abbott.[20] The *Globe*'s irreverent incredulity was bolstered by Pierre Berton's optimistic claim that in the past every picture would have been seized, and the Chair of Ontario's Commission on Obscene Literature who declared that he found Markle's work inoffensive.[21]

Public reactions evinced widespread frustration at resurgent moralism and emboldened Cameron to announce on Tuesday that she intended to re-hang the Markle, because storing it tacitly admitted it was obscene.[22] Fleming informed the police of her intention and the following afternoon – before *Lovers I* could be reinstalled – two detectives entered the gallery with a search warrant, which formalized their actions and demonstrated that the media drubbing had hardened their attitude. They gained further resolve when they read the small hand-written "Adult Viewing Only" sign that Cameron had taped to the front door to capture the public mood – if prudes and police could not approach art maturely, they should stay out of galleries.[23]

Detectives recorded the names of twenty or so gallery visitors before ushering them out and locking the door. Cameron called Fleming, but her emotions soon betrayed her shock at the authoritative police action. When detectives declared they were going to remove several drawings, she became extremely upset and threw herself in front of them, exclaiming "you'll have to kill me first before you take my pictures."[24] Fleming arrived and calmed her as detectives unhooked *Lovers I*, *Lovers II* (Fig. 2), *Lovers VI*, *Lovers VII*, and *Paramour*, from Markle's *Burlesque* series, along with *The Lovers* (1953), a drawing of heterosexual intercourse by Fred Ross (b. 1927) and a chalk drawing of a woman grasping a man's genitalia by Lawrence Chaplin (b. 1939), a recent graduate of the Ontario College of Art.[25] Four of the works depicted nude female couples, while another two showed heterosexual pairings. *Lovers I* and another picture were privately owned, while the rest carried modest prices of between one hundred and one hundred and forty dollars.[26] Cameron then became the first art gallery owner to be charged under Section 150 of the *Criminal Code*, which stated: "everyone commits an offence who knowingly, without lawful justification or excuse, sells, exposes to public view or has in his possession for such a purpose any obscene written matter, picture,

2 | Robert Nelson Markle, *Lovers II*, 1963, tempera, 59 x 89 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario. (Photo: Art Gallery of Ontario)

model, phonograph record or other thing whatsoever."[27] The front page of that evening's *Toronto Star* showed detectives wrapping the pictures in brown paper, signalling that the city's do-gooding moralists were once again ascendant (Fig. 3).[28]

This apparently arbitrary attack on artistic freedom stunned the legal and arts communities. On 3 June the recently formed Canadian Civil Liberties Association hosted a public debate about the need for active oversight of obscenity laws that gave unrestricted censorship powers to detectives.[29] One week later, eight of Toronto's foremost commercial art dealers issued a statement declaring that "no matter what the administrative process which brought them [detectives] to the point of seizing drawings and charging a gallery owner, someone should have the common sense to prevent it."[30] They feared a precedent that would empower anyone who disliked an exhibition to telephone the police, and expressed a widely held view that charging Cameron was a mistake. Newspapers and magazines supported Cameron almost unanimously, though a few cynics whispered that she had staged

3 | Toronto Police Morality Squad detectives take pictures wrapped in brown paper to their car during the second raid on Cameron's gallery. *Toronto Telegram* Photo Collection, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, York University. (Photo: author)

the raid to publicize a show that was now attracting the biggest crowds her gallery had ever seen (Fig. 4).[31]

Cameron continued working, but her physical, emotional, and financial resources were soon drained and she closed the gallery in early autumn. She blamed the failure on the difficulty of making a living out of selling Canadian art, but the *Toronto Star* published a photograph of her taping a hand-written "For Rent" notice in the gallery window, implicitly linking its failure with the "Adult Viewing Only" sign that she had affixed there in May.[32]

The uncertainty that had marked Pilkington's actions in the initial raid reappeared on the eve of the trial. Crown Attorney Peter Rickaby, who had seen *Eros 65* and recommended charging Cameron, realized that her conviction would be denounced as censorship, while an acquittal would make the police seem like ridiculous zealots.[33] This accounts for the offer he made on the eve of the trial to drop the charges if Cameron agreed that she would never exhibit the pictures again. The deal would spare the morality

4 | Curious Torontonians peer through the Dorothy Cameron Gallery front window to see what all the fuss is about. The red hearts taped to the windows were meant to create a romantic atmosphere in keeping with the theme of *Eros 65*. Cameron's "Adult Viewing Only" sign is visible by the door. *Toronto Telegram* Photo Collection, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, York University. (Photo: author)

squad from further scrutiny and Cameron no longer had a gallery in which to show pictures. She refused, once again believing that her acceptance would be interpreted as an admission that the pictures were objectionable.[34] Her obstinacy hardened Rickaby's attitude and he decided to proceed by indictment, which entailed a possible criminal record, two-year jail sentence, and severe fines.[35] Cameron opted to face a magistrate, rather than a judge and jury, believing that the objective assessment of a learned officer of the court would exonerate the pictures.

The trial's physical surroundings reinforced the emerging power dynamic and exposed underlying assumptions about women and obscenity. Proceedings opened on 5 October in the "cramped and crowded" basement courtroom in the old city hall in which prostitutes – the archetypal female transgressors of social and sexual mores – were traditionally arraigned. City

council had recently decamped to the modernist landmark that symbolised Toronto's aspirations, leaving this stone and mortar evocation of a more conservative era. There was little grandeur in a courtroom with wire-covered windows, Formica tables, and a wall calendar bearing the name of a stationery supplier. Reporters, who usually covered the arts scene, emphasized the absurdity of the surroundings by contrasting Magistrate Fred C. Hayes's gauche light grey suit, chunky ring, gold watch, and garishly spotted tie with Cameron's elegant fur-collared coat, pillbox hat, blue linen dress, and heirloom jewellery.[36] Assumptions about gender were also evident when Cameron failed to hear the Clerk call her name and he, no doubt expecting a far less respectable-looking defendant, missed her response to his second attempt. They recognized one another on the third try, but the exchange augured the challenges she would face in explaining the pictures to the court. The *Globe*'s liquor store bag analogy was also revived as newspapers published photographs of detectives carrying the pictures into court wrapped in brown paper.[37]

Crown Attorney Peter Rickaby adopted the traditional strategy for prosecuting obscenity cases. After arguing that the magistrate must decide whether the *Criminal Code*'s definitions of "obscene" and "publication" applied to works of art, he brought the seven pictures into court. Detective George Quennell then recounted the first raid. When Rickaby asked him to describe *Lovers 1*, Fleming objected, saying "the picture speaks for itself. It may be a picture of Willie Mays catching a fly ball. The witness is not in a position to say what the artist is intending to depict." The magistrate accepted the baseball analogy and instructed the detective to "describe what you see in order to assist the record. I make it abundantly clear that I shall be the one which will be doing the looking and the observing and reaching the conclusions;" at the time, this was the norm in obscenity cases.[38] Quennell briefly described the other pictures before turning to the second raid, in which he had noticed the "Adult Viewing Only" sign next to the front door. In the courtroom, Cameron's joke was construed as an admission that the exhibition was unsuitable. Quennell then reverted to gendered stereotypes by saying that when you asked Cameron "a question, she went off on a far tangent until you brought her back again to the subject at hand. She's a very emotional person," and transformed her from a successful, educated professional under unaccustomed stress, into a hysteric who had wilfully contravened social mores. Doing so linked her to the brazen women normally tried in that courtroom. Unfortunately, Cameron appeared to justify the comparison by laughing aloud at Quennell's remark.[39] Fleming left the point unchallenged, but he objected when Quennell called the pictures obscene. The magistrate again agreed, though he allowed that "an officer carrying out

an investigation has to reach some conclusion to bring to being the evidence to the attention of the Crown."[40] So Fleming tried to undermine Quennell's judgment by forcing him to admit he was "not an art critic."[41] Detective George Cross briefly corroborated Quennell's testimony and the prosecution's case closed.

The way Fleming reacted to Quennell's testimony indicated that he intended to prove that the "public good" had been served by an exhibition that introduced students, artists, and ordinary citizens to contemporary Canadian art.[42] The concept of public good could be proven if, for instance, Fleming succeeded in showing that the exhibition had explained fundamental or important artistic concepts. This was an important aspect to Cameron's defence, because the concept would override the *Criminal Code*'s strictures against obscenity and lead to her acquittal. Moreover, Fleming's strategy was rooted in the quintessential modern obscenity trial – the British government's 1960 prosecution of Penguin Books for publishing D.H. Lawrence's novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Penguin had triumphed by calling over two dozen authors, academics, and public figures to situate Lawrence's expletive-laden prose within the Western literary canon.[43] The radical lawyer F.R. Scott successfully repeated this argument before the Supreme Court of Canada two years later thanks to 1959 revisions to the *Criminal Code* that had replaced the Victorian idea that "anything tending to deprave was obscene" with one requiring an evaluation of whether the emphasis on sex in a work was "undue." Scott enlisted the novelists Morley Callaghan and Hugh MacLennan to convince the court that "undueness" could only be judged using expert interpretation of a work's social and literary context and prevailing community standards. Subsequent obscenity cases about published works further identified the balance between expert testimony and a magistrate's ability to determine community standards.[44] These broadly liberalizing judgments gave Cameron and her gallery's shareholders the confidence to stage *Eros 65*, and provided an appealing blueprint for her defence.

The strategy required experts who could talk authoritatively about contemporary Canadian art. Iconic figures such as Group of Seven members Lawren Harris and A.Y. Jackson might have filled such roles, but neither was associated with modern art and there is no evidence that Fleming approached them. Nor did Fleming ask Alan Jarvis, the former director of the National Gallery of Canada, who had relentlessly championed the country's art and culture since 1955. Jarvis knew Cameron well, but his alcoholism meant he could not be trusted on the witness stand. Though Fleming was unable to enlist experts whose judgements might be accepted unequivocally by the court, he found six prominent members of Toronto's arts scene whose combined testimony he felt would sway the magistrate.

Firstly, Art Gallery of Toronto director William Withrow vouched for the importance of Cameron's gallery and the serious intentions of her artists. However, when Fleming asked him to describe the Markle pictures, he admitted only to seeing "flame-like figures as they flicker across the surface, create an ambiguity which is background and which is figure." Under cross-examination, Withrow suggested telephoning public galleries to see if they owned works resembling the ones on trial, causing the magistrate to snap, "it's really not your task here to decide how this can be done, sir. You just answer the questions." Withrow was then asked whether the pictures had sexual overtones, causing Fleming to interject a second baseball analogy through which he hoped to defuse elitist assumptions about art, that "actual acts of intercourse, that's one thing, but pre or post … I suppose the courtroom's full of adults and we're all pre or post. We may be playing centre field for San Francisco." The audience tittered. Withrow's adamant focus on indefinable forms then sparked a lengthy debate on points of law and his attempt to participate in the discussion prompted a stern "just don't interrupt will you please" from the bench.[45] Withrow had not won the court's sympathy, but the defence appeared to gain a small victory as the first day closed. The magistrate acknowledged that Cameron was not a woman of low morals by ordering the trial to reconvene in a more respectable courtroom where, as observers noted, he donned a sombre black coat and grey trousers.[46]

The morning's first witness was Doris McCarthy (1910–2010), a long-time teacher at the Central Technical School, one of Toronto's foremost art programs. She tried to desexualise the images on trial by arguing that the artists were working out ways of arranging figures. As technical exercises, the pictures might meet the *Criminal Code*'s public good provisions. But when Fleming attempted to establish community standards by asking McCarthy to compare the works to the Art Gallery of Toronto's recent Picasso exhibition, Rickaby pointed out that Canadian law forbade such direct comparisons. In cross-examination, he made McCarthy focus on what the works depicted and, like Withrow, she only admitted to seeing abstract shapes.[47]

Next to testify was Ronald Bloore (1925–2009), the painter who headed Regina's Art Gallery, who had a degree in archaeology and had just returned from sketching in Greece. He said that the artists were tackling technical problems and argued that genitalia were commonly depicted in Classical art. Bloore's academic expertise was unchallengeable, so Rickaby undermined his testimony by asking him to name his Toronto dealer. When Bloore answered that he was represented by the defendant, Rickaby suggested he would "like to assist Miss Cameron in any way you could." Bloore fired back that he did "not understand" the implication and Rickaby withdrew the question.[48] A few minutes later, Bloore suggested that *Lovers 1* recalled the French

modernist painter Fernand Léger, causing Rickaby to snap "I don't care what it reminds you of … , my question was what is it?" Bloore replied that it might be "an aquatic ballet" before conceding that it was one woman "apparently embracing the genitalia of the other." When asked why the figures had been posed this way, Bloore said he would never stifle an artist's creativity.[49]

This was the trial's turning point, because explicit references to lesbian sex aired an assumption that neither detective had mentioned, though it had certainly implicitly informed their actions. Toronto's morality squad, which had a long history of harassing gay men, had begun targeting lesbians during the Second World War. Their actions reflected wider social anxieties caused by large numbers of women entering the workforce, as well as the mainstream acceptance of Freudian theories and studies by sexologists such as Alfred Kinsey that demonstrated that a sizeable portion of the population was homosexual. Lesbians also appeared to challenge social mores directly by meeting openly. Initially they gathered in rough downtown bars, where fights and drugs were common, and many of the socially and sexually marginalized women worked as prostitutes, providing police with excuses to harass and humiliate them.[50] Lesbian sex was first outlawed in 1953 under sweeping "criminal sexual psychopath" legislation. The following year, a Royal Commission began studying this legislation and affirmed that Canadian adults enjoyed a wide variety of sexual activities, though its 1959 report did not recommend legalizing homosexual acts. By contrast, that year Britain's so-called *Wolfenden Report* into homosexual offences argued for tolerant distinctions between sexual behaviour that was permissible for adults in public and private spheres.[51] *Wolfenden* had no force in Canada, though it profoundly influenced legal thinking about homosexuality in this country. By 1962 a gay "community" was emerging fitfully in Toronto, prompting a morality squad inspector to proclaim that "sexual perversion is spreading. These people are no longer ashamed to admit what they are."[52] Despite the police, a couple of churches supported the emerging community, a New Democrat MP promised to table a bill legalizing homosexuality, the city's first gay publications appeared and the mainstream media ran sympathetic stories about gay men.[53] By 1965 Toronto's first respectable, middle-class lesbian bars had opened. Cameron had judged the submissions for *Eros 65* within this broadly liberalizing context. Unfortunately, she underestimated the unshakeable views held by the police.

Therefore, when Rickaby introduced the idea that at least one of the pictures depicted lesbian sex during his cross-examination of Bloore, he altered the context within which the pictures had been created and exhibited from Western artistic tradition to the sexual and social tensions in mid-1960s Toronto. His intention was to ensure that they were judged against the latter.

Though only some of the works were even vaguely lesbian, Rickaby was attempting to implicitly link them to the legally marginalized community that was familiar to the police and courts. The morality squad and the magistrate might well have suspected that Cameron was gay because she had married unhappily and now moved in a famously tolerant arts community. Moreover, if Rickaby's gambit succeeded, it would comprehensively destroy any argument that the exhibition had served the public good.

The next witness, lawyer and *Toronto Telegram* art critic Harry Malcolmson, had to refute these connections. He conceded that the name *Eros 65* was meant to attract customers, that the pictures were "gamey," and that their realism challenged the dominance of abstraction in contemporary art. But he refused to concede that lesbianism was their central theme and argued that the publication of *Lovers 1* in *Canadian Art* proved its acceptability. Rickaby undermined this point by having Malcolmson agree that the magazine reached only about one tenth of one percent of Canada's population, which could not represent community standards.[54] Rickaby's attacks seriously undermined Malcolmson's testimony. Fleming then called art teacher Mary Bagnani to the stand to explain that the exhibition was an important way to expose young people to contemporary Canadian works. Rickaby sensed that Bagnani had failed to prove that the exhibition had served the public good, so he asked her only which of the works she liked best.

To borrow one of Fleming's baseball analogies, the sixth witness was supposed to be the clean-up hitter. Ted Heinrich introduced himself on the stand as a Berkeley- and Cambridge-educated art historian who had headed the Royal Ontario Museum and founded York University's fine arts department. But before Heinrich could say anything else, Rickaby objected on the basis that trials were limited to five experts. Fleming replied feebly that he was calling "simple" witnesses, and court adjourned so that he could consult the relevant case law. The following morning he conceded and asked Heinrich only to introduce the catalogue of a 1964 Vancouver Art Gallery exhibition. The magistrate was not compelled to consult written evidence. Rickaby had no questions, and closing arguments began on this diminuendo.[55]

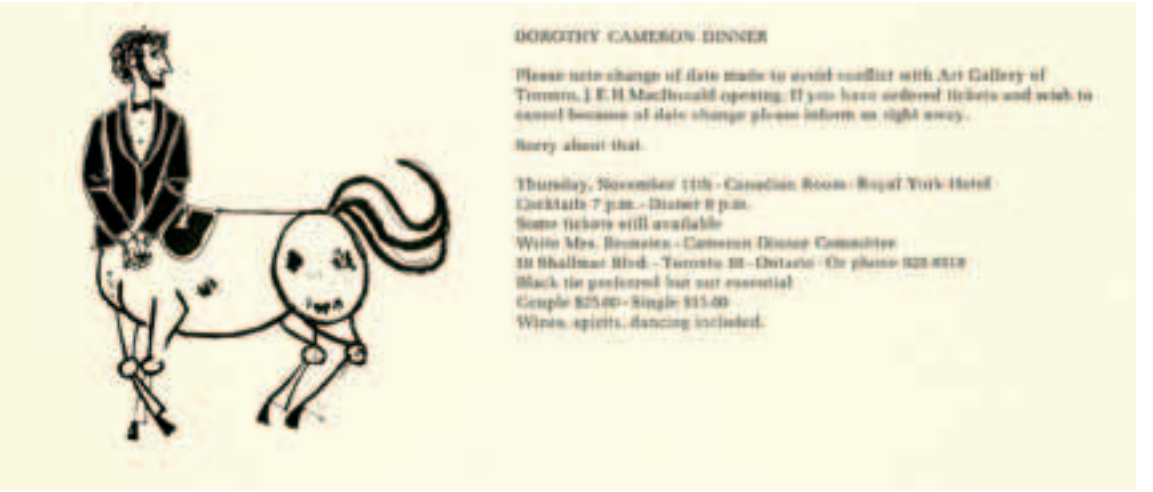
Fleming portrayed Cameron as "a person of some refinement and culture" who had never been in trouble, and had not staged a "clandestine exhibition." He argued that the seven pictures met community standards because the Gallery's shareholders had endorsed the exhibition, and *Lovers 1* had been published in a national magazine. Finally, he maintained that the works depicted the human form and that pictures, like books, had to be judged on their overall characteristics, rather than specific details. He underlined the point by asking rhetorically how the Crown could emphasize lesbianism,

when neither detective had mentioned it. More troublingly, he pointed out that a "print explicitly depicting fellatio" had been overlooked by the police, perhaps, he suggested archly, because it "was extraordinarily pretty." The act was also heterosexual, legal, and therefore acceptable to the male police officers. Unfortunately, Dorothy Cameron and her sister reinforced gender stereotypes underlying the trial by weeping quietly on the front bench as Fleming spoke.[56]

Sensing victory, Rickaby claimed the experts' unshakeable focus on abstract forms "makes me a little suspicious – it seems obvious to the ordinary eye" that the works on trial depicted sexual acts. He clarified this by stating "I am not suggesting any reasonably intelligent human being could be corrupted by these pictures," especially since no one was compelled to enter Cameron's gallery, and conceded that it was acceptable for artists to depict sex and genitalia. But he also alluded to *Wolfenden* ideas by arguing that the works depicted intercourse, which is normally carried out in private between men and women. However, when "the same act is performed on the city hall steps it becomes indecent," especially, as his references to lesbianism implied, when it concerned female couples.[57] Rickaby then admitted that the pictures would be inoffensive if they were hung in a more broadly-themed exhibition, causing a surprised magistrate to ask what he was trying to say, and at least one reporter to note that the prosecutor had "apparently thrown his case down the drain." He soon recovered and clarified that grouping the pictures under the title *Eros 65* made sex their dominant idea.[58]

There was a flurry of public commentary during the weeks in which the magistrate pondered the verdict. In mid-October, the CBC's controversial satire television program *This Hour Has Seven Days* aired a skit featuring a Toronto morality squad officer lecturing recruits about art. He displayed visions of Venus by Rubens and Titian, which he described in cockney patter as explicit, but acceptable because they were based in Western tradition. By contrast, a modern abstract jumble was "lewd, obscene, and designed with only one purpose in mind, and that is to stimulate the libido of the average art lover."[59] The parody closely echoed the *Globe*'s liquor store bag article and reinforced notions that reactionary detectives had censored what they had misunderstood.

Cameron's supporters, led by the publisher Jack McLelland, reacted in force one month later at the Royal York Hotel. Invitations to the black-tie dinner were illustrated with a centaur, the mythological man-horse that symbolises lust and drunkenness. This particular centaur captured the risqué glamour of Cameron's parties by sporting a dinner jacket and sly grin (Fig. 5). The light-hearted evening was hosted by Alan Jarvis who called the charges against Cameron "a sickening blow by a blunt instrument."[60] He mocked



5 | The invitation to a dinner to raise funds for Cameron. The drawing of a satyr in evening dress played on the mythological creature's sensual nature, with the respectability of a society event at Toronto's most elegant hotel. Theodore Allen Heinrich collection, box 130, file 1694, Archives and Special Collections, John Archer Library, University of Regina. (Photo: author)

Toronto's resurgent rectitude and joked that the morality squad's head, for whom a place had been reserved, had not shown up. This cued the actor from *This Hour* – still in costume – to burst in and "raid" the room. The irreverent whimsy floated on a sea of wine donated by one of the Cameron gallery's backers, while the well-oiled guests danced into the early morning to the music of the vibraphonist Peter Appleyard.[61]

The levity ended two weeks later when the trial judge ruled that a "word description of certain sexual experiences taken in the overall character of a book would not render the book obscene. But when these circumstances are portrayed in a sketch, drawing, or painting, the effect of this portrayal and its acceptance in the community may be entirely different." He chastised the experts for focusing on artistic concepts and though he never mentioned lesbianism explicitly, he found that the works' dominant characteristic was an undue exploitation of sex, and that the exhibition had not served the public good. Pleading for clemency, Fleming reemphasised Cameron's lack of criminal intent, stated that her gallery had closed, and that she had defended herself on a point of principle. Cameron was fined fifty dollars for each picture, or five days in jail.[62] She could evidently pay so it was a token punishment that further demonstrated the Crown's discomfort with the case, and implied that the law needed to catch up with contemporary society.

Though the pictures were unacceptable, they had not been widely distributed, Cameron was clearly not a pornographer, and would never reoffend. So the magistrate effectively slapped her wrists in hopes of concluding the case.

But the conviction shocked the many Torontonians who had naively believed that works by respectable artists hanging in a first-rate gallery could not be confused with pornography. Reactions crossed the political spectrum, with the liberal *Toronto Star* denouncing "a throwback to the worst days of mid-Victorian Toronto," which empowered the state to dictate what adults could see, while the conservative *Telegram* was dismayed by a time-wasting "judicial procedure (that) is redolent of the Middle Ages," and called the trial "INCREDIBLE " above an article lamenting the *Criminal Code*'s outdated strictures.[63] Robert Markle snorted "I'm really impressed by the non-allowance of integrity on the part of an artist in this community. In no other area of endeavour could a layman make his own opinion felt in this way."[64] Owners of two of the pictures wondered if they would ever again see their art, while Pierre Berton, who had opened *Eros 65* so optimistically, sighed "I'd hoped Toronto had grown up a bit more, but obviously it hasn't."[65] Reactions culminated at year's end, when the Canadian Press named Cameron the most newsworthy woman in art and literature; lauding her for creating a climate of concern for freedom of expression. She responded self-effacingly that "I was never alone. There was an army that formed itself overnight."[66]

One of the most important battalions in that army, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA), took up Cameron's case. In January 1966, Julian Porter, a young lawyer who had observed the initial trial, began preparing the appeal. Because this had to rest on points of law rather than new arguments, Porter asked Ted Heinrich to reinforce the original defence by compiling a list of sexually explicit Western art works and addressing "the psychology of art and the concept of viewing art as distinct from reading a novel or partaking in another art form. It may be difficult to adduce such types of argument before the Court of Appeal but could you give the writer some ideas of the psychology of art and how it may be argued before a Court?"[67] Heinrich listed over fifty works from pre-Renaissance Europe to modern Canada that depicted sexually-charged myths such as "Leda and the Swan," copulation, lesbianism, and graphic female nudity, backed by twenty-seven art books and exhibition catalogues.[68] He and Porter then formulated an argument that likened artists to lawyers as professionals who "practice in the wake of tradition." To downplay lesbianism, Heinrich wrote a short essay arguing that Man is artists' central preoccupation, that the "nude" is only a form, and that artistic explorations of "form, line and psychological state" have reflected social progress since the Renaissance. He also voiced one of the fundamental concerns raised in Cameron's trial: that community standards

cannot "be such as will deprive our citizens of the opportunity of viewing works acclaimed by renowned experts because they offend the sensitivity of a sergeant of police."[69] This bolstered the CCLA's argument that "there is no obscenity in the description or portrayal of the nude or of sex in the fine arts – no matter how explicit the portrayal may be. Obscenity lies in the treatment of the subject-matter – whether it be for a base purpose" and that the trial judge had not given sufficient weight to the "manner, circumstance and extent of the publication," even though the case clearly involved a show for a small audience at a respectable gallery.[70] The CCLA focused on the Crown's fundamental uncertainty about the case and echoed the widely held belief that the conviction would do "irreparable harm" by outlawing many of the Western canon's core themes.[71]

While these arguments were being prepared, Robert Markle appeared on *This Hour Has Seven Days.* He was clearly uncomfortable defending work he admitted was graphic, erotic, and had lesbian overtones, but was unable to understand how it had contravened community standards when "*Time* magazine runs a photograph of a Vietnamese with his head chopped off, you know. Now what's going on? A national magazine can run that kind of thing and I, I'm talking about love and something beautiful and they lock me up."[72] Fred Ross found it simply "ridiculous" that a drawing whose message was "charm and sensitivity" could be obscene.[73] More stridently, the cover of February's *Saturday Night* magazine bore a large portrait of Cameron with a thick white strip censoring her eyes, while a long article severely criticized the police and the Crown.[74] One *Saturday Night* reader responded with a satirical poem that concluded:

> Let's all stand against oppression (which is Cultural regression);
> battle prudes whose only object is to vex.
> There is far too much repression;
> let us fight for free expression
> Of our wants, and most importantly Sex.[75]

The two-day Ontario Court of Appeal hearing that opened on 9 May 1966 starkly demonstrated how Cameron's exhibition had challenged conservative visions of community and culture. Chief Justice John Aylesworth and two of his colleagues had served in the First World War, while all nine justices had been alive when its first shots were fired. The youngest and newest judge was fifty-three-year-old Bora Laskin, a brilliant legal scholar whose early career had been blighted by the reluctance of Toronto law firms to hire Jews. Nevertheless, in 1965 he was appointed to the Appeal Court, which he found replicated the worst features of Toronto's legal profession by

emphasizing seniority and productivity, rejecting creative or novel arguments, and generally taking a "crime control" approach to the law. Laskin believed in the court's duty to protect individuals and as a result he dissented more often than all his colleagues combined. Roughly one third of his dissenting opinions were written in criminal cases, which were being appealed increasingly frequently thanks to the introduction of Legal Aid in 1966.[76]

On the appeal's first morning Cameron's supporters lined the courthouse steps brandishing signs and distributing pamphlets. They then took up places in the august courtroom where the books Ted Heinrich had assembled were stacked in neat piles on the appellant's table. Behind this small library sat the CCLA's Walter Williston QC, who would lead the appeal. To prevent corrupting those present in the court, the pictures were displayed in a private anteroom.[77] Five judges – two more than the minimum – heard the appeal. Laskin's presence on the bench caused Williston to whisper "we'll lose, four to one. Laskin, of course, will *have* to vote for us – he owes it to his public."[78] June Callwood, the campaigning journalist and CCLA board member, sensed the same support thanks to a chance encounter with Laskin in the courthouse halls. On hearing that she was supporting her friend, he responded with a smiling "good for you," before proceeding on his way.[79] The presence of justices James McLennan and F.G. MacKay might have increased the hopes of Cameron's backers, since they had ruled that John Cleland's 1748 novel *Fanny Hill* was not obscene in a landmark judgment the previous year.

Williston began the legal arguments by stating that *Eros 65* had been "calculated to attract connoisseurs and art lovers rather than persons interested in pornography," before citing three flaws in Cameron's conviction. The works had artistic merit; it was legitimate for artists to depict sex; and comparable works were exhibited elsewhere. The justices replied that the experts had signally failed to describe what the works depicted, for as McKay said "the witnesses were not concerned at all with the *Criminal Code of Canada*, and we have to be – that's the difference." Williston predicted a dull future if the conviction stood, claiming "I just don't want to spend the rest of my life looking at Grandma Moses," the American naïve painter, to which Aylesworth retorted "do you think you are in any danger of that?" Williston then made the *Wolfenden*-inspired point that "if these pictures were plastered at Queen and Yonge [streets] the person who did that should go to jail," but they had been displayed in a private gallery for a restricted audience. Moreover, he claimed that postcards of Rembrandt's works could be censored by this conviction, and referred to the magazines *Sizzle* and *Man's Favourite Passion* to show the obvious distinctions between smut and art. This earned a further rebuke from Aylesworth, who eventually conceded that if only art experts had visited *Eros 65*, the law would not have been breached.

But unfortunately, as Williston argued, "this is a peculiar kind of case, a case where the judge himself goes into the witness box and makes up his own mind." Williston and Aylesworth jousted about whether obscenity lies in what works of art depict, or how they are used, before Williston closed by pleading for *Wolfenden*-inspired community standards based on what the judges "will permit in their homes" and "what they will tolerate in artists in a limited field."[80] It was a spirited argument, but the justices' interventions hinted that they believed that the impact of Cameron's conviction was fairly narrow.

Gordon Hachborn then argued for the Crown that art results from pure intentions, while baser motives produce pornography. He strongly objected to allowing galleries to exhibit works that would otherwise be banned, and underlined this democratic point by likening Dorothy Cameron to a merchant who has full knowledge of what she sells. He rejected Williston's plea for adaptable community standards by arguing that they could not reflect the "super sophisticated, super-knowledgeable art lover's point of view – nor from the standards of the person who knows nothing and cares nothing – some kind of middle ground is needed." Or, as Aylesworth stated more prosaically, "the sexual act is not limited to Toronto and Vancouver – it is also known in Hamilton."[81]

The judges accepted the books that Ted Heinrich had compiled, over Hachborn's objection that this was getting new "evidence in the back door," and the legal arguments ended. Those who had hoped for a favourable decision were disappointed, because the appeal was rejected on 23 June.[82] Aylesworth's majority opinion focused on the enormous gulf between the detectives' testimony and experts who "carefully restricted themselves to the actual treatment and have not considered the obvious exploitation of sex in each of the exhibits." His own examination of the pictures convinced him that they lay "not in any gray area of doubt; they are of base purpose and their obscenity is flagrant."[83] In a supporting judgment, Justice McKay wrote that some of the works might not be obscene on their own, but they had to be condemned collectively.[84]

The hammering eloquence of Bora Laskin's dissenting opinion has been called as "perfectly attuned to the emerging ethos of sexual liberation as his judicial brethren were out of tune with it."[85] He was deeply troubled that the conviction rested on the trial judge's subjective reaction to the pictures, he rejected the notion that the name *Eros 65* had been an invitation to see obscene art, and he argued that community standards could not be drawn from "an arithmetic totalling and averaging of sectional or regional measurements. A standard must come from experience of art; it cannot rise from a vacuum if it is to be something more than a personal reflex. Its reflection in time is more important than its roots in place. In other words,

we are concerned with changing criteria, with movement in public taste that takes place under the push, initially at any rate, of artists and their sponsors." Moreover, such a standard can "not rest on what is the safest level of general acceptance," because this might be unattainable in a large and diverse country like Canada "without it being a reduction to the lowest level of appreciation."[86] Laskin captured the tremendous disappointment of Cameron's supporters, for as Julian Porter summarized "the general theme of the [majority] judgement was that anybody with a pair of eyes could see that they [the pictures] were obviously obscene and that was that."[87]

One last hope remained, because the split verdict sent the case automatically to the Supreme Court of Canada. The CCLA's spring 1967 brief to the Court included a "little lecture on art" by Heinrich along with a plea that the lower courts had focused on sex while ignoring the artists' intentions, the expert testimony, Canadian and international precedents and the contradiction that men's magazines were sold at newsstands while "a person would be deemed a criminal who showed pictures acknowledged to be sincere and honest works of art in a private gallery."[88] The Supreme Court refused to hear the case. Though the Court rarely discloses the reasons for its decisions about whether to hear a case, denying Cameron's appeal almost certainly reflected a belief that her conviction had not set a far-reaching precedent.[89]

Superficially, only the denouement remained. The pictures, which were only obscene when displayed collectively, were returned in brown paper wrappers to Cameron, who returned them to their owners. She eventually married Ronald Bloore, became a freelance curator, and remained an animating presence in Toronto's art scene. Canadian gallery owners were briefly wary of displaying works that might be deemed obscene, but the Crown had been chastised rather than emboldened by Cameron's case. The police have generally left gallery owners and artists alone in the intervening years, while several of the seized pictures have since been acquired by public galleries.[90]

The initial *Chatterley*-inspired defence was appropriate, even if Robert Fulford later recalled "I have never in my life felt so powerfully the gulf between those who care about art and those who don't."[91] The experts had simply failed to convince the court of the nuances, emotions, and cultural references through which art is expressed and understood. At the same time, the trial highlighted Toronto's difficult evolution from dour colonial centre to cosmopolitan city. Neither the police nor the courts understood the irreverent spirit in which Cameron, her clients, and her friends approached art and life. These misunderstandings were amplified because many of the young artists employed popular cultural motifs that blurred the distinctions between art

and reality and could be interpreted as reflecting standards that were inimical to the city's older inhabitants. This further hampered detectives' ability to see beyond their accustomed lens of obscenity when examining the pictures and to interpret Cameron's "Adult Viewing Only" sign as an admission of impropriety. Cameron's status as an articulate businesswoman with significant support from Toronto's media, social, cultural, business, and legal elites and the elegant gallery setting in which she displayed the pictures were equally disorienting to the morality squad. Their initial offer to compromise reflected both their unease at assessing art and gendered assumptions that a divorced mother from a good background would be anxious to protect her name and reputation. Had she accepted, *Eros 65* would almost certainly have run its course, but her social and professional position gave her the confidence to reject both deals. Although she was convicted, the original sentence was a fairly gentle admonishment that hinted at Cameron's gender and social status and the Crown's unease with the case. Finally, the unexpected emphasis on lesbianism exposed one of the most difficult facets of Toronto's evolution. This aspect of the case was not widely reported because the gay and lesbian community did not yet attract broad public sympathy or support.[92]

Cameron's decision to stage *Eros 65* was precipitate but not wrong and has had an ongoing impact on Canadian art and law. Had it been a show of abstracts, the police could have shrugged that modern art was incomprehensible. But these sexually-charged images were touchstones for Toronto's social tensions, and transformed Cameron's trial into one of the first engagements in the social, cultural, sexual and generational battles of the 1960s. While the judgment did not become a cudgel with which to strike the arts community, its indirect impact was huge. As has been noted, Bora Laskin's dissenting opinion captured Canada's emerging social mores. Six months after Cameron's failed Supreme Court appeal, federal Minister of Justice Pierre Trudeau introduced sweeping changes to the *Criminal Code* that legalized homosexual acts in private along the lines that the *Wolfenden Report* had established in the United Kingdom. Then, in 1970, Prime Minister Trudeau appointed Laskin to the Supreme Court and to the position of Chief Justice three years later. Laskin's court reshaped the way Canadian law relates to society and his opinion in the Cameron case continues to be one of the most widely-cited judgments in obscenity cases around the world. Cameron may have failed to prove her case, but its legacy has helped to shape a broad liberalization of obscenity law in Canada and elsewhere.

NOTES

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« Pour adultes seulement » : le procès de Dorothy Cameron pour exposition de tableaux obscènes en 1965

ANDREW HORRALL

Au début des années 1960, Dorothy Cameron, galeriste à Toronto, défend l'art canadien. Elle s'intéresse aux jeunes artistes torontois et cherche à créer un marché pour l'art contemporain canadien. La scène artistique torontoise est en pleine effervescence : toute une génération de peintres, de sculpteurs et d'artistes en tout genre se laissent inspirer par leur ville natale et décident d'y demeurer pour affirmer leur talent. En compagnie d'autres galeristes, Dorothy Cameron met cette esthétique urbaine à l'honneur dans des expositions qui bousculent ceux pour qui l'art canadien se résume essentiellement aux représentations du Bouclier canadien. En mai 1965, la police visite la galerie de la rue Yonge au cours des premiers jours d'une exposition sur l'amour intitulée *Eros 65*, après avoir reçu une seule plainte d'une personne présente au vernissage. L'escouade des mœurs examine les œuvres exposées, saisit sept tableaux qu'elle juge obscènes et accuse Cameron d'avoir exposé du matériel obscène en public.

L'intervention policière témoigne des tensions qui opposent alors les jeunes artistes et la contre-culture émergente aux groupes conservateurs plus âgés à Toronto. Dans les jours suivant la descente, la police est fortement critiquée et ridiculisée dans la presse et à la télévision par des citoyens incrédules qui n'arrivent pas à imaginer qu'on puisse assimiler des œuvres d'art sérieuses à la pornographie. Les partisans de Cameron sont en grande partie des amateurs d'art avertis, persuadés que l'évaluation objective des tableaux par un juge réfuterait la présomption d'obscénité. La galeriste refuse donc l'offre du procureur de la Couronne d'abandonner les poursuites, préférant se défendre contre ce qu'elle considère comme un acte de censure injustifié qui risque d'ouvrir la voie à d'autres attaques à l'endroit de l'expression artistique.

Pendant le procès, la Couronne soutient que les tableaux sont obscènes parce qu'ils illustrent des actes hétérosexuels autant que lesbiens. L'avocat de Cameron fonde sa défense sur celle qui avait réussi en Grande-Bretagne et au Canada à réfuter les accusations d'obscénité portées contre le roman *L'Amant de Lady Chatterley* de D.H. Lawrence. Il fait appel à cinq experts en art qui expliquent en quoi les tableaux saisis sont des œuvres d'art

sérieuses qui s'inscrivent dans la tradition artistique occidentale. Le juge n'est pas convaincu et condamne la galeriste en novembre 1965. Même si l'amende imposée est relativement légère, le jugement choque les partisans de Cameron, qui décide de porter la cause en appel. Sa démarche est appuyée par la toute nouvelle Association canadienne des libertés civiles.

La condamnation de Dorothy Cameron suscite une nouvelle vague de moqueries dans la presse et sur les ondes, notamment à l'émission *This Hour Has Seven Days*, revue d'actualité satirique controversée diffusée à la CBC. Robert Markle (1936–1990), artiste émergent de Toronto et auteur de cinq des tableaux saisis, n'arrive pas à comprendre que ses œuvres puissent être taxées d'obscénité. D'autres craignent que la condamnation ne crée un précédent qui autoriserait la saisie éventuelle d'œuvres d'art légitimes au prétexte qu'elles auraient heurté la sensibilité d'un seul spectateur.

Puisqu'ils ne peuvent présenter de nouvelles preuves lors de l'appel, les avocats de Cameron tentent de développer l'argumentaire fondé sur la tradition artistique qui avait été invoqué à propos du procès. En vain. Dans un jugement partagé, la Cour d'appel de l'Ontario rejette l'appel. La majorité des juges statue que les tableaux sont manifestement obscènes et contraires aux normes sociales. Selon eux, le regroupement des œuvres incriminées dans l'exposition *Eros 65* en a accentué l'effet d'obscénité. Néanmoins, Bora Laskin, dernier juge nommé à la Cour et cadet de la magistrature, présente une vibrante opinion dissidente soutenant que l'art a pour fonction sociale de remettre en cause les idées et les opinions préconçues. Son opinion ouvre la voie à une éventuelle requête devant la Cour suprême du Canada. Cependant, le stress et la pression de la bataille juridique ont raison de la pugnacité de Dorothy Cameron, qui ferme sa galerie. L'art contemporain canadien perd alors une importante ambassadrice. Sa condamnation n'a toutefois pas eu les conséquences que redoutaient les défenseurs de la galeriste; en effet, on ne l'a jamais invoquée par la suite pour interdire des expositions. Par ailleurs, l'opinion dissidente de Bora Laskin est devenue l'un des arguments les plus cités dans les procès pour obscénité partout dans le monde.

Bordering the Vernacular: J. Russell Harper and the Pursuit of a "People's Art"

ERIN MORTON

In 1970, curator and art historian J. Russell Harper (1914–1983) embarked on what would become one of his most extensive ventures into Canadian art history – a field that he helped to legitimate beginning with the publication of his monograph *Painting in Canada: A History* in 1966 and by holding such prominent positions as curator of Canadian Art at the National Gallery of Canada between 1959 and 1963. It came in the form of a major survey exhibition entitled *People's Art: Naïve Art in Canada*, which opened at the National Gallery of Canada in 1973, just ten years after Harper had left his curatorial post there.[1] Composed of 164 oil paintings, watercolours, woodcarvings, metal sculptures, and collages ranging from the mid-eighteenth century to 1971, *People's Art* is significant to the larger history of art exhibition in Canada because of the two primary factors that conditioned Harper's representational strategy. First, the exhibition grappled with what I wish to suggest was Harper's reaction to the exhaustion of a specific national project. We can now understand this project as constructing Canada as a peaceful settler society (rather than as a settler-colonial society founded on violence) and as being based in a limited white diversity that was iconized in representations of rural immigrant agricultural labour.[2] Harper's romanticized interpretation of this context lead him on a search for what he saw as a lost age defined by European settlers toiling the land, which went as far as sentimentalizing his own boyhood days in rural Ontario. As he put it in an undated manuscript draft of the *People's Art* exhibition catalogue:

> Throughout the years I have wanted desperately both to feel my own country and to help others to experience its inner fibre. These feelings, then not crystallized into words, go back to the days when in the older parts of Ontario as a boy I remember two venerable old grandfathers with long white beards, stump fences on the farms when white pines were pulled from the virgin soil by the oxen 'Buck' and 'Bright,' fields

Detail, William Panko, *Birds in a Garden/Blue Birds of Happiness*, ca. 1940, watercolour, 31.8 x 33.7 cm, Coll. Moira Swinton, Winnipeg, MB. (Photo: Ernest Mayer)

> of waving golden wheat, massive oak shade trees, and a walled garden filled with herbs and flowers. There was something about it all that gave me a love for my boyhood countryside. I have since developed a love for many other corners of Canada.[3]

In order to understand what had been lost and, perhaps more importantly, to predict what the future would hold for art production in Canada, Harper sought out a material culture context to express the postwar transition from rural to urban life. Harper's lament for a nation was undeniably muddled with his sense of loss over the Canadian countryside of his childhood, even if most of this personalized sentiment was eventually edited out from both the *People's Art* exhibition catalogue and from the scholarly monograph that accompanied the project.[4]

What remained, however, speaks to the second factor that can be seen to have set the parameters of the 1973 exhibition: the fact that it developed at the interface of a broader transition within Canada, which political economists call post-Fordism.[5] This was the shift away from a postwar capitalist model – commonly referred to as "Fordism" after its namesake, Henry Ford – that built national economies on a domain of domestic mass production and consumption. Post-Fordism represented a transitional period in Canadian capitalism in which the Keynesian national economy became more deeply embedded in a regime of flexible accumulation tied to a transnational neoliberalism. Keynesian economics advanced the idea that the state should be prepared to intervene in order to maintain the demand for the consumption and the supply of goods.[6] As Keynesian states such as Canada focused on economic growth, full employment, and the social welfare of citizens in the immediate postwar period, they also struck a social "compromise between labour and capital" that was generally understood as the key to overall national prosperity.[7] On the other hand, this neoliberal approach was adverse to the notion of the isolated, individual labourer, instead insisting on overall "flexibility" in the labour market itself.[8] Neoliberal economic policy moved away from Keynesian principles by withdrawing from welfare systems and becoming hostile to all forms of labour organization that sought out restraints on the state accumulation of capital at the expense of worker employment.[9] In essence, the Keynesian-style accumulation of capital, which focused on assembly-line production, mass political organizing, and an interventionist welfare-state, transitioned to one of flexible accumulation under neoliberalism, by seeking out niche markets, decentralizing state involvement in manufacturing, and deregulating and privatizing production.[10]

Since it is often regarded as the symbolic beginning of the formation of neoliberal states throughout the world, 1973 is an important year in marking this transition.[11] Symbolic or not, the complex development of the post-industrial age in northern North America shaped the ways in which dominant cultural producers, such as Harper, thought about Canadian nationalism after 1973. The decline of a nationally articulated economy created a new social structure, which Harper referred to in his *People's Art* monograph with such statements as "contemporary living has assumed an overwhelming complexity."[12] Although Harper largely understood this complexity in terms of an overwhelming confrontation with mass technocultural change, a notion that was in line with a McLuhanistic understanding of an intensifying postmodern way of life, we might approach Harper's words from a contemporary perspective that also considers postmodernity's connection to post-industrialism under neoliberalism.[13] In this regard, the vernacular past for Harper could be seen as "a mine for a nationalism of reassurance," to borrow historian Ian McKay's phrase, in that Harper sought out material cultural remnants of rural life to bolster his ideas about Canada's cultural foundations.[14] Specifically, Harper needed reassurance that the Canada he imagined, one based on a nationalism that converted what McKay calls "a liberal empire, not a nation, and not a democratic state" into "a country like the one we now inhabit," was salvageable in cultural terms, even if it was not on the political-economic front.[15] Canada is best described, after all, as the process (and not the end result) of supplanting and defending a British, Protestant, liberal, capitalist imperialism in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries against challenges to the hegemonic commonsense of these categories and ideologies.[16] This often meant the inclusion of ideas that stood in opposition to the liberal capitalist rationale in order to renegotiate its hegemony in particular moments of crisis such as 1973. On the cultural front, dominant players in the field of Canadian art such as Harper understood the importance of using historical objects of art and culture to bolster a nationalist project that sought out unity in the face of increased diversity and of the heightened decentralization of formerly nationalist sectors such as labour markets. Yet, by the early 1970s, few inhabitants of northern North America could actually see themselves as part of this nationalist endeavour, if they ever could, not only because of the shifts that post-industrialism wrought but also because of a domestic political climate that required increased management on a number of fronts.

This article argues that Harper's *People's Art* exhibition represented an important moment in the development of Canadian art historiography. Conditioned by the context of post-Fordist economic realities that marked

this period in general and the exhaustion of the specific discourse of settler-colonial nationalism, Harper attempted to reconstruct this discourse by presenting the agrarian settler roots of Canada's industrial period at the precipice of its post-industrial age. In this regard, Harper's pursuit of what he called the "Canadian vernacular" was an intensely ideological and politicized one that helped him and others to reassert the ideal of a Canada that never (or, at least, no longer) existed. I explore Harper's pursuit in four parts. First, I examine its connection to the emergence of post-industrialism in advanced capitalist societies such as Canada after 1973. This allows me to pay particular attention to the ways in which Canada's concurrent transitions from Fordism and from a Euro-bounded liberal diversity challenged previous definitions of the Canadian nation-state – and of Canadian art – that I believe Harper was after. Certainly, it is also important to note here that Harper made his intervention not through elite art, but by attempting to shine light on works that had previously been ignored by the Canadian art establishment. Next, I consider how *People's Art* was informed by the use and expansion of modernist-primitivist discourse in academic and museological Canadian art circles in the early to mid-twentieth century. This allows me to explore how Harper's ideas of a vernacular "people's art" developed alongside larger negotiations of such terms as "primitive" and "folk" art in and around one of the country's dominant postwar cultural institutions, the National Gallery of Canada. Of particular import in this regard is how the pursuit of a vernacular "people's art" actually created the language in which this quest was carried out. Harper and many of his contemporaries were in the process of locating both a material and a conceptual language in which to express their aspirations – one that, in effect, did not exist as they imagined it should. Initially, this pursuit focused on material culture terms, as the National Gallery looked to established experts in the field such as Harper to assess objects that would address centres of regional diversity in Canada and in order to help mobilize the reconstruction of a past nationalist identity with their authority. As the material base of the Canadian vernacular was established, the language to describe it followed, even if this language was ultimately a rearticulation of earlier ideas about ethnicized and racialized difference. My conclusion looks at Harper's organization of the *People's Art* project and reflects on its results.

(Neo)Liberal Hegemony and the "People's Art"

Perhaps it is not surprising that Harper's search for a Canadian cultural nationalism in the *People's Art* exhibition took him to popular art production given his status as a liberal federal nationalist and considering his influence

on developing Canadian art history as a discipline that extended that ideology.[17] He is probably best known as "a determined pioneer in the history of art in Canada"[18] because of his tireless mapping of the field in museological and academic circles. This pursuit would ultimately earn him the title "father of Canadian art history,"[19] a distinction he attained through producing one of the first dictionaries of Canadian artists, *Early Painters and Engravers in Canada* (1970); the first bilingual survey text in the field, *Painting in Canada: A History* (1966); and his monographic studies of late nineteenth-century settler-colonial artists, *Paul Kane's Frontier* (1971) and *Kreighoff* (1979).[20] He also held various posts in cultural institutions across Canada, including curator of Lee College, Hart House, at the University of Toronto (1947–50); chief cataloguer at the Royal Ontario Museum (1948–52); archivist at the New Brunswick Museum (1952–56); and curator of the Beaverbrook Art Collection (1957–59), before taking up the prominent positions of curator of Canadian Art at the National Gallery of Canada (1959–63) and chief curator of the McCord Museum in Montreal (1965–68), where he also lectured at Sir George Williams (now Concordia) University (1967–79).[21] He was, in other words, someone who operated from the privileged position necessary to conceptualize the direction of both museological and academic Canadian art history, spheres that have always been overlapping and intertwined in their shaping of the discipline as a whole. To be sure, at a dominant institution such as the National Gallery, this integration of public and intellectual authority had long been achieved through the professionalization of white male figures such as Harper, and the *People's Art* exhibition was no exception to this rule.[22]

When Harper came toward the end of his career and retired from most of his university teaching in the early 1970s, he used this considerable influence to launch the *People's Art* project, a decision that might have been understood as a departure from his previous engagement in the field of Canadian art. Yet as I argue here, "People's Art" can be more productively framed as establishing a linear narrative with regard to cultural production in North America, with a special focus on Canada, as it was known by the European immigrant cultures that had claimed it. Indeed, the postwar economic model of advanced capitalist societies was built on violent imperial expansion into Indigenous territories and dependent on mass production meeting mass consumption in such a way that, as geographer David Harvey puts it, postwar economics appeared more "as a total way of life" than as a capitalist strategy.[23] If the early 1970s capitalist model fundamentally restructured this system and the ways in which national production of any kind could be understood, art and culture was neither immune to the status of the mass commodity nor to the neoliberal challenge to the historical "compromise between capital and labour" that defined advanced postwar capitalist economies in many parts of

the world, including North America.[24] *People's Art* bolstered Harper's ideas about the necessity of integrating the country's regional, ethnic, and linguistic heterogeneity in order to solidify a national sovereignty based on the myth of peaceful European settlement, specifically by searching for the remaining elements of Canada's agrarian past at a time when challenges to this mythology were being increasingly wrought by the post-industrial context in which he was working. Over the course of his research for the exhibition, Harper was teaching in Montreal where, as was powerfully demonstrated in the October Crisis of 1970, a complex political situation produced a very different post-industrial liberal climate in which to consider questions of national identity.[25] The Front de libération du Québec (FLQ) kidnapped James Cross, a British diplomat, and Pierre Laporte, a Quebec cabinet minister and, on 16 October, the federal government implemented the War Measures Act to quell the resulting violence. Yet here too the post-industrial neoliberal model was in action, since the majority of those arrested by the army were labour activists. As a result, Quebec's most prominent labour unions – the Confédération des syndicats nationaux, the Fédération des travailleurs du Québec, and the Corporation des enseignants du Québec – rejected both the FLQ and the federalist cause and called for a political reform outside of these available options.[26]

Harper's challenge, then, was to assemble an exhibition that could easily navigate a complicated political and cultural terrain marked by the unsettling and renegotiation of the liberal hegemony of Canada in the post-industrial period, which he understood in cultural terms. He met this challenge by presenting elite scholarly and museum-going audiences with objects that he described as "keyed to ordinary people who are forthright, uncomplicated – the bulwarks of society."[27] Paradoxical as it was, exhibiting the art production of Canada's European settler-colonial labouring classes to an audience of elite European settler-colonials was a necessary ideological context for defining the "people's art." Furthermore, members of this latter privileged constituency were often the most enthusiastic advocates of Canadian cultural nationalism – even long after such a project could be productively reconciled with the developing transnational economic logic of neoliberalism. If Modernism was "the official art of progressive capitalism" and the industrial era, Harper's task was, above all else, to find a new source of art production that could help him negotiate a period in which neither the postwar victory of Modernist aesthetics nor the commercial character of mass culture could effectively extend the English-Canadian nationalist perspective of the mid-twentieth century into the post-industrial context in Canada.[28] The problem was very much of the moment, though complicated by Harper's inability to find what he was looking for in Canada's contemporary art circles, since the

parameters of what a national culture could look like were already shifting as the economic system of maintaining national sovereignty through liberal capitalist enterprise collapsed. Harper was concerned about the increasingly transnational climate of art production and exchange, aiming his critique at what he called "the back-biting Canadian art world,"[29] which he understood to be the result of escalating external cultural influences on the nationalist domestic content in which he was so invested. And, like many cultural nationalists of his day, he measured this budding threat of transnational neoliberalism on the cultural front in terms of his perceptions about the Americanization of culture in Canada, which he understood both through the lens of elite Modernist art practice and through the facilitated circulation of mass culture across national borders. As he put it in a 1972 letter to Montreal journalist Peter Desbarats:

> Canadian culture matters, particularly in English-speaking Canada, are in a rather bad way simply because the old basic precepts have been so eroded by the fast buck and ballyhoo Americanism that there is not much life which is truly Canadian. Perhaps I should amend it by saying that there isn't much left which I would like to see as what we should really be in this country.[30]

Moreover, Harper lamented the effects of "ideas originating from the canons of New York (that isn't really relevant to Canadian society)" and the influence of "certain taste makers who are little autocrats" on art production in Canada.[31] Certainly, Harper's analysis of U.S. influence on Modernist Canadian art production, which many curators and art historians have read as creating regionalist abstract movements that were "more an outpost of New York than part of the Canadian art scene,"[32] speaks to his desire to help visitors "discover a Canadian ethos through its people's art,"[33] but there is also a broader historical significance to this quest that extends beyond the limited reach of elite art circles.[34]

Specifically, the broader significance of *People's Art* lies in its demonstration of the ways in which many of those invested in the late twentieth-century project of Canadian art history in the 1960s and 1970s – by its very nature, a nationalist endeavour – were also using historical objects of art and culture to negotiate a developing neoliberal context. The negotiation of neoliberalism at this particular juncture speaks to what cultural studies scholar Imre Szeman refers to as "the prehistory of our present moment … and of the idea of the nation more generally in the era of globalization."[35] It is clear, for example, that Harper's *People's Art* exhibition retraced the nationalist context of Canadian art through the historical material remnants

of immigrant European settler-colonial labour rather than through the postmodern art movements with which contemporary artists were starting to engage. Yet given Szeman's arguments, the exhibition can also be read as demonstrating Harper's desire to domesticate cultural production in Canada against the deterritorialization of local, national, and regional cultures under a developing neoliberal context.[36] Therefore, a particular examination of the political-economic rationale for national culture-making during the 1960s and 1970s is essential to a reading of the prehistory of neoliberal globalization through Harper's *People's Art* exhibition. Indeed, despite the fact that domestic production models were disintegrating under the developing neoliberal turn of late capitalism, this was a period in which there was a receptive audience for nationalistic cultural production in Canada.

Discussion of these ideas remained active and fraught in the early to mid-1970s. In her patriotic 1976 tome, *Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture?*, for example, Susan Crean advocated domestic cultural protectionism of the communications and media sectors that Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's federal government became known for at this time. As she explained: "In 1967 we awoke to find ourselves celebrating the 100th anniversary of a real country. This country. With money and attention lavished on national festivities as never before, we became aware of Canada as never before. We watched the centennial year unfold, and what we saw was ourselves. For a little while, Canada was visible."[37] Yet, as Szeman suggests, there was also a growing sense that transnational economic policies threatened such nationalism, which fostered a concentrated effort to support not only "culture in Canada" but also "Canadian culture."[38] Under the guise of protecting Canadian "content," Trudeau's federal government enacted policies that developed the understanding that culture was an important resource for the political and economic expediency that nationalism required.[39] Crean cautioned that the focused federal attention on culture necessitated its conscientious management and the development of new infrastructures because culture was a resource like no other: "it is not the kind of resource we are accustomed to thinking of in Canada. Culture in not something that lies buried in the ground beneath the nation's art centres, waiting to be dug up and shipped out in freight cars."[40] Culture, in the context of 1960s and 1970s Canada, was a resource that required management like any other industry. It needed to be managed according to the political-economic rationale of the day – a unified, if "decentralized" and "democratized," liberal, just society in which nationalist cultural production played an important role in the offensive strategy to maintain this hegemonic commonsense, especially considering the ongoing threat to domestic economic sustainability.[41]

The particular challenges of maintaining Canadian cultural nationalism at this time also meant grappling with a domestic political-economic structure that saw the increased internationalization and corporatization of communications media. This first developed in the immediate postwar period and was then extended in the late 1960s and early 1970s in ways that affected the extent to which culture could effectively be pronounced a national product. Technological structures had not been the object of debates over the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty since the railway expansions of the late nineteenth century, even if this time the connections forged in Canadian space were negotiated primarily in cultural terms.[42] The crux of the issue was the extent to which Canadian cultural content could be produced when communications media owned by U.S. corporations were charged with disseminating it, even in Canadian domestic markets. Historian Ryan Edwardson puts it best when he notes that by 1966, the "three institutional pillars upholding the Masseyites' Canadianization – the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the National Film Board, and the Canada Council – were up against the eroding impact of changes benefiting television station owners, periodical publishers, and feature filmmakers; identifying Canadian content in terms of high-cultural experience, something quite hard to measure, was being overshadowed by a bureaucratic preference for quantitative assessments of Canadianess."[43] This reality was particularly significant for Harper's *People's Art* project, for it helped him to demonstrate how the transnational corporatization of Canadian content shaped the reading of art as a domestic product. It was, to be sure, less a question of artists training in such centres of Modernist excellence as New York and Paris that affected their ability to produce Canadian art – for this had been done for decades – than it was the manner in which federal cultural organizations could resist the denationalization of cultural industries on behalf of Canadian cultural producers on the whole. Making an ongoing nationalist claim to culture through the search for a "people's art" appealed to Harper because he saw it as being able to withstand both U.S. American elite art (and its Canadian imitators) and the forces of mass culture that were located in transnational corporations that often had a U.S. base. In fact, Harper saw so-called naïve cultural producers as operating outside both the regulating structures of the art world and of the commercial and corporate cultural melee and therefore unaffected by these threats to erode Canada's national character.

As a result, when Harper began conceptualizing the *People's Art* project, that moment was shaped by the inability of dominant Canadian culture makers to successfully frame artistic endeavours in nationalist terms.

Defending Canadian culture against an increasingly privatized transnational cultural system was particularly difficult because the production and circulation of cultural forms were affected at all levels of conventional classification – elite, popular, mass, and everything in between. Harper spent most of his career working in elite art circles and in that milieu, concerns about the U.S. influence on artistic expression remained at the forefront throughout the period in which he researched the exhibition. However, perhaps his turn to popular cultural production during the 1970s does make sense when properly contextualized. In a letter written in 1972, Harper deplored the internationalization and industrialization of the culture industries because of their effects on the people of Canada as a whole who, Harper feared, were becoming disconnected from their shared national history, and particularly, on professional contemporary artists in Canada who, unlike a "naïve" producer ignorant of artworld mechanisms, seemed unable to resist the foray of transnational influences that threatened the nationalist core of Canadian art at this time.[44] "Art," Harper reminded Desbarats, "was surely created for the enjoyment and enrichment of the lives of people – hence the book which I am now writing on the vernacular in Canadian art, art of the people. But I must not get started on a sermon."[45] Outlining such concerns in the monograph that accompanied the *People's Art* exhibition and its catalogue, Harper noted that, under current conditions, "new domination by mass media from many outside sources, multinational corporations, and omnipresent mercenary standards threatens individuality. Self-assertion is difficult. But it is possible, as the paintings in this book remind us. We are as diverse as our provincial flowers, yet all of these can be united in a colourful 'bush garden.' If we sympathetically open our minds, these diverse parts can be blended into a strong and real Canada."[46] Harper steadfastly maintained the combination of two elements in the *People's Art* exhibition: his assertion that naïve artists could withstand the mass cultural influences that he saw rooted in U.S. imperialism and his contention that the context of transnational cultural exchange had muddied the waters of elite art production in Canada in particular. In his determination to identify objects that would satisfy his premise, Harper assembled works that spoke to the "social and cultural panorama of ordinary men,"[47] drawn from those whom he characterized as "discriminating collectors of primitives from Halifax to Victoria."[48] He provided his audience with what he framed as "a kind of 'other look' at art in Canada,"[49] one that served as a reminder that "mass media and external economic pressures are fast negating much of [Canada's] feeling of unity."[50] This reality, Harper insisted, meant that it was "imperative that the art which emerges from the soul of the land be examined now."[51] Nationalist cultural producers such as Harper believed that, when properly selected and disseminated, art could provide a nation in the process of forgetting with a

reminder of its history as an immigrant European agrarian society that pulled itself up by the bootstraps into postwar industrialism.

The Modernist-Primitivist Model, "Regional" Expertise, and the Post-industrial Present

If Harper's understanding of the "people's art" was a search for Canada's European agrarian settler past against the realities of post-industrial technological neoliberalism, it was also equally informed by the historical discourse of modernist-primitivism that had roots in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century colonial capitalism.[52] This discourse, as literary scholar Victor Li points out, sought to advance ideas about people "belonging to authentic, primordial cultures yet untouched or uncontaminated by modernity," which could "no longer be called upon to act as pure forms of otherness" in the post-industrial, postmodern context.[53] To make this argument Harper sought out the primordial folk past that his experience in the post-industrial present negated, and he did so by poring over the conceptual and material dimensions of folklore. Harper played with a multitude of terms in order to describe the material heritage of the Canadian ethos, using such words as "primitive," "naïve," "provincial," and "folk" to specify what he was in search of. In 1969, Harper began scouring the country for artworks that he initially described as "primitives,"[54] to see "if I could not find enough provincial and primitive Canadian painting to make a companion volume to a book, 'Painting in Canada'." He recalled, "I was never completely happy with that work because so much of the art seemed based on European and American tradition – and I would like to captivate more completely the Canadian flavour."[55] As I have argued, Harper's search for what he came to call "the Canadian vernacular" was a mission with important nationalist undertones, one that required bringing regional cultural production into the fold of a national cultural institution in order to validate it. "Being a good Canadian," he wrote in 1970, "I think we can do just as well here as the Americans have done in the Rockefeller Collection at Williamsburg, and in other places. We are simply too modest to toot our own horns."[56] He solidified this sentiment a year later, by arguing that, "It's time we sounded the horn a bit more on things Canadian. This is what I hope the book on primitives will do. We can do just as well in this country as the Americans have done on their so-called 'Folk' art that they have been vaunting for the last forty years."[57] Although he eventually abandoned the term "primitive," Harper's search for a "people's art" was certainly imbued with what Li calls "a deep primitivist logic" that allowed the term to be revived in the post-industrial context "under such acceptable or neutral names as 'alterity,' 'culture,' and 'modernity.'"[58] Harper was, in other words,

compelled to define a Canadian vernacular in such a way that it came to stand in for Canadian culture as a whole: the European settler society in its purest and most authentic form.

Harper was faced with the challenge of finding a way to combine the diversity of regional cultural forms that spoke to the settled past under one national umbrella in order to solidify his vision in the present. He also needed to locate a terminology that would effectively describe the material remnants of the "people's art." One way to accomplish this was to examine the character of regional culture itself and to suggest that its various incarnations across Canada could be united under the notion of a national "vernacular," a cultural language that somehow all Canadians should be able to understand. "In speech," he explained, "regional expressions are termed a vernacular. It seems equally appropriate to speak of the 'vernacular' in connection with an art that reflects local ways of life. Paintings from a particular region of Canada find much of their appeal in qualities as distinctive as the local dialect in speech."[59] Harper clearly understood the "region" as a site of rural cultural production outside of central Canadian cities, arguing that "those from the Atlantic seaboard … seem as regional as the phrases and soft accents of Maritimers which varied from county to county until radio and television imposed a dull uniformity. If his dialect differentiates a Nova Scotian from a Newfoundlander, with his lilt a sea 'argot,' or from a prairie rancher whose tales are peppered with the expressions of ranching days," Harper insisted, "so do his local paintings."[60] Harper's argument that national communications networks were levelling out regional diversity subtly contradicts his desire to critique the "mass media and external economic pressures"[61] that undermined Canadian national unity. Herein lies the twisted logic of the *People's Art*: the project illustrates the National Gallery's historical pattern of capitalizing on the activities of provincial cultural institutions in its ongoing quest to determine the nature and direction of Canadian art as a nationalist enterprise, while suppressing regional cultural expressions that suggest alternative narratives.[62] The irony of Harper's framing of these "regions" is that his central Canadian authority relied on precisely those supposedly marginal sites of influence to reproduce his vision of a national vernacular. This illustrates the slippage that occurs between such categories when one defines a "regional" expression according to a nationalizing logic; if Harper used this exhibition "to demonstrate an underlying national spirit in historic terms,"[63] he did so by relying extensively on the knowledge of museum professionals working outside of dominant institutions in Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa. It was, in the end, this so-called regional expertise that determined most of the objects that made up what Harper articulated as a national exhibition, which also provided an untapped reserve to effectively illustrate Canadian culture.

Harper understood his role as identifying and bringing wider recognition to popular art and nationalizing regional artistic expression by presenting it at Canada's most authoritative cultural institution. As he explained to National Gallery director Jean Sutherland Boggs during the planning stages of the exhibition in 1971, "I feel that I should probably make a trip to both the east and west coast to assure some kind of national coverage, but concentrating most of my travelling to shorter trips in Ontario and Quebec. I think I should visit a number of smaller Ontario museums, etc., which normally don't attract attention." He then seemed to reconsider his request: "Actually, I went on my own to the Maritimes last summer, and I might be able to by-pass that. I do want to get in touch with people in Newfoundland."[64] Having worked in Saint John and Fredericton for most of the 1950s, Harper relied on his existing network of contacts at Atlantic Canadian museum and heritage sites to assess available material, writing in 1970 to John Lynn of the Fortress of Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia, "I am anxious to include representative work from all parts of Canada and I don't like to be accused of forgetting the Maritimes."[65] To Peter Bell at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland, Harper explained, "one of the National Gallery's stipulations is that I should go from coast to coast in my search."[66] To cover all of his bases, Harper also contacted two of the leading "Atlantic Realist"[67] painters of his day, Alex Colville (1920–2013), then in Sackville, New Brunswick, and Christopher Pratt (b. 1935), in St. Catherine's, Newfoundland, in search of "odd things tucked away on the east coast" that might have inspired their own work.[68] In conducting this search, Harper depended on the knowledge of local experts to isolate suitable works for consideration in the exhibition before travelling outside of central Canada to evaluate the objects in person. For instance, in 1971, he told Moncrieff Williamson of the Confederation Art Gallery that: "The situation is that I would love to go over to Charlottetown, but time and money are limited and I don't want to come unless I feel I might have some hope of discoveries."[69] Harper thereby delegated much of the selection process to regional professionals who were geographically closer to what he envisioned as the rural sites of "naïve" art production. Such a system required Harper to provide a detailed explanation of what precisely constituted the "people's art." "My biggest difficulty," Harper later explained to Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature curator James Stanton, "is to describe to people just what I am looking for, but it is art with character and quality but in the non-grand manner tradition of Europe and with what some people describe as a folk or naïve character. Incidentally these terms are ones with several definitions."[70]

By 1972, Harper confirmed that, given the vast geographical realities of the project, the "search for the Canadian ethos is not a simple matter."[71] He had by that time followed up on several leads from private collectors

and local museums, guiding him to travel to Saint John, New Brunswick, and Halifax, Nova Scotia, and up and down the Quebec-Windsor corridor. Such trips demonstrated the difficulty of the task at hand, as he articulated later in the *People's Art* monograph: "The fruitlands of Niagara bear no visible relationship to the bleak Arctic or the British Columbia rain forests. Fishermen from Newfoundland outports are virtual foreigners to workers in prairie grain elevators. A real unity of thought and outlook seems impossible for Canada because of its sheer size; Vancouver Island is as remote spiritually as it is physically from Cape Race."[72]

Equally complex as the nationalization of regional cultural production, though, was Harper's constant negotiation to find the appropriate language to express what he called the "material achievements" of the objects he was assembling.[73] In his correspondence with provincial museums, Harper tended to use the word "primitive," although he was also quick to stipulate that it was "a term I don't quite agree with but [one] used much by Americans for those in the famous Rockefeller Collection."[74] He articulated his need to come up with a suitable definition to Boggs in 1971. Noting that she had suggested *Primitive Images in Canada* as a title for the exhibition, he explained, "My idea had been to confine the book to purely pictorial material, but to include provincial, naïve and folk art. The question of definitions of various terms comes up. I assume that we are agreed that it should be an exhibition of 'unsophisticated art' rather than sticking to any academic interpretation of 'primitive.'"[75] He shared this correspondence with Francess Halpenny, his editor at the University of Toronto Press: "As you will note in my letter to Jean Boggs, while she has suggested a title *Primitive Images in Canada*, I am a little concerned that it is not quite wide enough. I had thought of some such title as *The Unsophisticated Look*, or *The Unsophisticated Painting*, with a sub-title of *Canadian, Folk and Naïve Art*. The difficulty is to get around the terminology."[76] In 1972, he further expressed his frustration with taxonomy to Boggs, lamenting, "the critical point as to when a painting turns from a really 'provincial and popular' aspect to 'high art' has bothered me greatly."[77] That same year, he wrote to the National Gallery's curator of Canadian art, Pierre Théberge, that "deciding what should really be in this exhibition has been a most difficult problem."[78]

The Folk Art Category and the National Gallery of Canada

Luckily, previous National Gallery exhibitions that had sought Canada's European agrarian folk heritage in its regional art production provided Harper with established models to draw upon in his ideological conception and material representation of the "people's art." In his appreciation of known

"primitive paintings from the prairies, particularly those of [Jan G.] Wyers and [William] Panko,"[79] Harper drew specifically on Norah McCullough's 1959 National Gallery exhibition *Folk Painters of the Canadian West*.[80] According to Harper, this exhibition "pioneered for the region" in terms of identifying viable folk artists from the Western Provinces who could locate a particular vision of rural Canada and showcase the agrarian negotiation of industrial expansion for an urban audience in Canada's capital city.[81] What is more, *Folk Painters of the Canadian West* also exposed the tensions in the categorization of "folk" cultural production at the National Gallery and the ways in which this term was embedded with the same modernist-primitivist discourse as Harper's exhibition, albeit this time with living artists whose work could be used to prove the resilience of folk societies despite modern industrial expansion. McCullough, who was at the time the National Gallery's liaison officer for Western Canada,[82] launched her exhibition through the Gallery's Department of Extension Services, which was dedicated to expanding the institution's sphere of influence by offering artwork loans and bringing exhibitions to provincial museums outside of Ontario. Former director Eric Brown had activated the national loans and extension programs in 1916 as part of his "chief ambition … to bring the National Gallery to every part of Canada."[83] Yet, as McCullough's exhibition demonstrated, rather than "extending" any long-term decentralized regional authority to these museums, the programs run out of Extension Services had the effect of nationalizing cultural producers formerly outside of the National Gallery's immediate reach. Chief among the formerly excluded, according to McCullough, were artists who she described as "not professional painters – that is, those who painted for the love of it and who were not trained at art schools."[84] These included Wyers and Panko, who Harper would later see as central figures in defining folk art of the Canadian prairies. "These people," McCullough wrote to Maxwell Bates in 1959, "… are not 'primitive.' They seem always to have been with us going back fairly obviously, to the medieval workers who delighted in birds, beasties, leaves and flowers. The simplicity and honesty is refreshing."[85] Bates, a well-known professionally-trained artist and writer based in Calgary, replied to McCullough that he had, "off and on for some time … been writing an article on Folk Artists. I think this name you have chosen is much better than Primitive, or Modern Primitive, and I shall use it in the future."[86] More than a simple relabeling, the shifting of this categorization from "primitive" to "folk" had important aesthetic and socio-cultural implications for the *Folk Painters of the Canadian West* exhibition in terms of reinscribing a primitivist logic under expanded conceptual guises. In particular, McCullough's objective was to organize the "Folk Painters" exhibition around works that demonstrated "one of the

principle characteristics of the folk painter," which she described as "excessive productivity, a curious and urgent compulsion."[87] More importantly, however, McCullough framed the exhibition in racialized terms, by presenting the artists she chose as a type of European immigrant *volk* who brought their primordial customs with them to Canada.

This distinction between the "primitive" and the "folk" categories is important and it helps to demonstrate two things about McCullough's employment of "folk" terminology. To begin with, as art historian Leslie Dawn argues, there is a longer history in English-speaking Canada in which, during the early twentieth century, British settler-colonial inhabitants did not think of themselves as having "an ancient *volk* who they could cite as ancestors, thereby legitimizing their entitlements to [Dominion] territories by continuous occupation."[88] Further, Dawn suggests that, "recognizing the 'Indians' as the nation's *volk* at this time would have validated their rights to their disputed territories and obviated the need to destroy their traditions. The alternative, then, was either to exclude them from the emerging emblems of nation or to place their cultures irretrievably in the past … They were certainly not presented as Canada's *volk*."[89] This was precisely the position that such early twentieth-century folklore enthusiasts as National Museum of Canada ethnologist Marius Barbeau took when it came to applying modernist-primitivist discourse to Indigenous and settler-colonial cultural production, most notably in his 1927 *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art, Native and Modern*, which placed the paintings of the Group of Seven and Emily Carr alongside Nisga'a headdresses, Tlingit Chilkat robes, and models of Haida totem poles at the National Gallery.[90] As art historian Lynda Jessup points out, director Brown touted the exhibition as the first to position Northwest Coast Indigenous cultural production as "artistic first and ethnological after."[91] In the accompanying catalogue, Brown wrote that the exhibition's purpose was "to mingle for the first time the art work of the Canadian West Coast tribes with that of our more sophisticated artists in an endeavour to analyze their relationship to one another, if such exists, and particularly to enable this primitive and interesting art to take a definite place as one of the most valuable of Canada's artistic productions."[92] The result was to present paintings by Carr and members of the Group of Seven as Modernist masterworks, with the Indigenous material culture positioned relationally as both aesthetically and socially "primitive" by way of its perpetual location in the past.[93] Barbeau's simultaneous promotion of folk "soirées" in Montreal in the 1920s, which brought rural Québécois folklore and material culture to elite urban audiences, applied with scholarly authority a notion of primitivism that had formerly been reserved for Indigenous societies in North American anthropological circles to European settler-colonial traditions.[94] Yet all of

this only exposed the malleability of the primitivist logic, even if, as Dawn puts it, "the Native and the native were not to be easily reconciled" at the National Gallery in terms of maintaining distinct ideas about Indigenous and European settler-colonial primitivism.[95] Harper writes of the trajectory of negotiating the primitive category amongst Indigenous and European settler-colonial producers alike, noting, "A few individual Canadian collectors have long been sympathetic to our primitives. Marius Barbeau, [U.S. artist] Patrick Morgan, and [painter, filmmaker, and art historian] Jean Palardy have been pioneer promoters of the more contemporary phases, giving encouragement to the folk painters of Charlevoix County in Quebec during the 1930s."[96] While the Indigenous could still be located within the primitive past and framed as an "exotic" remnant of a colonial enterprise, different language was required when it came to providing the justificatory evidence of a primordial folk culture in Canada; this distinction would provide the added bonus of entrenching European settler-colonial claims to Indigenous lands.

Although McCullough was working within the same modernist-primitivist paradigm as such prominent figures as Barbeau, she used this model to make the claim for a European immigrant *volk* in Canada. Specifically, McCullough based her inquiry into folk culture on the racialized categories established by John Murray Gibbon, who popularized the term "Canadian Mosaic" in 1938.[97] Much like Harper's articulation of popular art in the 1970s, a context marked by using multiculturalism as official state policy to address increasing settler diversity,[98] Gibbon was especially concerned with the growing industrialization of Canada under interwar modernity in the 1920s and 1930s, which he feared would create increased isolation as the country's diverse European immigrant groups failed to interrelate with one another.[99] More than this, Gibbon saw the concept of the mosaic (and how such "folk" fit into it) as politically astute, since it could help to subvert the appeal of socialism or other forms of labour unrest. The mosaic, then, did not just build national unity; it also undercut political ideas that might challenge a liberal commonsense.[100] Gibbon's solution to such problems, as it would be later for McCullough and Harper, was to help Canada reclaim some of its agrarian roots through the promotion of so-called folk culture. As historian Stuart Henderson puts it, Gibbon's solution relied on "an immutable background of white Anglo-Celt (male) hegemony onto which he could manufacture his mosaic."[101] Connecting her search for folk art directly to her understanding of Indigenous primitivism, McCullough framed each context in ways that were equally allochronistic.[102] "It may be that the folk painter in North America will soon disappear for good," McCullough concluded in the catalogue, "or like a bird lost in migration will be found only in more remote parts of the country from time to time."[103] This is certainly the concept of the

folk artist that Harper would draw upon in *People's Art*, reminding his readers that "Canada until recently was a rural society and it is in rural society that vernacular art has always found its deepest roots."[104]

Building her case for an immigrant European *volk* in Canada made McCullough eager to contextualize the "folk" painting of ethnic communities within the larger Euro-North American perspective. In 1959, she wrote to National Gallery's librarian, Christa Deddering, requesting, "all the data you have" on "folk painting." She continued, "It is curious but so far I am finding that this kind of painting – apart from Grandma Moses – seems to be a masculine prerogative … Also, are there any psychological references to painting compulsions by *retired* persons, not necessarily aberrated? Of course [French "naïve" painter Henri] Rousseau is the most outstanding example and from the French film about him, it does seem that there are very definite psychological factors although these need not necessarily be pathological, unless one accepts that as the basis for all creative output!"[105] Although she felt compelled to isolate folk art as a separate field of ethnic cultural production, McCullough clearly understood the broader context of establishing the so-called "folk" or "naïve" artist as one derivative of the "primitive" category. Once again, McCullough conducted careful research on the use of the term "folk art" in international art circles. She wrote to Louise Dresser of the Worchester Art Museum in Massachusetts later that same year: "I find Jean Lipman has expressed herself very well on the subject [of folk art] … Can you tell me … if you think she is the kind of person to who [sic] I could write requesting her permission to paraphrase her definition of folk art?" In the same letter, McCullough noted that she was also impressed by "a summary, in a copy of *Studio* written by Alice Ford, of a symposium on Folk Art. She must be an American, as she refers to 'our' arts – such a nice, light touch this piece has – and I would like to send an inquiry to her too."[106]

In turning to Lipman's *American Primitive Painting*, published by Oxford University Press in 1942, McCullough recognized the interrelation between Modernist painters and the so-called folk artists they valued. As Lipman put it, "it seems worth noting here that such outstanding modern artists as Robert Laurent, William Zorach, Stephan Hirsh, Alexander Brook, Elie Nadelman, and Charles Sheeler were among the first to recognize the quality of the American Primitives and have gained inspiration from collecting them. Our generation values abstract quality above all else."[107] With this statement, Lipman articulated one of the foundational ideas of the modern folk art construct, which demonstrated that, "for the first time in history … [produced] a deliberately abstract art," leading art historians to value the work of untrained artists "formerly described as crude, uncouth, stiff, distorted, [and] poorly executed … That the same objects are now described

as original, individual, formalized, lucid, abstract," Lipman continued, "merely implies a shift in the attitude of the critic, who has come to value abstract above illusionistic representation and to evaluate primitive art positively rather than negatively."[108] Crucially, Lipman concluded, "abstract design is the heart and soul of the American Primitive, and it is this fact which has won for it the acclaim of the moderns."[109] Alice Ford's 1951 article "What is American Folk Art?" in *Studio*, in turn, summarized thirteen typical definitions of the form, all of which demonstrated the ways in which "[in] our own culture, we are, and always have been, mesmerized by European aestheticism." In other words, Ford argued that regardless of the aesthetic qualities of the work, typical definitions of folk art in the U.S. tended to emphasize the European roots of its artists, as "New England, the Atlantic seaboard and adjacent Pennsylvania are jealously guarded as the only American folk culture reality."[110]

After conducting her research into these sources, McCullough wrote to the National Gallery's director of Extension and Exhibition Services, Richard Simmins, to enlist the assistance of an expert in the field, someone who could speak to the international qualities of the form. "Could we not ask [U.S. American Modernist painter] Max Weber to write a few words on the primitive or folk artist for the preface to the catalogue," she asked Simmins, "on the basis of his friendship and sympathy for Rousseau? It would give the whole thing a tremendous lift."[111] Despite McCullough's view that Weber would be an appropriate choice, given her understanding of an international folk art field, Simmins did not agree, "I do not think we should ask Max Weber to do a forward [sic] to the catalogue as I would like it to be a Canadian production from start to finish. I am going to ask you to be responsible for the text and perhaps I will ask Alan Jarvis [then National Gallery director] to contribute the forward [sic]."[112] As it turned out, Jarvis helped to frame *Folk Painters of the Canadian West* in less broadly internationalist terms than McCullough had perhaps envisioned. For example, rather than positioning the group of painters McCullough selected as being identifiable within an international folk art field and an immigrant European *volk* tradition, Jarvis simply noted that their art was "rarely exhibited, and then only locally" and belonged to no "stream of tradition … although they do seem to have much in common with the recognized folk painters of Europe, past and present."[113] Jarvis's comments in the foreword suggested that the artists represented in *Folk Painters of the Canadian West* were known only in their regional communities, with little connection to identifiable artistic circles, European or otherwise. In fact, of the six painters represented in the exhibition – Sydney H. Barker (1893–1970), Eugene W. Dahlstrom (1885–1971), Roland Keevil (1884–1963), William Panko (1892–1948), W.N. Stewart (1888–?), and Jan

G. Wyers (1888–1973) – only two, Barker and Stewart, were born in Canada. The remaining four were European-born, Dahlstron in Sweden, Keevil in England, Panko in Austria, and Wyers in Holland. In her catalogue essay, McCullough examined these painters in the context of "the medieval artist-craftsmen of Europe" and "the early American folk artist," noting that, "this group of six artists have [sic] not emerged from a well-established colonial society. Their origins are close to Europe, for only two are Canadian-born, and they have come together in this exhibition by accident."[114] With this, McCullough bolstered her assertion "that the folk-painter continues to exist throughout western cultures, to emerge again and again as he has in England, in France, Switzerland, Sweden or here in Canada."[115]

Much like McCullough before him, Harper debated how to define precisely the European settler-colonial vernacular tradition of the "people's art," and he was working at a time when many ideas about what constituted popular art forms were becoming increasingly institutionalized. In 1972, Harper wrote a letter to Prime Minister Trudeau explaining the significance of the *People's Art* project for contemporary society: "It seems an appropriate moment for the book and exhibition at a time when over-intellectualism in art has isolated much painting from the masses and when technocracy tries to remove the warmth of humanity from daily life."[116] Again, Harper conceived of such threats in nationalist terms, insisting that he was "very pro-Canadian these days," because of the U.S. influence on Canadian cultural matters. "I was slightly incensed to see that the recent Royal Ontario Museum publication on Canadian pottery was honoured with a foreword with a few patronizing words from a Smithsonian curator," he complained in 1971. "Are we so emasculated that we have no Canadians left capable of saying anything about our own cultural heritage?"[117] Locating the vernacular roots of an increasingly post-industrial society, however, was one of Harper's primary challenges in bringing such categories as the "folk" and the "primitive" into relief against the emerging neoliberal capitalist context of the early 1970s. Always open to reinterpretation and renegotiation to take account of the particular realities of modernization at a given historical moment, the "primitives" and "folk" of Harper's day were also tempered within a societal context defined by bi- and multicultural state policy in Canada. Beginning in the 1960s, the federal government reinvigorated Gibbon's mosaic metaphor in the official policy on bilingualism and biculturalism and in the extension of separate legal rights to Indigenous people (officially classified as Indians, Inuit, and Métis).[118] Moreover, the postwar era saw what sociologist Richard J.F. Day describes as "increasing intervention of the Canadian state in providing solutions to the problem of Canadian diversity, primarily by taking on the task of what it now called 'integration' of citizens."[119] Unlike the 1940s,

however, when "Canadian identity was taken up by the Canadian state as a solution to the wartime problem of European Immigrant diversity,"[120] the Canadian federal state of the late 1960s and early 1970s saw integration as necessary to quell Québécois nationalism, to cope with the arrival of non-European immigrants, and to assimilate Indigenous populations who were then increasingly resisting colonialist claims to ancestral lands.[121] In a federal state concerned with the problem of non-European diversity, Harper's search for a "primitive" or "folk" heritage in Canada had particular implications when it came to using these terms to establish what a national vernacular could mean. Certainly, there were limits to Harper's desire for integration into the "strong and real Canada," which meant rethinking the available categories of the "primitive," the "naïve," the "provincial," and the "folk" according to Eurocentric notions of a national past tied to the colonial settling and working of the land – even if, in the post-industrial era, there were few agrarian labourers of European descent left in Canada.[122]

The Aesthetics of Agrarian Labour under Late Capitalism

By the time he published the *People's Art* exhibition catalogue (1973) and his monograph *A People's Art: Primitive, Naïve, Provincial and Folk Painting in Canada* (1974), Harper had completed his categorical negotiations and solidified his terminology, using words such as "primitive," "naïve," "provincial," and "folk" and taking pains to provide definitions of these terms. "'Primitives'," he insisted, "are done by artists who lack the technical knowledge of the trained painter but overcome their handicap by sheer will power." A "naïve" artist, in turn, Harper defined as "really the humblest of the primitives. To my mind the difference is simply a matter of degree of proficiency in execution."[123] Unlike the primitive and naïve artists, who "may well know nothing about the rules of perspectives laid down for the classical artist," Harper noted that, "provincial canvases receive stylistic inspiration from a centre elsewhere, be it London, Paris, or New York …. Where, however, is the border between what is truly 'primitive' and what is sufficiently skilled to be 'provincial'? Go one step further and you will find it difficult to determine when the 'provincial' ceases and the 'classical' begins."[124] Folk art, Harper argued, "in contrast to the other three subdivisions, usually has an ethnic character … Some writers have described the paintings of Wyers, Panko, and the artists of Charlevoix County as 'folk' art; using the definitions being developed here they would be classified as 'primitive.'"[125] Possibly, Harper's understanding of these artists as "primitive" rather than "folk" was tied to the overall argument in both the catalogue and monograph, which delineates a retreat from agrarian lifestyles to urbanization across the

1 | Jan Wyers, *My Home in Holland*, n.d., oil on canvas, 40.8 x 64.3 cm, Coll. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, ON. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada)

country. According to this line of thinking, the ethnic farming communities across the Canadian prairies, which McCullough described in 1959, had perhaps all but evaporated by the 1970s. A case in point is the isolation of Panko's and Wyers's paintings in both *Folk Painters of the Canadian West* and *People's Art*. In her exhibition catalogue, McCullough provided a short interview with Wyers in which he states, "I have a quarter section of land and go out to the farm as soon as spring comes. I feel better out there."[126] The three Wyers canvasses that McCullough selected for reproduction in the catalogue cast a trajectory from Wyers's Dutch roots to his life on Saskatchewan farmlands. Specifically, McCullough juxtaposed Wyers's 1930s work *My Home in Holland* (Fig. 1), which depicts an image of Wyers's childhood home which he had painted from a photograph,[127] with two scenes of prairie farm life, *The First Saskatchewan Harvest* and *These Good Old Threshing Days* (Fig. 2), thus marking a passage into his life of agrarian – if mechanized – labour in rural Saskatchewan. Harper described the artist as "a Dutch-born farmer," who "painted scenes depicting many aspects of his life on the farm," and selected two Wyers paintings, *These Good Old Threshing Days* and *Quitting Time* (Fig. 3) for *People's Art*. Read together, these paintings

2 | Jan Wyers, *These Good Old Threshing Days*, ca. 1955, oil on fabric, 71.1 x 99.1 cm, Coll. MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina, SK. (Photo: MacKenzie Art Gallery)

3 | Jan Wyers, *Quitting Time*, n.d., oil on fabric, 59.7 x 74.9 cm, Coll. Neil Devitt, Winnipeg, MB. (Photo: courtesy of the MacKenzie Art Gallery)

4 | William Panko, *Birds in a Garden/Blue Birds of Happiness*, ca. 1940, watercolour, 31.8 x 33.7 cm, Coll. Moira Swinton, Winnipeg, MB. (Photo: Ernest Mayer)

map a day of working in the field, which Harper recounted as "the farmer's paen [sic] of thanksgiving to nature which provides for all."[128] Panko, in turn, emerged in McCullough's exhibition as an Austrian immigrant who "worked as a farmer in summer and each winter in the Alberta mines at Drumheller until stricken with tuberculosis of the hip in 1937."[129] As Harper explained, Panko then "recalled those idyllic earlier days in his paintings."[130] Panko's 1940 watercolour *Birds in a Garden* (Fig. 4) was included in both exhibitions but Harper titled it *Blue Birds of Happiness*, and the *People's Art* catalogue also illustrated Panko's industrial work in *Drumheller, Alberta*. "The town of Drumheller is pictured at the peak of prosperity," Harper wrote of the latter

Panko painting, which depicts a bustling industrial town with coal mines, grain elevators, trains, and postwar workers' housing: "The artist was one of them."[131]

Despite Harper's attempt to establish temporal distance between these coeval representations of European settler-colonial agrarian labour and late capitalism, it was the contemporary nature of these works that marked their status as "primitive." Harper explained this contradiction as the result of an ongoing "spontaneous phenomenon," whose "spirit appears and vanished like the will-o'-the-wisp … But this approach brings a fresh and stimulating breadth into a contemporary society preoccupied with the grand tradition and with fashion."[132] This sentiment is in line with an interview he gave Virginia Nixon of the Montreal *Gazette* in 1975, in which he expressed "nostalgia for things I find are lacking in contemporary society, which is rather hard and matter-of-fact."[133] As Nixon noted, Harper "contrasted today's 'egocentric' approach with the picture of the patriarch trying to build something for his community."[134] Once again, Harper turned to his search for the "people's art" to contrast what he saw as the ills of post-industrial society. "For instance," he offered Nixon, "19th-century Ontario farmers sometimes painted or commissioned portraits of prize livestock to hang in their dining rooms. It gives such a sense of 'I raised those sheep – look what I did' as opposed to the man who works on an assembly line at General Motors."[135] Along these same lines, Harper closed both the *People's Art* exhibition and its accompanying publications by offering what he posited as a concrete example of this transition from agrarian to industrial life. The juxtaposition of two canvasses by Chicoutimi-based artist Arthur Villeneuve (1910–1990), his *The Carnival Dance* (1971) and *The Nightmare of Civilization* (1967) visually expressed what Harper poetically referred to in the *People's Art* monograph as a "creative vernacular spirit" that was "not quite dead" in the present.[136] Harper described the first painting as Villeneuve's depiction of the "Carnival of the End of the World," which is "held annually in Chicoutimi, Quebec, during the week preceding Ash Wednesday. The mayor proclaims that all should celebrate."[137] Harper argued that, in contrast to "the creation of the festive mood we see in [*The Carnival Dance*]," in *The Nightmare of Civilization* Villeneuve "gives expression to the troubling complexities of the contemporary world."[138] For Harper, Villeneuve's *The Nightmare of Civilization* is an act of protest, a canvas that shows "man exhausted by the modern world: a present-day Adam, stripped of even the affectation of clothing, is left prostrate and shivering after the bombardment. Impersonal robot-like life patterns cannot be ignored," Harper warned, "they infect our culture. Yet it is possible in the 1970s to look to uncomplicated vernacular in the search for that personal and direct relationship with life desired by

Villeneuve and others."[139] The canvas, which depicts stylized monstrous characters swirling around an abstract male figure, certainly communicates a feeling of chaos. Ultimately, Harper's *People's Art* exhibition suggested that the Canadian vernacular was the key tool with which to navigate the chaos of the post-industrial era in particular, marked as it was by increased challenges to Canadian cultural life. Given this context, it is not surprising that Harper and many of his nationalist contemporaries found themselves doing battle with cultural homogenization, particularly when one considers the pace of postwar North American modernization and the extended circumstances of its subsequent demise. As Harper reminded his readers, "Young and old, in an attempt to escape from present-day impersonality, seek out furniture of past years to surround themselves with the quiet aura of former times. Through the land, city dwellers seek new homes in the countryside."[140] In the end, Harper's longing for this aura ensured that "isolating 'Canadianism' is most difficult" in the present, forcing one to look beyond the "outside forces [that] have erected internal psychological barriers which work against unified national feeling."[141] Harper's search for a unified Canadian vernacular was one that ended up being as ephemeral as the project of Canada itself, leaving the "people's art" as an idea that only dominant cultural nationalists would continue to seek out and claim.

NOTES

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1 The final book-length study of J. Russell HARPER's career was his monograph, *Kreighoff* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979).

2 For an analysis of the distinction between the terms "settler," "colonial," and "settler-colonial," see Lorenzo VERACINI, "Settler Colonialism and Decolonisation," *Borderlands* 6:2 (2007). Accessed 7 July 2011, http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol6no2_2007/veracini_settler.htm; Lorenzo VERACINI, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); and Anna JOHNSON and

Alan Lawson, "Settler Colonies," in *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies,* ed. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), 360–76.

3 "Canadian Homespun: Primitive, Folk and Provincial Painting," Manuscripts, Working Drafts, n.d., Library and Archives Canada, J. Russell Harper fonds, MG 30 D 352, volume 44, file 17. Unless otherwise noted, all quoted correspondence can be found at Library and Archives Canada, J. Russell Harper fonds, MG 30 D 352, volume 44.

4 Harper wrote two books to accompany the "People's Art: Naïve Art in Canada" exhibition. The first was an exhibition catalogue published by the National Gallery of Canada in 1973, entitled *People's Art: Naïve Art in Canada*, which contains a short introductory essay by Harper along with a catalogue raisonné of the works in the exhibition. The second was a monograph entitled *A People's Art: Primitive, Naïve, Provincial and Folk Painting in Canada* and published by the University of Toronto Press in 1974. The monograph is a more extensive scholarly introduction to the subject of primitive, naïve, folk, and provincial art in Canada and nine short essays group the exhibition's works thematically as follows: The First Canadians; Honour Thy God; For King and Country; The Placid Countryside; The People of the Land; The Rising Towns and Villages; Of Ships and the Sea; The Sporting Life; and Some Leisure Hours.

5 Geographer David Harvey is among those who has written most extensively on the Fordist phase (1950–73) of capitalism, a period of productivity in which the myth of labouring classes sharing the benefits of accumulated profits with those who controlled the means of production emerged. He also articulates the subsequent post-1973 (post-Fordist, post-industrialist) neoliberal rationale of free trade as a solution to managing the gross accumulation of postwar capital. This model has actually resulted in the dispossession of workers from their sources of employment in order to ensure that their surplus labour could be extracted and exploited. He refers to this secondary phase, which began in 1973, not simply as an era of "post-Fordism" but also as one of "flexible accumulation" in which the dimensions of time and space are shrinking as communications and information technologies allow for changes in the production and accumulation models of capital and labour. See especially David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 1990); David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (London: Verso, 2006). For an especially good synopsis of the crisis of Fordism and the emergence of the post-Fordist economy, which synthesizes many of Harvey's arguments, see also Fran Tonkiss, *Contemporary Economic Sociology: Globalisation, Production, Inequality* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 87–104.

6 David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 10–11.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., 75.

9 Ibid.

10 David Harvey, *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 123.

11 As Harvey argues, 1973 was a significant year in neoliberal state formation, beginning with the U.S.-military backed coup in Chile that violently repressed social movements and political organizations on the left. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil embargo of 1973 also fostered plans of a U.S. invasion of oil-producing states such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Abu Dhabi in order to restore oil exports and reduce oil prices globally. Finally, 1973 was the year in which U.S. foreign investment banks became more actively internationalist in their lending of capital to governments abroad. So-called developing countries were encouraged to borrow excessively, and New York bankers controlled interest rates in U.S. dollars to their advantage. See HARVEY, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 26–27.

12 HARPER, *A People's Art*, 10.

13 For more on the heyday of McLuhanism that emerged between 1965 and 1975, see Donald THEALL, *Virtual Marshall McLuhan* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001).

14 Ian MCKAY, "After Canada: On Amnesia and Apocalyse in the Contemporary Crisis," *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region* 28:1 (Autumn 1998): 81.

15 Ian MCKAY, "The Liberal Order Framework: A Prospectus for a Reconnaissance of Canadian History," *Canadian Historical Review* 81:4 (December 2000): 645.

16 McKay argues that "Canada" is best understood as "a historically specific project of rule, rather than either an essence we must defend of an empty homogenous space we must posses." In particular, McKay sees "Canada-as-project" as denoting the historical expansion of liberalism across northern North America. He suggests that the unfolding of this "liberal order" is the principal lens through which historians must now "rethink Canada," thereby abandoning the approach of historical synthesis and moving towards a "reconnaissance" that "will study those at the core of this project who articulated its values, and those 'insiders' and 'outsiders' who resisted and, to some extent at least, reshaped it." See MCKAY, "The Liberal Order Framework," 621.

17 Certainly, it is important to note that Harper was far from the first to identify so-called "primitive" or "folk" art as an area of artistic, scholarly, and curatorial interest in Canada, especially one with nationalist undertones. Harper explained that his interest in "the Canadian vernacular" was first motivated by his knowledge of mid-seventeenth-century "ex-voto paintings of Quebec," which he studied as part of his research for the book *Painting in Canada: A History*, 2nd edition (Toronto and Laval: University of Toronto Press and Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1977). He described these works as possessing the ability to "tell thrilling stories taken from the simple faith of country folk. It seems appropriate," he therefore insisted, "that most were painted by naïve artists" (16).

18 Francess G. HALPENNY, "J. Russell Harper," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, Historica Foundation. Accessed 7 July 2011, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com

19 Virginia NIXON, "Meet J. Russell Harper, Father of Canadian Art History," *The Gazette* (Montreal), 8 Mar. 1975, as cited in Anne WHITELAW, "To Better Know Ourselves: J. Russell Harper's *Painting in Canada: A History*," *Journal of Canadian Art History/Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* 26:1–2 (2005): 27.

20 Jo Nordley BEGLO, *The Library of J. Russell Harper* [exhibition catalogue] (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2011), n.p. For a complete listing of Harper's writing, see

Brian Foss and Loren Lerner's bibliographic entry "J. Russell Harper, 1914–1983," *Journal of Canadian Art History/Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* 7:2 (1984): 106–12. Whitelaw also provides an important analysis of Harper's role in the English-language historiography of Canadian art in "To Better Know Ourselves," 8–33. For more on this historiography and on the influence of cultural institutions on its development, see also Kristy A. Holmes, "Feminist Art History in Canada: A 'Limited Pursuit'?" in *Negotiations in a Vacant Lot: Studying the Visual in Canada*, ed. Lynda Jessup, Erin Morton, and Kirsty Robertson (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, forthcoming); Lynda Jessup, "Prospectors, Bushwhackers, Painters: Antimodernism and the Group of Seven" *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 17:1 (1998): 193–214; Lynda Jessup, "The Group of Seven and the Tourist Landscape in Western Canada, or The More Things Change …," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 37:1 (2002): 144–79; Lynda Jessup, "Landscapes of Sport, Landscapes of Exclusion: The 'Sportsman's Paradise' in Late-Nineteenth-Century Canadian Painting," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 40:1 (Winter 2006): 71–123; Lianne McTavish, "Beyond the Margins: Re-framing Canadian Art History," *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region* 30:1 (Autumn 2000): 104–17; Sandra Paikowsky, "Constructing an Identity: The 1952 xxvi Biennale di Venezia and 'The Projection of Canada Abroad,'" *Journal of Canadian Art History/Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* 20:1–2 (1999): 130–77; Joyce Zemans, "Establishing the Canon: Nationhood, Identity and the National Gallery of Canada's First Reproduction Program of Canadian Art," *Journal of Canadian Art History/Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* 16:2 (1995): 7–39; Joyce Zemans, "Envisioning Nation: Nationhood, Identity and the Sampson-Matthews Silkscreen Project: The Wartime Prints," *Journal of Canadian Art History/ Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* 19:1 (1998): 6–51; Joyce Zemans, "Sampson-Matthews and the ngc: The Post-War Years," *Journal of Canadian Art History/ Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* 21:1–2 (2000): 96–139.

21 "Harper, J. Russell," *Canadian Who's Who* xvii (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 454.

22 Indeed, limiting the pursuits of amateur women collectors, enthusiasts, and workers through the professionalization of white male authority in Canadian museums has been well documented, particularly in Lianne McTavish's "Strategic Donations: Women and Museums in New Brunswick, 1862–1930," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 42:2 (Spring 2008): 93–116. While McTavish argues that the "inclusiveness of the museum may have fostered female involvement," she also demonstrates the ways in which women's "marginal position produces a familiar story of women's efforts to gain both power and authority within a male-dominated institution" (96). See also Lianne McTavish and Joshua Dickison, "William Macintosh, Natural History and the Professionalization of the New Brunswick Museum, 1898–1940," *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region* 36:2 (2007): 72–90. Anne Whitelaw also recently presented a paper on the significance of women's influence with regard to the acquisition of objects in what McTavish refers to as a "gift economy." Entitled "From the Gift Shop to the Permanent Collection: Art Gallery Women's Societies and the Circulation of Inuit Art," this paper was presented at the conference "Material Culture, Craft and Community: Negotiating Objects Across Time and Place," Material Culture Institute, University of Alberta, 21 May 2011. In particular, Whitelaw charts the influence of women's volunteer organizations in bringing Inuit cultural

production into permanent collections by first positioning such objects in gallery gift shops.

23 Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 135; Tonkiss, *Contemporary Economic Sociology*, 92.

24 Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 10.

25 For more on the interrelation of Canadian, Québécois, and French-Canadian liberal orders and the expansion of nationalism, see Jean-François Constant and Michel Ducharme, "Introduction: A Project of Rule Called Canada – The Liberal Order Framework and Historical Practice," in *Liberalism and Hegemony: Debating the Canadian Liberal Revolution*, ed. Jean-François Constant and Michel Ducharme (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 3–32.

26 For more on the connection between labour and the October Crisis, see Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).

27 J. Russell Harper, *People's Art: Naïve Art in Canada* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1973), 13.

28 Paul Mattick, Jr., "The Old Age of Art and Money," in *Capital Culture: A Reader on Modernist Legacies, States Institutions and the Value(s) of Art*, eds. Jody Berland and Shelley Hornstein (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 67.

29 J. Russell Harper to Peter Desbarats, 3 June 1972, file 6.

30 Ibid. Peter Desbarats is a journalist, writer, broadcaster, and professor who has written and commented extensively on media and politics in Canada in his position as a national affairs columnist for *The Toronto Star* and as Ottawa Bureau Chief and co-anchor for Global Television. Before taking up a post as the Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at Western University in 1981, Desbarats worked for three decades as a journalist between Montreal, Winnipeg, and London (uk) writing for the *Gazette*, the *Montreal Star,* the *Winnipeg Tribune*, the cbc, and Reuters. He is also the author of several books, including a biography of former Quebec premier and Parti Québécois founder René Lévesque, entitled *René: A Canadian in Search of a Country* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976).

31 J. Russell Harper to Peter Desbarats, 3 June 1972, file 6.

32 Roald Nasgaard makes this observation, for example, in relation to a group of abstract painters from the prairies, The Regina Five, who garnered the attention of the well-known Modernist critic Clement Greenberg and led him to refer to Saskatchewan as "New York's only competitor." See Nasgaard's *Abstract Painting Canada* (Vancouver and Halifax: Douglas & McIntyre and Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, 2007), 143.

33 Harper, *A People's Art*, 11.

34 In her 2009 dissertation, "Going British and Being Modern in the Visual Art Systems of Canada, 1906–1976," Sarah A. Stanners raises the important point that it is crucial "to recall and assess the British foundations of Canada's sense of modernism in the visual arts" in order to understand the postwar perception "that all modern culture in Canada was born from or is a spin-off of American precedents" (3). Stanners makes this point by examining Canadian collectors of British art, which, as she suggests, had a heavy hand in shaping Canada's dominant institutions of art and

culture, even if this history remains largely "a matter of cultural amnesia" (3). I am grateful to Mark A. Cheetham for alerting me to Stanners's argument.

35 Imre Szeman, *Zones of Instability: Literature, Postcolonialism, and the Nation* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2003), 201.

36 Ibid., 203.

37 Susan M. Crean, *Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture?* (Don Mills, ON: General Publishing Co., Ltd., 1976), 7.

38 Szeman, *Zones of Instability*, 155.

39 Much of my reading of the use of culture as resource in political and economic expediency is informed by George Yúdice's arguments in *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), in which he suggests that post-industrial societies have increasingly come to treat culture like any other political-economic resource in development strategies. Yet, as Yúdice makes clear, the use of *culture-as-resource* means that it is "much more than a commodity; it is the lynchpin of a new epistemic framework in which ideology and much of what Foucault called disciplinary society (i.e., the inculcation of norms in such institutions as education, medicine, and psychiatry) are absorbed into an economic or ecological rationality, such that management, conservation, access, distribution, and investment – in 'culture' and the outcomes thereof – takes priority" (1).

40 Crean, *Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture?*, 2.

41 I provide a more in-depth analysis of the rhetoric of "decentralization" and "democratization" of the Trudeau government's "culture czar," Gérard Pelletier, in my forthcoming book, *Historical Presenting: The Place of Folk Art in Late Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia*, especially as it pertains to the regionalist dimensions of his cultural policy initiatives. For a general overview of Pelletier's policies, see also Ryan Edwardson, *Canadian Content: Culture and the Quest for Nationhood* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 194–96.

42 Szeman, *Zones of Instability*, 153.

43 Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 112. For a discussion of the Massey Commission on Canadian culture making, see also Paul Litt, *The Muses, the Masses, and the Massey Commission* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

44 Sociologist Julia Ardery makes a similar argument in her study of the construction of a twentieth-century Appalachian folk art field, noting that as "masters of fine arts programs and new art journals proliferated throughout the 1970s, rural folk artists appeared ever more exceptional in their noncompliance with an increasingly dense cultural system." See Julia Ardery, *The Temptation: Edgar Tolson and the Genesis of Twentieth-Century Folk Art* (Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 3.

45 J. Russell Harper to Peter Desbarats, 3 June 1972, file 6.

46 Harper, *A People's Art*, 4. To date, I have been unable to find evidence that Harper was purposefully referencing Northrop Frye's preface to his 1971 edited collection of essays, *The Bush Garden*. In it, Frye articulates the question of Canadian identity as a regional one in a language similar to Harper's: "An environment turned outward to the sea, like so much of Newfoundland, and one tuned towards inland seas, like so much of the Maritimes, are an imaginative contrast: anyone who has been conditioned by one in his earliest years can hardly become conditioned by the other

in the same way. Anyone brought up on the urban plain of southern Ontario or the gentle *pays* farmland along the south shore of the St. Lawrence may become fascinated by the great sprawling wilderness of Northern Ontario or Ungava, may move there and live with its people and become accepted as one of them, but if he paints or writes about it he will paint or write as an imaginative foreigner. And what can there be in common between an imagination nurtured on the prairies, where it is a centre of consciousness diffusing itself over a vast flat expanse stretching to the remote horizon, and one nurtured in British Columbia, where it is in the midst of gigantic trees and mountains leaping into the sky all around it, and obliterating the horizon everywhere?" For this reason, I cannot imagine that Harper's use of the "bush garden" metaphor was coincidental. See Northrop Frye, "Preface to *The Bush Garden* (1971)," in *Northrop Frye on Canada*, ed. Jean O'Grady and David Staines (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 414.

47 Harper, *A People's Art*, 24.

48 Ibid., 6, 13.

49 J. Russell Harper to Ontario Showcase, Showcase Publishing Co., Ltd., 21 Dec. 1970, file 1.

50 Harper, *People's Art: Naïve Art in Canada*, 16.

51 Ibid.

52 The interrelation of these two terms ("modern" and "primitive") has a long history in modern art historical and anthropological scholarship. Elazar Barkan and Ronald Bush delineate this interrelation by pointing to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe's search for rationality in the face of the "impending cultural transition" of colonialism. Theorists such as Max Weber and Emile Durkheim "searched for the ills of modern society," and as Barkan and Bush note, "their ideal types approximated the polarized ideals of the primitive and the civilized. A similar shift occurred in the history of art. Previously, when art historians spoke of the 'primitive,' they usually had in mind the 'naïve' style of Pre-Raphaelite and Colonial American painting – that is, artifacts of the West's own childhood. In the late nineteenth century, however, primitive painting came increasingly to connote the geographically exotic 'savage' – even as violence was beginning to receive its 'positive' modern spin. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the neo-primitivist painters in France were branded Fauves – wild beasts." See Elazar Barkan and Ronald Bush, "Introduction," in *Prehistories of the Future: The Primitivist Project and the Culture of Modernism*, ed. Elazar Barkan and Ronald Bush (Stanford, ca: Stanford University Press, 1995), 2. For an analysis of modernist-primitivist discourse as it pertains to art history in particular, see Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighten, "Primitive," in *Critical Terms for Art History*, 2nd edition, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 217–33.

53 Victor Li, *The Neo-Primitivist Turn: Critical Reflections on Alterity, Culture, and Modernity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), ix.

54 J. Russell Harper to C.H. Foss, 17 Nov. 1970, file 1.

55 J. Russell Harper to Mrs. G.F. Bowlby, 30 Dec. 1970, file 2.

56 J. Russell Harper to Mrs. G.F. Bowlby, 8 Jan. 1970, file 2. Harper was referring to the prominence of the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Collection, which opened at Colonial Williamsburg in 1935 and has helped to define the field of modern and contemporary folk art in the United States since the 1930s. For more on this

collection, see Holger Cahill, *American Folk Art: The Art of the Common Man in American, 1750–1900* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1932); Nina Fletcher Little, *The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Collection: A Descriptive Catalogue* (Williamsburg, va: Colonial Williamsburg, 1957); Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, *American Folk Art from the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Collection* (Williamsburg, va: Colonial Williamsburg, 1966); and *American Folk Art: The Exhibition of 1932* (Williamsburg, va: Colonial Williamsburg, 1968).

57 J. Russell Harper to Dan Taylor, 8 Jan. 1971.

58 Li, *The Neo-Primitivist Turn*, ix–x.

59 Harper, *A People's Art*, 4.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid., 16.

62 See also Lynda Jessup, "Bushwhackers in the Gallery: Antimodernism and the Group of Seven," in *Antimodernism and Artistic Experience: Policing the Boundaries of Modernity*, ed. Lynda Jessup (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 152, note 70.

63 Ibid., 11.

64 J. Russell Harper to Jean Sutherland Boggs, 30 Jan. 1971, file 2.

65 J. Russell Harper to John Lunn, 30 Dec. 1970.

66 J. Russell Harper to Peter Bell, 7 July 1971, file 3.

67 Newfoundland painter Christopher Pratt is often credited with coining the term "Atlantic Realism," to describe the illusionistic, almost photographic, style of a group of painters who worked in Atlantic Canada during the late twentieth century around such centres as Sackville, Wolfville, and St. John's. This group generally includes Christopher Pratt, Mary Pratt, and Alex Colville. For more, see Josée Drouin-Brisebois and Jeffrey Spalding, *Christopher Pratt: All My Own Work* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2005); Mark A. Cheetham, *Alex Colville: The Observer Observed* (Toronto: ecw Press, 1994); Mark A. Cheetham, "The World, the Work, and the Artist: Colville and the Communality of Vision," *Revue d'art canadienne/ Canadian Art Review* 15:1 (1988): 58–63; Mark A. Cheetham, "Colville and Paton: Two Paradigms of Value," in *Capital Culture: A Reader on Modernist Legacies, State Institutions and the Value(s) of Art*, ed. Jody Berland and Shelley Hornstein (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 116–21; Sandra Gwyn and Gerta Moray, *Mary Pratt* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1989); Joyce Zemans, *Christopher Pratt: A retrospecive organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1985); and Charlotte Cliff Eyland, Charlotte Townsend-Gault, and Gemey Kelly, "Atque Ars." Accessed 12 Mar. 2013, http://www.umanitoba.ca/schools/art/content/galleryoneoneone/atque.html.

68 J. Russell Harper to Alex Colville, 30 Jan. 1970, file 2.

69 J. Russell Harper to Moncrieff Williamson, 15 July 1971, file 3.

70 J. Russell Harper to James B. Stanton, 16 June 1971.

71 J. Russell Harper to Miss Gamble, 3 June 1972, file 6.

72 Harper, *A People's Art*, 11.

73 Ibid.

74 J. Russell Harper to Alice Blackstock, 8 June 1971, file 3.

75 J. Russell Harper to Jean Sutherland Boggs, 30 Jan. 1971, file 2.

76 J. Russell Harper to Frances Halpenny, 30 Jan. 1971.

77 J. Russell Harper to Jean Sutherland Boggs, 20 July 1972, file 6.
78 J. Russell Harper to Pierre Théberge, 7 Sept. 1972, file 2.
79 Harper, *A People's Art*, 6.
80 Norah McCullough, *Folk Painters of the Canadian West* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1958). This exhibition opened at the Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina, SK, 4–25 Sept. 1959, and toured to the Calgary Allied Arts Centre, Calgary, AB, 2–23 Oct. 1959; the University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, 30 Oct.–20 Nov. 1959; the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Victoria, BC, 30 Nov.–27 Dec. 1959; the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, MB, 8–29 Jan. 1960; the Saskatoon Art Centre, Saskatoon, SK, 5–26 Feb. 1960; the Halifax Memorial Library, Halifax, NS, 24 Mar.–22 Apr. 1960; the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, ON, 27 May–4 Sept. 1960; the Charles and Emma Frye Museum, Seattle, WA, 2–23 Apr. 1961; the Historical Society of Montana, Helena, MT, 7–28 May 1961; the Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego, San Diego, CA, 11 June–2 July 1961; the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Collection, Williamsburg, VA, 1–24 Sept. 1961; the Loch Haven Art Center, Orlando, FL, 12 Nov.–3 Dec. 1961; the State University College of Education, Plattsburgh, NY, 1–22 Jan. 1962; and the Montclair Art Museum, Montclair, NJ, 4–25 Feb. 1962. Charles F. Comfort to Sydney H. Barker, 2 May 1962, Folk Painters of the Canadian West Exhibition, 12-5-9, volume 2, National Gallery of Canada Library-Archives, National Gallery of Canada Fonds, National Gallery of Canada Exhibitions (hereafter cited as Folk Painters of the Canadian West Exhibition).
81 Harper, *A People's Art*, 6.
82 Sandra Alfoldy, *Crafting Identity: The Development of Professional Fine Craft in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 23–25; Dawna Doris Gallagher, "Bringing Art to the People: A Biography of Norah McCullough" (MA thesis, Carleton University, Ottawa, 1997), 133. I am grateful to my former MA student, Gillian Bourke, for bringing Gallagher's thesis to my attention during her own research on McCullough.
83 Eric Brown quoted in Douglas Ord, *The National Gallery of Canada: Ideas, Art, Architecture* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 143.
84 Norah McCullough to Mary Perich, 21 Mar. 1959, Folk Painters of the Canadian West Exhibition, 12-4-49, volume 1.
85 Norah McCullough to Maxwell Bates, 5 June 1959, Folk Painters of the Canadian West Exhibition, 12-4-49, volume 2.
86 Maxwell Bates to Norah McCullough, 12 May 1959, Folk Painters of the Canadian West Exhibition, 12-4-49, volume 2.
87 Norah McCullough to Dr. Ferdinand Eckhardt, 2 Feb. 1959, Folk Painters of the Canadian West Exhibition, 12-4-49, volume 1.
88 Leslie Dawn, *National Visions, National Blindness: Canadian Art and Identities in the 1920s* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 2.
89 Ibid., 8, 23.
90 *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern* [exhibition catalogue] (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1927) and University of Toronto Libraries, Canadian Pamphlets and Broadsides collection. Accessed 6 Aug. 2011, http://link.library.utoronto.ca/broadsides/search.cfm.
91 Eric Brown quoted in Lynda Jessup, "Marius Barbeau and Early Ethnographic Cinema," in *Around and About Marius Barbeau: Modelling Twentieth-Century Culture*,

ed. Lynda Jessup, Andrew Nurse, and Gordon E. Smith (Gatineau: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2008), 290.

92 *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art*, 2.

93 Dawn, *National Visions, National Blindness*, 8, 113.

94 Richard Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 74. Moreover, in the early 1940s, publications such as Jean-Marie Gauvreau's *Artisans du Québec. 80 illustrations en hors-texte* (Trois-Rivières: Les Éditions du Bien public, 1940) and Barbeau's *Maîtres artisans de chez-nous* (Montreal: Les Éditions du Zodiaque, 1942) generated increased museological interest in collecting the popular arts of Quebec, objects that entered Québécois museum collections en masse during the 1960s. In 1940, self-taught Charlevoix artist Simone-Mary Bouchard exhibited her work at the Art Association of Montreal (now the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts) with the help of Morgan and his wife, artist Maud Cabot, prompting the combination of and thus the "Charlevoix Primitives" were displayed alongside such professionally-trained, modern artists as Paul-Émile Bourduas, John Lyman, and Alfred Pellan in Quebec and abroad. See Jean Simard, "L'art populaire dans la collection du Musée de la civilization de Québec," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 29:1 (Spring 1994): 47 and Lora Senechal Carney, "Modernists and Folk on the Lower St. Lawrence: The Problem of Folk Art," in *Antimodernism and Artistic Experience*, 113.

95 Dawn, *National Visions, National Blindness*, 272. "We now consider 'primitive' a fighting word," as Barkan and Bush explain, for example. "Like 'savage,' it is a racist designation. In contrast, primitivism denotes an Occidental construction, a set of representations whose 'reality' is purely Western." Barkan and Bush, "Introduction," in *Prehistories of the Future,* 2. See also James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, ma: Harvard University Press, 1988); Christopher B. Steiner, *African Art in Transit* (Cambridge, uk: Cambridge University Press, 1994); George E. Marcus and Fred Myers, "The Traffic in Art and Culture: An Introduction," in *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology*, ed. George E. Marcus and Fred Myers (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 1–51; Shelly Errington, *The Death of Authentic Primitive Art and Other Tales of Progress* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Ruth B. Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700–1900* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1998); Lynda Jessup, "Antimodernism and Artistic Experience: An Introduction," in *Antimodernism and Artistic Experience: Policing the Boundaries of Modernity*, ed. Lynda Jessup (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 3–10; and Sally Price, *Primitive Art in Civilized Places* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

96 Harper, *People's Art: Naïve Art in Canada*, 6.

97 John Murray Gibbon, *The Canadian Mosaic: The Making of a Northern Nation* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1938). See also Stuart Henderson, "'While there is Still Time … ': J. Murray Gibbon and the Spectacle of Difference in Three cpr Folk Festivals, 1928–1932," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes* 39:1 (Winter 2005): 139–74.

98 Richard J.F. Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 146.

99 Henderson, "'While there is Still Time,'" 141.
100 I am grateful to Andrew Nurse for suggesting this reading and phrasing of Gibbon's goals based on Gibbon's novel *Pagan Love* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1922), and essay, "The Foreign Born," *Queen's Quarterly* 17:4 (1920): 331–51.
101 Henderson, "'While there is Still Time,'" 141–42.
102 In *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002 [1983]), Johannes Fabian defines the process of allochronic distancing historically imposed on non-European societies by anthropologists as a denial of coevalness. Fabian explains the contradiction as anthropologists of the "here and now" denying coeval time and space to their ethnographic subjects by relating them to the "then and there": "The Other's empirical presence turns into his theoretical absence, a conjuring truck which is worked with an array of devices that have the common intent and function to keep the Other outside the time of anthropology" (xli).
103 McCullough, *Folk Painters of the Canadian West*, n.p.
104 Harper, *A People's Art*, 7.
105 Norah McCullough to Christa Deddering, 5 Jan. 1959, Folk Painters of the Canadian West Exhibition, 12-4-49, volume 1.
106 Norah McCullough to Louise Dresser, 28 Feb. 1959, Folk Painters of the Canadian West Exhibition, 12-4-49, volume 1.
107 Jean Lipman, *American Primitive Painting* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), 5.
108 Ibid.
109 Ibid., 8.
110 Alice Ford et al., "What is American Folk Art?" *The Studio* 141:696 (March 1951): 88.
111 Norah McCullough to Richard Simmins, 28 Feb. 1959, Folk Painters of the Canadian West Exhibition, 12-4-49, volume 1.
112 Richard Simmins to Norah McCullough, memorandum, 4 Mar. 1959, Folk Painters of the Canadian West Exhibition, 12-4-49, volume 1.
113 Alan Jarvis, "Foreword," in Norah McCullough, *Folk Painters of the Canadian West* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1958), n.p.
114 McCullough, *Folk Painters of the Canadian West*, n.p.
115 Ibid.
116 J. Russell Harper to The Rt. Hon. Pierre Elliot Trudeau, 18 Mar. 1972, file 5.
117 J. Russell Harper to R.W. Finlayson, 15 Nov. 1971, file 12.
118 Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity*, 22.
119 Ibid., 176.
120 Ibid., 158.
121 Himani Bannerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2000), 9.
122 My phrasing here is informed by Ruth B. Phillips's research on Norval Morrisseau and what she sees as the sporadic entrance of modernist-primitivism into the Canadian art world before the mid-twentieth century. As she puts it, reviewers of a 1962 Morrisseau exhibition "had difficulty fitting his paintings into the available categories of the primitive, the folk, and the modern" (68). See Ruth B. Phillips, "Morrisseau's 'Entrance': Negotiating Primitivism, Modernism, and Anishnaabe Tradition," in *Norval Morrisseau: Shaman Artist*, eds. Greg A. Hill, Norval

Morrisseau, Ruth B. Phillips and Armand Garnet Ruffo (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2006), 42–77.

123 Harper, *A People's Art*, 7.
124 Ibid., 7–8.
125 Ibid.
126 McCullough, *Folk Painters of the Canadian West*, n.p.
127 R.L. Bloore, "Folk Painters of the Canadian West: Jan G. Wyers," *Canadian Art* 17:2 (March 1960). Accessed 21 Aug. 2011, http://www.ccca.ca/c/writing/b/bloore/bloo01t.html
128 Harper, *A People's Art*, plate 51 caption, n.p.
129 McCullough, *Folk Painters of the Canadian West*, n.p.
130 Harper, *People's Art: Naïve Art in Canada*, 82.
131 Ibid., 114.
132 Ibid., 22.
133 Virginia Nixon, "Meet J. Russell Harper, Father of Canadian Art History," *The Gazette*, 8 Mar. 1975. Accessed in Library and Archives Canada, J. Russell Harper fonds, mg 30 d 352, "Correspondence, Research, Reviews," n.d., 1862–1978, volume 47, file 3.
134 Ibid.
135 Ibid.
136 Ibid.
137 Harper, *People's Art: Naïve Art in Canada*, 140.
138 Ibid., 164.
139 Harper, *A People's Art*, 10.
140 Ibid., 11.
141 Harper, *People's Art: Naïve Art in Canada*, 14.

Aux frontières de la réalité populaire : J. Russell Harper et la quête de « L'art populaire »

ERIN MORTON

Historien de l'art et conservateur, J. Russell Harper (1914–1983) a joué un rôle prépondérant pour établir l'histoire de l'art canadien comme champ d'études à part entière dans les musées et le milieu universitaire à la fin du XX^e^ siècle. Dans les décennies 1950 et 1960, il a occupé divers postes dans des musées prestigieux, dont la Galerie nationale du Canada (Musée des beaux-arts du Canada) et le Musée McCord, avant de terminer sa carrière comme professeur à la Sir George Williams University (maintenant l'Université Concordia), de 1967 à 1979. Un grand nombre de ses publications de l'époque sur l'histoire de l'art canadien sont bien connues aujourd'hui, notamment la première étude bilingue réalisée dans cette discipline, *La peinture au Canada des origines à nos jours* (1966). Toutefois, le milieu de la recherche ne s'est pas encore penché sur l'un de ses plus grands projets, soit l'exposition *L'art populaire : l'art naïf au Canada* présentée en 1973 à la Galerie nationale du Canada.

Le présent article aborde *L'art populaire* par un examen des archives du projet, qui comprennent les articles de Harper appartenant à Bibliothèque et Archives Canada, les dossiers d'exposition au Musée des beaux-arts du Canada ainsi que le catalogue d'exposition et la monographie complémentaire *A People's Art: Primitive, Naïve, Provincial, and Folk Painting in Canada*, publiée en 1974 par la University of Toronto Press. En premier lieu, il existe, selon moi, un lien entre la quête de Harper pour définir ce qu'il a appelé la « réalité populaire » (*Canadian vernacular*) et le début de l'ère post-industrielle dans les sociétés capitalistes avancées, comme l'était le Canada après 1973. Ce moment a coïncidé avec la fin de la période du capitalisme fordiste d'après-guerre, durant laquelle le système industriel reposait grandement sur la production intérieure et où la consommation définissait l'économie canadienne. Tandis que ce système disparaissait, il fallait chercher ailleurs matière à alimenter le mythe de la paisible société née de colons européens, puisque la réalité ne pouvait maintenant plus entretenir l'idéal culturel canadien. Je cherche ici à démontrer que les changements d'alors ont ébranlé la définition du Canada comme État-nation et celle de l'art canadien que tentait d'établir Harper. En examinant le mythe de la paisible colonie européenne, il cherchait les indices culturels d'une « nation » et les

fondements d'un discours selon lequel il existait une culture façonnée par les colons immigrants européens ayant administré le territoire qu'était devenu le Canada. Cependant, l'objectif de Harper consistant à utiliser l'hétérogénéité régionale, ethnique et linguistique pour consolider la souveraineté nationale doit, à mon avis, être placé dans un cadre politique et culturel marqué par la redéfinition de l'identité du Canada, tout comme l'hégémonie libérale doit être étudiée dans la réalité de la période post-industrielle. La difficulté était contextuelle, bien que Harper n'ait par ailleurs pas pu trouver ce qu'il cherchait dans le milieu de l'art contemporain; le changement des paramètres d'une apparente culture nationale était déjà amorcé, alors que s'effondrait le système économique dans lequel le maintien de la souveraineté nationale reposait sur le capitalisme libéral.

En deuxième lieu, je souhaite souligner que *L'art populaire* s'inspirait du discours moderniste primitiviste des universitaires et du milieu de l'art muséologique canadien du début et du milieu du XX^e^ siècle, et de l'évolution de ce discours. À mon avis, l'objectif de Harper consistait en partie à établir un langage matériel et conceptuel définissant la culture canadienne qu'il cherchait à dépeindre. À cette fin, il a pris le même chemin que celui emprunté par de nombreux autres nationalistes culturels de l'après-guerre, qui ont recensé les manifestations culturelles régionales correspondant au projet national qu'ils envisageaient. Harper a aussi puisé dans des expositions ayant constitué des précédents, par exemple celle de Norah McCullough à la Galerie nationale du Canada en 1959, *Folk Painters of the Canadian West*. Harper a dit de cette exposition qu'elle était avant-gardiste pour la région, car elle recensait des artistes populaires établis des provinces de l'Ouest qui pouvaient présenter une certaine vision du Canada rural aux citadins de la capitale du Canada. En outre, dans *L'art populaire*, Harper a étudié le passé matériel des sociétés agraires de colons immigrants ayant marqué son enfance, et dans lesquelles il a trouvé le remède pour contrer l'influence croissante des États-Unis sur l'élite artistique aussi bien que sur la culture de masse. Afin de consolider sa vision du présent, Harper a dû chercher un moyen d'unifier sous une identité nationale diverses formes culturelles régionales témoignant du passé d'un peuple de colons. Il lui a aussi fallu trouver un langage qui décrive efficacement les vestiges de « l'art populaire ». Le portrait des « régions » tracé par Harper soulève, selon moi, un certain paradoxe. En effet, il appuyait précisément son autorité dans l'établissement de l'art canadien central sur des lieux d'influence prétendument marginaux. L'étude de *L'art populaire* met donc au jour la contradiction qui apparaît lorsqu'on présente une réalité « régionale » en suivant une logique de nationalisation.

En terminant, je souhaite aborder des particularités de *L'art populaire*, à savoir les œuvres de William Panko (1892–1948), de Jan Wyers (1888–1973) et

d'Arthur Villeneuve (1910–1990). Il convient de souligner qu'en retenant leurs œuvres, Harper a démontré que ces artistes prétendument naïfs pouvaient selon lui rejeter le système culturel transnational de plus en plus privatisé qui caractérisait la production artistique au Canada. Même si Harper lui-même travaillait principalement auprès de l'élite artistique dans les universités et les musées bien en vue au Canada, il ne croyait pas ces milieux capables de se soustraire à l'influence culturelle des États-Unis sur l'art. Sa recherche artistique dans ce qu'il a appelé « le panorama social et culturel de l'homme ordinaire » lui a permis d'affirmer qu'il était possible de puiser dans le riche passé de la société agraire de colons européens formant maintenant le Canada pour trouver un langage populaire commun dans le contexte de l'importante transition culturelle et socioéconomique en cours. Bien que Harper ait tenté d'établir une certaine distance temporelle entre les représentations du travail agricole des colons européens dans les œuvres de Panko, de Wyers et de Villeneuve, c'est la nature contemporaine de leurs travaux qui lui a permis de les classer parmi les artistes « primitifs ». Fait important, pour Harper, ces artistes demeuraient non seulement loin des tendances artistiques dans les milieux intellectuels, mais ils ignoraient aussi le paysage politique et culturel ayant marqué la fin des années 1960 et le début des années 1970 au Canada. À mon avis, par son exposition, Harper a tenté, en dernière analyse, de rapprocher deux visions : celle de la reconnaissance de la transformation post-industrielle du paysage culturel d'un Canada bilingue, officiellement multiculturel et formé de régions différentes, et celle des partisans de l'illustration historique coloniale du pays, qui privilégiaient le maintien d'un État-nation impérial britannique unilingue, protestant, libéral et capitaliste. Il est toutefois paradoxal que Harper ait utilisé *L'art populaire* afin de dénoncer l'orientation d'un champ d'études qu'il avait lui-même contribué de manière si directe à définir. Finalement, l'étude de l'exposition *L'art populaire* de J. Russell Harper montre dans quelle mesure la réalité populaire canadienne qu'il a cherché à dépeindre était tout aussi éphémère que l'idéologie nationaliste libérale dominante qui l'avait mené à entreprendre sa quête.

1 (*au-dessus*) | Jacques Leblond de Latour, *Tabernacle*, avant 1694, noyer cendré et pin dorés, 101,3 x 233,2 x 45,5 cm, Musée des Maîtres et Artisans du Québec (732.0386). (Photo : Michel Élie, Centre de conservation du Québec)

2 (*au-dessous*) | Le tabernacle avant restauration. (Photo : Michel Élie, Centre de conservation du Québec)

Un tabernacle inédit de Jacques Leblond de Latour

CLAUDE PAYER ET GÉRARD LAVALLÉE

Sauvegarde et analyse d'un tabernacle anonyme

En 1984, le Musée d'art de Saint-Laurent[1] reçoit en dépôt à long terme, à la suite de longues démarches auprès du ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, la collection de la défunte École du meuble[2]. Cet ensemble de meubles et objets d'art décoratif, réunis principalement par Jean-Marie Gauvreau (1903–1970)[3] pour le bénéfice des étudiants, avait connu, après 1967, quelques péripéties dont, entre autres, la dispersion de toutes les archives de la collection. Dans le lot se trouve un meuble d'église qui a particulièrement attiré notre attention (Fig. 1).

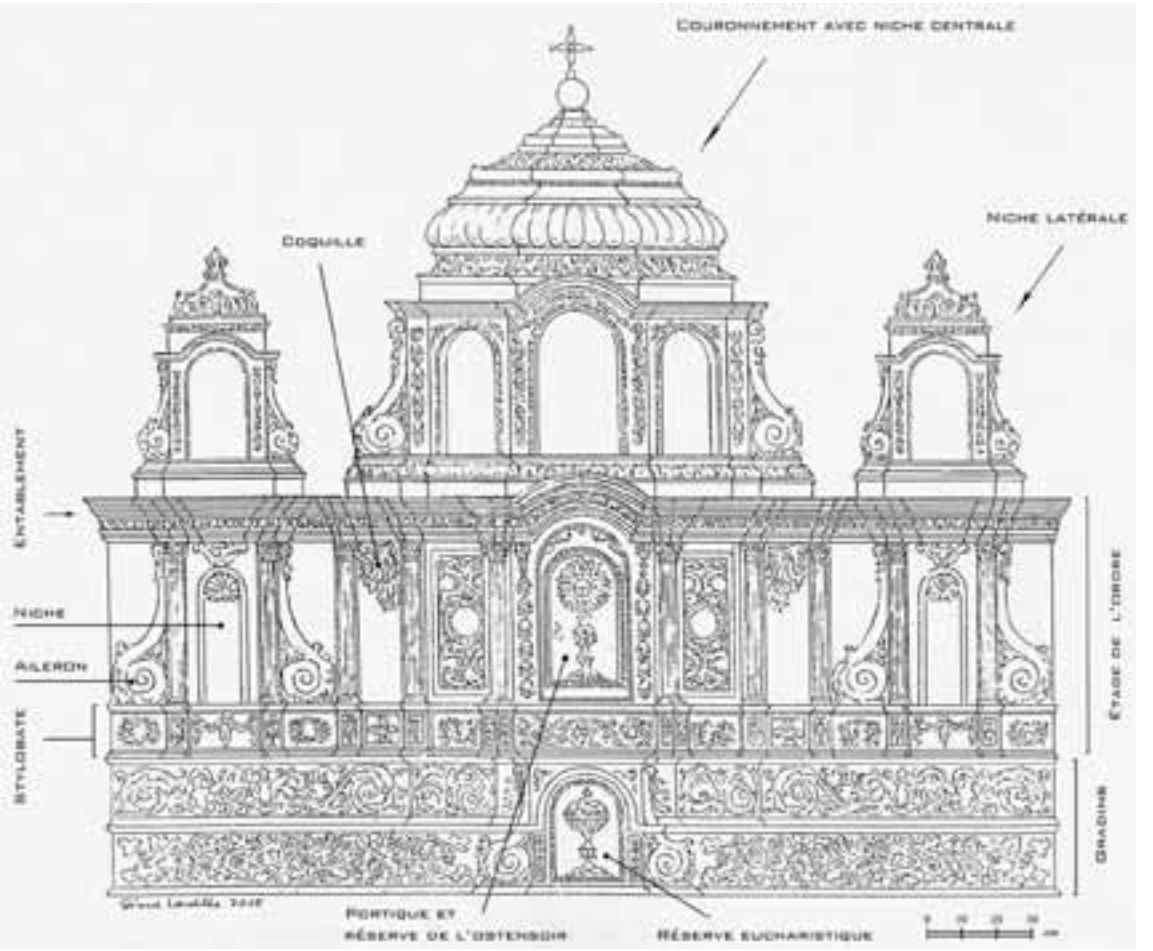
Ce tabernacle est un meuble destiné à conserver le pain eucharistique consacré lors de la célébration de la messe. Pour correspondre aux directives cultuelles de l'Église catholique romaine, il doit être placé sur un autel. Le vocable « tabernacle » ne s'accorde correctement qu'à la petite armoire qui garde en réserve les Saintes Espèces (hosties), mais, par métonymie, il a fini par définir non seulement cette partie du meuble, mais toute la construction qui l'enchâsse. La consigne voulant que le tabernacle soit placé sur l'autel et non ailleurs dans l'église fut une conséquence de la réforme liturgique du concile de Trente, terminé en 1563. L'intégration du tabernacle dans un retable (ou contre-table) doté de gradins, de panneaux avec ou sans ordre d'architecture, de niches et de sculptures en ronde-bosse ou en bas-relief, fut à l'origine d'un nouveau type de meuble dont la tradition perdura jusqu'au concile Vatican II (1963–1965). Selon la nouvelle liturgie véhiculée alors, l'autel peut être dépouillé de cette construction afin de permettre au célébrant de procéder à l'eucharistie face aux fidèles.

Dès son entrée au musée, le tabernacle est exposé avec ses revêtements, sans restauration (Fig. 2). Bien que d'auteur anonyme, sans provenance ni historique connus, et visiblement altéré, le meuble suscite tout de même l'intérêt des chercheurs. À la suite d'examens et d'études approfondies menés à partir de 1993, il devient manifeste que cette œuvre savante doit être restaurée. En 1999, le meuble est confié au Centre de conservation du Québec (CCQ) qui s'applique à lui redonner son lustre d'antan. Il est retourné au Musée des maîtres et artisans du Québec à l'été 2006.

3 | Montage replaçant dans leur position originelle les éléments centraux du tabernacle : l'arcade centrale jouxtée de colonnes s'ouvre sur le portique, ajouré sur ses flancs concaves. Le fond du portique percé de la porte de la réserve de l'ostensoir est également concave. (Photo : Michel Élie, Centre de conservation du Québec)

Tel qu'il nous est parvenu, le tabernacle, sculpté en bois, est composé d'un gradin, d'une réserve eucharistique – ou tabernacle proprement dit –, flanquée de deux travées comprenant des colonnes corinthiennes, des niches à piédestaux carrés ou circulaires étayées par d'amples ailerons dans les entrecolonnements. L'entablement et le stylobate de l'ordre sont rythmés par des ressauts et des retraits soulignés par le profil de la mouluration. Ici et là, des motifs sculptés, visibles malgré l'empâtement créé par l'application successive de plusieurs couches de peinture blanche, contribuent à l'ornementation, qui, elle, est composée de rinceaux de pampres et de gerbes de blé sur la contremarche du gradin – ou prédelle –, de couronnes de laurier, de fleurs de lys[4], de festons de draperie sur le stylobate, de coquilles dans les niches, de chutes de feuillages sur la façade du corps central et de feuilles de refend sur la frise de l'entablement.

Le corps central est cependant diminué, résultat d'un bricolage obtenu lors d'une transformation majeure par l'agencement de pièces de bois récupérées du meuble même, dont certaines retaillées grossièrement[5]. Nos examens ont permis de découvrir, pour cette partie, une conception tout à fait originale



4 | Le tabernacle tel qu'il aurait été sculpté par Jacques Leblond de Latour vers 1694. (Dessin de Gérard Lavallée)

dont on ne trouve pas écho sur les autres tabernacles anciens. En effet, une niche prend la forme d'un portique dont le fond comprenait jadis une porte ornée donnant accès à une petite armoire destinée à contenir un ostensoir (Fig. 3). Dans ce portique prenait également place un crucifix sur pied exigé par les prescriptions liturgiques. Cette deuxième armoire n'est toutefois pas inhabituelle dans les tabernacles de la Nouvelle-France, non plus que le portique. Leur amalgame est, quant à lui, un cas unique. Par ailleurs, sur le plateau de cette travée, des traces laissées dans la peinture confirment que cette dernière était autrefois surmontée d'un couronnement.

Sur la prédelle se déploient deux segments de frises en rinceaux de vigne réunis au centre par un petit ajout orné d'un motif en mastic vraisemblablement moulé sur une partie des rinceaux de la frise. Cet

assemblage nous donne à croire que la réserve eucharistique originelle est disparue du centre du gradin, les Saintes Espèces étant dès lors conservées dans la réserve supérieure transformée. On peut également conclure que le meuble était plus large lors de son exécution, que ses dimensions, tant en hauteur qu'en largeur, pouvaient impliquer la présence de deux gradins de part et d'autre du tabernacle et que l'ensemble rejoignait ainsi l'amplitude des meubles plus imposants généralement affectés aux maîtres-autels (Fig. 4).

Les éléments du décor du tabernacle sont tributaires de l'architecture et du répertoire des ornemanistes français du XVII^e siècle. Les colonnes, chapiteaux, entablement et stylobate reproduisent fidèlement l'ordre corinthien proposé par Vignole dans sa *Règle des cinq ordres d'architecture* (1562). Celle-ci connut une grande diffusion dans les traités et livres publiés par la suite et dans l'usage qu'en firent un grand nombre d'architectes et de sculpteurs pendant les siècles subséquents. Quant aux ornements, on trouve leur source dans les « inventions » et le répertoire des ornemanistes prolifiques de la seconde moitié du XVII^e siècle – comme Jean Lepautre (1618–1682), Jean Marot (v.1619–1679), Jean Bérain (1637–1711), ornements largement diffusés par le biais de la gravure.

Les motifs ornementaux, qu'ils soient appliqués ou sculptés dans la masse, sont remarquables par leur variété et leur élégance. L'architecture et l'ornementation témoignent ainsi, autant dans le dessin que dans l'exécution, de la maîtrise du sculpteur. Qui plus est, la menuiserie est réalisée avec beaucoup d'habileté. L'artiste a apporté autant de soin à la finition du bois caché aux regards qu'aux parties visibles. Grâce en bonne partie à sa belle facture, le meuble a été conservé en assez bon état. En outre, une dorure à la colle de grande qualité existait toujours, cachée sous les repeints.

Une œuvre savante de la fin du XVII^e siècle

À défaut de données ou de témoignages sûrs, une comparaison avec les éléments architecturaux et les motifs ornementaux d'autres meubles permet de suggérer une piste de recherche quant à l'origine de ce tabernacle. Il existe en effet des similitudes frappantes avec l'ancien tabernacle du maître-autel de l'église de L'Ange-Gardien maintenant conservé au Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (Fig. 5)[6]. Les motifs de pampres et de gerbes de blé noués sur le gradin[7], la forme particulière des ailerons à champ plat à liséré, le profil des moulurations et le jeu des ressauts courbes et droits de l'entablement et ceux des piédestaux des niches plaident en ce sens. Notons également l'habile équilibre créé par les surfaces planes et nues de l'entrecolonnement et des niches et l'absence quasi complète de reparure, c'est-à-dire de motifs gravés dans les couches d'apprêt avant l'application de la feuille d'or. Que dire enfin

5 | Jacques Leblond de Latour, *Tabernacle de l'ancienne église de L'Ange-Gardien,* entre 1695 et 1705, noyer cendré doré, 286 x 274 x 72 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (1974.257). (Photo : Patrick Atman, MNBAQ)

de la parenté pour le moins éloquente des coquilles des niches angulaires des deux meubles (Figs. 6 et 7) ? Même si le tabernacle de L'Ange-Gardien semble plus élaboré dans son architecture et sa décoration, on ne peut douter que les deux meubles proviennent d'un même atelier[8].

Un autre tabernacle ancien, celui de l'ancienne chapelle des jésuites de Québec, peut être apparenté aux deux premiers (Fig. 8). Ce meuble offre en effet le même type d'ailerons de part et d'autre des portes et des niches. Les

6 (*à gauche*) | Coquille du tabernacle du Musée des Maîtres et Artisans du Québec. (Photo : Michel Élie, Centre de conservation du Québec)

7 (*à droite*) | Coquille du tabernacle de L'Ange-Gardien, au Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. (Photo : Claude Payer)

portes cintrées et bordées de chevrons, de même que le motif d'ostensoir de la porte supérieure, les chutes d'acanthe jouxtant cette dernière, les chapiteaux des colonnettes, les culots d'acanthe sur les piédestaux et la présence de fleurs de lys sont autant de ressemblances frappantes. Notons que l'architecture de ce meuble a été modifiée il y a longtemps, sans doute pour le mettre au goût du jour, alors que ses niches latérales ont été repoussées vers l'extérieur. On comprend mieux, dès lors, sa filiation avec l'architecture pyramidale du tabernacle de L'Ange-Gardien[9]. Offert en 1800 par les jésuites aux religieuses de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec, le tabernacle est ensuite transmis au Séminaire de Québec en 1807[10]. Longtemps laissé au grenier de cette institution, le tabernacle des jésuites aurait été utilisé temporairement au maître-autel de la

8 | Jacques Leblond de Latour, *Tabernacle de l'ancienne chapelle des jésuites de Québec*, vers 1700, noyer cendré et pin dorés et peints, 214,5 x 181,5 x 59,5 cm, Musée de la civilisation, collection du Séminaire de Québec (1994.37627).
(Photo : Pierre Soulard, Musée de la civilisation)

chapelle. Il est cédé en 1883 – ou 1884 – , à la paroisse de Stoneham où il est placé sur l'autel latéral. Le Séminaire le récupère finalement en 1969[11].

Si la comparaison des formes ne suffit pas pour démontrer hors de tout doute la parenté des trois tabernacles, deux composantes matérielles peu communes parlent d'elles-mêmes. En premier lieu, l'emploi du noyer cendré, une belle essence de bois spécifiquement nord-américaine qui, sans être rare dans le mobilier religieux de la Nouvelle-France, semble avoir été privilégiée systématiquement par un sculpteur[12]. Autre facteur important, les tabernacles anciens sont généralement démontables : les trois travées de l'étage de l'ordre se séparent et les tenons d'assemblage qui les relient sont fixés longitudinalement au meuble. Or, dans les trois meubles qui nous intéressent,

9 | Jacques Leblond de Latour, *Tabernacle* (détail), vers 1700, bois de pin pour la caisse, noyer cendré pour la porte, les ailerons et peut-être toute l'ornementation, 223,8 x 43,9 x 58,3 cm, fabrique de la paroisse Notre-Dame de Québec. (Photo : Michel Élie, Centre de conservation du Québec)

les tenons sont fixés perpendiculairement. Cette façon de faire, qui peut être considérée comme une marque de sculpteur, n'a été notée dans aucun des autres meubles québécois des XVII^e^ et XVIII^e^ siècles examinés par nous depuis 30 ans.

À cette série de trois tabernacles, il est possible d'en associer un quatrième, aujourd'hui exposé dans la chapelle Saint-Louis de la cathédrale Notre-

Dame de Québec. Ce meuble composé de deux gradins et d'une réserve eucharistique, sans colonnade ni couronnement, conjugue une qualité d'exécution avec un riche vocabulaire ornemental du même esprit que les précédents : les mêmes pampres et gerbes de blé noués sur le premier gradin et une porte cintrée à bordure de chevrons jouxtée par les mêmes ailerons (Fig. 9)[13]. En outre, le ciboire godronné et festonné et les magnifiques rinceaux du deuxième gradin permettent d'imaginer certaines parties manquantes du meuble du MMAQ. Ce meuble inédit conserve le secret de ses origines : ou il a été sauvé de l'incendie qui a ravagé la cathédrale en 1922, ou il a été offert à la paroisse Notre-Dame par une communauté religieuse voisine après 1922. On ne peut cependant douter qu'il provienne de la région de Québec.

L'œuvre d'un artiste de talent

Nous sommes donc en présence de quatre tabernacles de même facture provenant d'un même atelier. Or, le tabernacle du MNBAQ, considéré comme l'un des plus anciens et des plus prestigieux du Québec, est attribué à Jacques Leblond de Latour (1671–1715), sculpteur de grande renommée. Originaire de Bordeaux, formé en sculpture et en peinture, il arrive en Nouvelle-France en 1690. Tout en poursuivant une carrière de sculpteur, il étudie au Séminaire de Québec avant d'être ordonné prêtre en 1706. Nommé curé de Baie Saint-Paul, il y meurt dans la force de l'âge. Les historiens de l'art s'accordent à dire qu'il a pris une part importante, autour de 1700, à la réalisation des décors intérieurs des églises de la Côte-de-Beaupré, soit celles de Château-Richer, Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré et L'Ange-Gardien. L'ampleur de sa contribution personnelle reste cependant à préciser.

L'historien de l'art John R. Porter a déjà écrit : « Plusieurs composantes de ces deux derniers décors nous sont parvenues, qui témoignent d'un haut calibre professionnel. À considérer l'ancien tabernacle de L'Ange-Gardien ou encore le saint Michel terrassant le dragon provenant du retable de la même église, on se rend vite compte que la sculpture en Nouvelle-France avait peu à envier à l'art qui se pratiquait dans les provinces de la France continentale à la même époque ».

Ces tabernacles ont de toute évidence exigé des années de travail de la part de leur auteur et suggèrent une continuité certaine dans les activités du sculpteur. Or, Leblond de Latour a eu le loisir de pratiquer son art à Québec pendant au moins 18 ans, soit depuis son arrivée en Nouvelle-France, en 1690, jusqu'en 1708, alors qu'il termine des travaux pour le retable de l'église de Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré.

Les informations disponibles sur les autres sculpteurs actifs à l'époque dans la région de Québec sont très parcellaires. Parmi eux, un certain Denis

Mallet (1670-1704) s'engage à sculpter un tabernacle pour les récollets en 1693[16]. Or, ce Mallet connaîtra somme toute une carrière assez brève, sans rapport avec la production d'une série de meubles de grand style. Soulignons malgré tout que Leblond et Mallet auraient pu collaborer, vers 1695, à l'élaboration du fameux baldaquin de la chapelle du palais épiscopal de Mgr de Saint-Vallier, un décor prestigieux transporté en 1717 à l'église de Neuville[17].

Charles Chaboulié (ou Chabouillet) (v. 1647–1708), quant à lui, se fixe à Montréal dès 1701. Si le tabernacle de Saint-Grégoire-de-Nicolet est bien celui qu'il aurait sculpté pour les récollets de Montréal vers 1702, le style de ce meuble est aux antipodes de notre série de meubles liturgiques. Quant à Charles Vézina (1685–1755), dont le nom est également associé aux décors des églises de la Côte-de-Beaupré, il est déjà d'une autre génération. Au mieux, a-t-il pu poursuivre l'œuvre d'un autre sculpteur, par exemple Leblond, son maître présumé. Mais aurait-il pu en perpétuer si précisément le style et les caractéristiques techniques ? Nous en doutons.

Pour sa part, Jacques Leblond de Latour se présente comme un maître-sculpteur. Par exemple en 1705, il offre ses services aux ursulines de Québec et propose de sculpter un tabernacle pour la somme de cent écus, un meuble d'envergure puisque : « Le chap(ître) […] consent volontiers qu'on employe la dite sôme afin que ce tabernacle soit fait d'une maniere a pouvoir servir dans le tems avenir; dans une plus grande Eglise qu'en la divine providance, nous aura fait naitre, les moyens de la batir »[18]. On ne peut douter qu'il fut chef d'équipe et que, dans les entreprises qui concernaient directement le Séminaire de Québec, il fut responsable des travaux. Si ce n'est pas à lui, à qui d'autre peut-on accorder les œuvres de la Côte-de-Beaupré ? Par recoupements, il convient de donner à Jacques Leblond de Latour la paternité des quatre tabernacles de la série.

Une commande des jésuites

Après avoir établi par comparaisons stylistiques et techniques l'âge et le lieu d'origine du tabernacle du MMAQ et identifié son auteur, il ne nous est pourtant pas possible, par ces seules méthodes, d'en connaître les commanditaires ou encore la destination. C'est un indice iconographique qui nous a mis heureusement sur une piste sérieuse. Notre meuble ne comporte certes pas de scènes historiées, alors que les statuettes des niches ont disparu, mais la porte de la réserve est ornée d'un motif original et significatif (Fig. 10).

La lunule de l'ostensoir contient les lettres « IHS ». Il s'agit des deux premières lettres et de la dernière du nom de Jésus, en grec. Ce monogramme[19] fait partie des emblèmes figurés dans les armoiries des jésuites lors de l'institution de leur ordre, la Compagnie de Jésus. La composition

10 | La porte de la réserve de l'ostensoir du tabernacle du Musée des Maîtres et Artisans du Québec. (Photo : Michel Élie, Centre de conservation du Québec)

regroupe généralement, en plus des trois lettres, une croix, trois clous disposés en éventail ou plantés dans un cœur et les rayons d'un soleil, souvent enfermés dans un cartouche. Entre les XVI^e^ et XVIII^e^ siècles, les symboles apparaissent avec quelques variantes. En Nouvelle-France, ils ornent, entre autres, la grille d'un tympan provenant du collège des jésuites de Québec[20], le socle de la statuette en argent représentant saint François-Xavier, aujourd'hui à la basilique-cathédrale Notre-Dame de Québec[21], et des vêtements liturgiques brodés par les ursulines de Québec pour les jésuites[22].

De plus, le fait que le monogramme du tabernacle du MMAQ surmonte un cœur n'est pas un geste gratuit. S'il s'agissait d'une simple décoration, le « IHS » seul aurait été sculpté, comme c'est le cas pour l'ancien tabernacle de Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade livré en 1750 par Pierre-Noël Levasseur (1690–1770)[23]. On peut dès lors aisément associer le meuble de Jacques Leblond de Latour à la Compagnie de Jésus. Fait intéressant, les jésuites sont les commanditaires de deux autres tabernacles québécois du XVIII^e siècle portant les mêmes emblèmes. À la chapelle des Hurons de Wendake, une mission jésuite, le tabernacle datant du début XVIII^e siècle et attribué à Noël Levasseur (1680–1740) laisse voir un cœur enflammé portant les trois lettres qui marquent le centre de la frise ajourée au-dessus de l'arc principal. En 1747, le sculpteur Paul Jourdain dit Labrosse (1697–1769) livre un tabernacle à l'église de Laprairie-de-la-Madeleine paroisse qui faisait à l'époque partie d'une seigneurie propriété des jésuites. Un « IHS » surmontant un cœur y est gravé dans l'épaisseur de la dorure, maintenant repeinte, au fond de la niche d'exposition[24].

Un meuble « montréalais »

À la fin du XVII^e siècle, les jésuites couvrent un immense territoire de mission à partir de Québec, où ils forment la communauté d'hommes la plus nombreuse. Ils y possèdent un important collège dont la chapelle est ornée du tabernacle dont il a été question plus haut. Rien d'étonnant, dès lors, que les jésuites commandent au sculpteur avec lequel ils ont déjà fait affaire un second meuble liturgique. Mais peut-on déterminer à quel lieu ils destinent ce nouveau tabernacle et quelles sont les circonstances de la commande ? Est-ce pour l'une de leurs missions ? On peut en douter, étant donné l'ampleur présumée du meuble. De plus, la qualité et la fragilité de la dorure suggèrent un lieu plus prestigieux et mieux protégé, en l'occurrence une église paroissiale ou une chapelle de la Compagnie de Jésus.

Sculpté selon toute vraisemblance à Québec, il y a cependant tout lieu de croire que ce tabernacle était destiné à un lieu de culte de la région de Montréal. On retrace en effet notre meuble à la fin du XIX^e siècle, au cœur du Vieux-Montréal, en l'occurrence sur le maître-autel de la chapelle Notre-Dame-de-Bonsecours, comme en témoigne le cliché pris par le Studio Notman avant les grands travaux de réfection du décor intérieur entrepris en 1886[25]. Bien que rehaussé par un couronnement pompeux, allongé aux extrémités et surchargé de statues et de pots de fleurs, le tabernacle est reconnaissable grâce à son arcade centrale et ses niches ornées de coquilles et de volutes en console.

Or, en 1692, les jésuites, déjà présents sur le territoire montréalais depuis des décennies, reçoivent de Mgr de Saint-Vallier la permission d'établir, pour eux-mêmes, une résidence permanente sur l'Île de Montréal. Ils choisissent pour ce faire un lieu central et protégé, un terrain situé au nord de la rue Notre-Dame, là où s'élèvent aujourd'hui l'hôtel de ville et l'ancien palais de justice. Construits sur plusieurs décennies, les bâtiments comptent trois édifices : une chapelle, à l'ouest, destinée aux jésuites et aux congréganistes; l'habitation, au centre, pour les quelques résidents et les missionnaires de passage; une grande église, à l'est, pour le public. Les forces sont d'abord employées à ériger la chapelle de la congrégation, qui est bénite dès 1694 par Mgr de Saint-Vallier lui-même[26]. Quant à l'église, construction plus ambitieuse, elle ne sera érigée qu'entre 1719 et 1731.

À la lumière de toutes ces informations, nous croyons que le tabernacle sculpté par Jacques Leblond de Latour fut commandé à Québec par les jésuites, avant 1694, pour servir au maître-autel de leur chapelle de Montréal. Meuble de prestige, sculpté et doré à la perfection, il ne pouvait que susciter l'admiration des congréganistes et des visiteurs.

Le tabernacle ne devait pourtant servir qu'une soixantaine d'années à cet endroit. Délogés dès 1760 par les conquérants anglais, les jésuites doivent abandonner leur résidence. Ils se départissent alors de leurs biens immédiats et vendent, afin d'en assurer la conservation, leur meuble le plus précieux. C'est vraisemblablement le tabernacle qui nous occupe qui se retrouve à l'église de Saint-Geneviève, au nord-ouest de l'Île de Montréal[27] : « Lan mil Sept-Cents Soixante fut acheté Le tabernacle des jeSuites de montreal / pour la Somme de Cinq Cents livres et lan mil Sept cents Soixante un il fut / poSé et l'autel ou tombeau fut fait par le nommé la (venture ?) Et Dominique / Sculpteur doré par les Sœurs de la congregation en plus Six chandeliers de bois et un Christ de meme. Le tout a coute comptant lor le blanc et la facon Sans y comprendre la nouriture des ouvriers et le voyage des / Sœurs qui a Ete fourni gratis par mr le curé ainSi que le bois et une / partie de lor a la Somme de Six cents Soixante et dix livres »[28].

Aucune trace dans les archives de la paroisse ne nous permet cependant de savoir combien de temps le tabernacle des jésuites a servi dans cette église, ni ce qu'il en advint par la suite. On peut simplement faire l'hypothèse que vers 1840, alors que l'église Sainte-Geneviève subit des transformations majeures, il est cédé aux sulpiciens, propriétaires de la chapelle Notre-Dame-de-Bonsecours à Montréal, pour y être installé. Le meuble en aurait été retiré en 1888 ou peu avant, alors que des autels en marbre sont érigés dans l'édifice et que tout l'intérieur est doté d'un nouveau décor. Le tabernacle subit ensuite des transformations assez grossières : en plus d'être amputé, sa dorure est

couverte de peinture et son revers est doublé d'une simple finition de lattes de bois[29]. C'est dans cet état qu'il s'est ultérieurement retrouvé dans la collection de l'École du meuble, vraisemblablement entre les années 1940 et 1960.

Restauration et mise en valeur d'un tabernacle ancien

C'est d'abord la volonté claire du MMAQ de mettre en valeur la dorure originelle du tabernacle qui a motivé la récente restauration[30]. Un travail de longue haleine s'imposait pour retirer les repeints consistant en une accumulation de couches de peinture successives qui empâtaient les formes et faussaient complètement l'illusion d'or massif tant prisée à l'époque de sa dorure. Le défi consistait à ne pas abîmer, durant les opérations, la mince feuille d'or et à en conserver les nuances de brillance conçues à l'origine.

La dorure originelle maintenant mise en lumière permet d'apprécier une feuille d'or appliquée sur une argile (ou bolus) ocre rouge, sur une couche de préparation faite de craie et de colle. Il n'y a pour ainsi dire presque pas de « reparure », c'est-à-dire de motifs ciselés dans l'épaisseur de l'apprêt, à l'exception du fond strié entourant les deux fleurs de lys et le fond texturé de la prédelle. Les grandes surfaces lisses permettent ainsi, par leur éclat et leur sobriété, de bien saisir la conception architectonique du meuble. Le brunissage à la pierre d'agate de certaines surfaces dorées, réalisé selon un programme bien précis, accentue les volumes de l'architecture et le relief des ornements par le contraste de brillance qu'il crée entre les surfaces polies et les parties mates. Prenons pour exemple les colonnettes : le fût et les rudentures sont mats, alors que les cannelures et les reliefs de la base sont brunis; sur le chapiteau, les feuilles sont brunies, mais pas le tailloir. Il y a tout lieu de penser que cette dorure exécutée avec grand art est l'œuvre de religieuses artisanes, sans doute les ursulines de Québec qui avaient rapporté ce savoir-faire de France à leur arrivée en 1639[31].

Outre le dégagement de la dorure, la structure du meuble a été consolidée et des éléments décoratifs manquants ont été refaits, dans la mesure où ils n'étaient pas matière à interprétation; la corniche de l'entablement et les motifs en applique du gradin ont ainsi été complétés. À cette fin, pour restituer ou compléter les parties disparues ou mutilées, le bois d'origine, le noyer cendré, a été privilégié, mais il a été volontairement laissé à nu, permettant d'identifier facilement, si on y regarde de près, les ajouts qui contrastent ainsi avec les surfaces dorées[32]. Il fut cependant exclu d'intervenir plus avant sur la forme du meuble, en replaçant, par exemple, la porte de la réserve à son emplacement originel, puisque ce changement est survenu lors de travaux beaucoup plus vastes, sur une œuvre dont certaines formes restent hypothétiques.

La très grande majorité des tabernacles québécois des XVIII^e^ et XIX^e^ siècles comportent deux gradins servant d'assise à l'étage de l'ordre et logeant en leur milieu la réserve eucharistique destinée à recevoir un ciboire. Dans les deux seules exceptions du début XVIII^e^ siècle[33], la réserve déborde en hauteur l'unique gradin. Sur la photo prise dans la chapelle Notre-Dame-de-Bonsecours, vers 1884, le tabernacle du MMAQ n'a qu'un seul gradin, mais aussi une réserve inférieure cachée par un voile. Il n'est pas impossible qu'il en ait été ainsi dès l'origine. Des indices matériels découverts lors de la restauration ont établi que le meuble a pu être sculpté avec un seul gradin. Cependant, l'esthétique et la rigueur avec laquelle le sculpteur a, de toute évidence, suivi les règles de l'architecture nous font douter. L'ampleur des étages supérieurs réclame, en effet, un soubassement assez haut pour assurer l'équilibre des masses.

Quoi qu'il en soit, une chose est sûre : il existait une réserve inférieure – le tabernacle proprement dit – et donc une porte ornée et flanquée d'ailerons, dont on peut imaginer la forme à partir des trois autres tabernacles apparentés. Cela implique que le ou les gradins, et donc l'ensemble du meuble, étaient plus larges de près de quarante centimètres. On a pu établir qu'à l'étage de l'ordre, c'est la travée centrale qui était plus large, repoussant d'autant les ailes vers l'extérieur. La difficulté était donc d'établir la forme originale de cette travée centrale. En effet, la combinaison maladroite actuelle de la porte de la réserve de l'ostensoir et d'une arcade s'explique difficilement. Selon les modèles connus, cette réserve est située au niveau de la colonnade, alors que la niche d'exposition, lorsqu'il y en a une, la surmonte. Dans ce cas-ci, l'arc de la niche était supporté par deux colonnes. Or, nos tentatives de dessins intégrant deux colonnades superposées donnaient un meuble déséquilibré et gigantesque. La seule possibilité, pour éviter une telle maladresse, a été de proposer une combinaison surprenante, soit une niche d'exposition au centre de l'ordre, niche dont le fond est percé de la porte de la réserve de l'ostensoir (Fig. 3). Toutes les observations techniques menées par la suite ont confirmé cette hypothèse. Le tabernacle originel présentait donc une architecture tout à fait inédite, ici comme en France, intégrant une armoire pour loger un ostensoir, précédée d'un portique pour l'exposer. Cette innovation démontre d'une part l'habileté du sculpteur à se renouveler et, d'autre part, la complexité et l'originalité des meubles liturgiques de l'époque, en Nouvelle-France.

Une travée centrale d'une telle largeur exige un couronnement proportionnel, d'où la forme que nous proposons, soit une seconde niche d'exposition surmontée d'un dôme et d'une croix et flanquée de niches ou de reliquaires latéraux (Fig. 4). Au lieu de la masse rectangulaire de dimensions réduites qu'il est devenu, il faut imaginer que le majestueux tabernacle[34]

s'inscrivait, à l'origine, selon des canons architecturaux officieux auxquels on a eu recours pour réaliser ce type de meuble dans une forme pyramidale dont l'ostensoir figuré occupait le centre. La restitution partiellement hypothétique du tabernacle s'appuie sur l'évocation de formes exploitées dans des œuvres contemporaines.

Conclusion

Cette étude est le résultat d'un travail d'équipe où l'historien de l'art et le restaurateur ont mis en commun leurs hypothèses et leurs découvertes, et cela, de façon continue. La restauration aura, en outre, permis de lever le voile sur plusieurs aspects matériels de ce meuble remarquable et d'en préciser la forme primitive. L'observation, l'analyse stylistique et les données historiques disponibles se sont ainsi conjuguées pour sortir de l'ombre un meuble inédit et l'ajouter à l'œuvre connu d'un grand sculpteur. Jacques Leblond de Latour se voit, par le fait même, accorder la paternité de quatre tabernacles de grand style.

La connaissance du meuble liturgique qui est l'objet de cette étude permet d'ajouter un autre témoin important au corpus des tabernacles anciens de la Nouvelle-France. Ce qui ne veut pas dire qu'elle est une solution définitive.

Elle souhaiterait être une incitation à poursuivre et à approfondir des recherches souvent trop fragmentaires ou superficielles de plusieurs tabernacles uniques en leur genre, ou rattachés à des séries.

NOTES

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1 L'institution, devenue en 2003 le Musée des maîtres et artisans du Québec (MMAQ), est située dans l'arrondissement Saint-Laurent à Montréal. L'historien de l'art Gérard Lavallée, co-auteur du présent article, fut directeur-fondateur du Musée d'art de Saint-Laurent de 1962 à 1987. Quant à l'auteur principal, Claude Payer, il poursuit une carrière de restaurateur de sculptures au Centre de conservation du Québec depuis 1985.

2 Le MMAQ est officiellement propriétaire de la collection de l'École du meuble depuis 2005.

3 Le créateur et professeur Jean-Marie Gauvreau fut l'instigateur et le directeur de l'École du meuble dès 1935. Très tôt, il créa un musée d'art décoratif devant servir de support à l'enseignement. Voir Gloria LESSER, *École du meuble 1930–1950. La décoration intérieure et les arts décoratifs à Montréal / Interior Design and Decorative Art in Montreal*, Montréal, Château Dufresne, Musée des arts décoratifs de Montréal, 1989, 119 p.

4 Celles-ci sont rares dans le mobilier liturgique ancien du Québec. On peut toutefois en observer sur le tabernacle de l'ancienne chapelle des jésuites de Québec, maintenant conservé au Musée de la Civilisation, dépôt du Séminaire de Québec (Fig. 8), et le tabernacle du maître-autel à la mission Saint-François-Xavier de Kahnawake.

5 Ce tabernacle a été conçu comme un meuble de grandes dimensions. Notre dessin rend son aspect d'origine avec deux réserves, deux gradins et un imposant couronnement (Fig. 4). On aurait ultérieurement amputé le meuble pour le déplacer du maître-autel vers un autel latéral, ou pour l'intégrer à une plus petite église ou chapelle.

6 Ce tabernacle a subi quelques modifications. Le couronnement a sans doute été diminué en largeur et les colonnettes sont de deux modèles différents. La porte inférieure a disparu.

7 Ce motif iconographique, qui semble avoir connu une certaine vogue au début du XVIII[e] siècle, a été traité de façon fort différente sur d'autres tabernacles québécois, à l'autel du Sacré-Cœur de la chapelle des ursulines de Québec, à l'ancien maître-autel des récollets de Trois-Rivières, maintenant à l'église de Saint-Maurice, à l'autel majeur à la mission de Kahnawake et sur l'ancien tabernacle de l'église de Carleton, maintenant au Musée acadien du Québec à Bonaventure.

8 À première vue, le tabernacle du MMAQ, à cause de ses dimensions restreintes actuelles, pourrait être considéré comme une réduction de celui de L'Ange-Gardien. Mais le premier n'a pas toujours été petit; il était peut-être même plus grand que son pendant du musée d'État, si l'on en juge par les dimensions de leurs composantes. Voyons, par exemple :

	MMAQ	MNBAQ
Hauteur du stylobate :	16,3	14,4
Hauteur des colonnettes :	47,5	38,4
Hauteur de l'entablement :	11,4	10,0
Hauteur totale de l'ordre :	75,2 cm	62,8 cm

9 Une dorure à la colle existait sans doute au départ. Elle devait briller avec toute l'opulence typique des tabernacles d'envergure. Elle aurait été entièrement retirée pour être remplacée par une peinture rehaussée de feuille d'or, maintenant ternie par de la bronzine. Les transformations de forme et de fini auraient pu survenir en 1867 (*Journal du Séminaire de Québec*, vol. 2, p. 79, 7 mai 1867).

10 Mère Marie-Madeleine Vocelle de Saint-Pierre (née en 1792) écrit dans une note non datée : « Nous avons eu des Jésuites leur tabernacle, le tableau du maître autel, la chaire, le balustre – Ce tabernacle nous l'avons échangé avec Mrs du Séminaire pour le chandelier Pascal que nous avons ». Une note d'une autre main, mais contemporaine, apporte la précision suivante : « Elles ont eu le tabernacle qu'elles ont échangé avec le Séminaire pour le chandelier paschal le 14 8bre 1807 ». Archives des Augustines de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec, *T4, C 405 A, n° 7 et n° 2*.

11 On trouve un résumé de cette histoire dans Jean-Charles Auger, « Rapatriement des autels de Stoneham », *La Nouvelle Abeille* (Organe de l'Association des Anciens du Petit Séminaire de Québec), Québec, mars 1970, p. 4–6.

12 Au Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, les éléments de l'ancien retable de l'église de L'Ange-Gardien, attribué tout comme le tabernacle à Jacques Leblond de Latour, sont sculptés en noyer cendré ou noyer tendre (Juglans cinerea). Au Musée des Ursulines de Québec, une paire d'ailerons du même bois et d'un même dessin que ceux des trois tabernacles étudiés ici provient sans aucun doute du même atelier. Ces ailerons, à l'origine argentés, servaient d'éléments d'architecture, comme le suggère leur format (87,5 x 35 x 4 cm).

13 La moulure supérieure du gradin coupe ces ailerons, comme sur le tabernacle de L'Ange-Gardien du MNBAQ tel qu'il apparaît sur des photos anciennes.

14 John R. Porter et Jean Bélisle, *La sculpture ancienne au Québec. Trois siècles de sculpture religieuse et profane*, Montréal, Éditions de l'Homme, 1986, p. 342.

15 Le paiement final a été effectué le 30 août 1708. Archives de la paroisse de Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, *Livre de compte 1, 1659–1731*.

16 Contrat reproduit dans Porter et Bélisle, *La sculpture ancienne au Québec, op. cit.*, p. 447.

17 John R. Porter, « L'ancien baldaquin de la chapelle du premier palais épiscopal de Québec, à Neuville », *Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien*, vol. 6, n° 2 (1982), p. 180–200.

18 Archives des Ursulines de Québec, *Actes capitulaires. 1686 à 1802*, p. 86, 19 août 1705.

19 C'est faute d'avoir reconnu les capitales grecques que celles-ci furent interprétées comme l'abréviation (sigle) de la sentence : Iesus Hominum Salvator (Jésus Sauveur des Hommes).

20 Cette œuvre anonyme en fer forgé du XVII^e^ ou du XVIII^e^ siècle, maintenant conservée à la chapelle des augustines de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec, est reproduite dans Jean Trudel (dir.), *Le Grand héritage. L'Église catholique et les arts au Québec*, Québec, Le Musée du Québec, 1984, p. 41, n° 32.

21 Il s'agit d'une œuvre de l'orfèvre Alexis Porcher, exécutée à Paris vers 1751–1752. *Ibidem*, p. 54, n° 52.

22 Voir, par exemple, le voile de calice datant vers 1724, dans Christine Turgeon, *Le fil de l'art. Les broderies des Ursulines de Québec*, Québec, Musée du Québec, Musée des Ursulines de Québec, 2002, p. 53, cat. 29.

23 Ce tabernacle est conservé dans l'actuelle sacristie. Le monogramme est sculpté en relief au fond de la niche d'exposition. Voir à cet égard Claude Payer, « Pierre-Noël Levasseur : une pièce de mobilier remarquable, le maître-autel de l'église de Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade », dans Denis Castonguay et Yves Lacasse, dir., *Québec, une ville et ses artistes*, Québec, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, 2008, p. 76–83.

24 Dans le contrat du 6 mai 1736 qui la lie au sculpteur, la fabrique est « Asisté de L onorable personne du Reuerand pere dheu Religieux de la Compagnie de jesus Superieur de La Residance de montreal gerant Les affaire de La Seigrie de lade prairie … » (tel que cité dans René Villeneuve, *Le tabernacle de Paul Jourdain*, Ottawa, Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, 1990, p. 83–85). Le meuble a été donné entre 1883 et 1886 à la fabrique de Saint-Eugène-de-Grantham où il sert toujours au maître-autel de l'église paroissiale.

25 William Notman & Son, *Intérieur de l'église Bonsecours, Montréal, Qc, vers 1884*, Musée McCord, Montréal.

26 Lettre du Père Claude Chauchetière à son frère, 7 août 1694, citée dans Robert Lahaise, *Les édifices conventuels du Vieux Montréal. Aspects ethno-historiques,* Ville Lasalle, Éditions Hurtubise hmh, 1980, p. 369.

27 Autrefois Sainte-Geneviève-de-Pierrefonds.

28 Archives de la paroisse de Sainte-Geneviève, *Registre des comptes et délibérations, Volume 1, 1740–1870.*

29 Ces changements suggèrent qu'il servit alors dans une chapelle rustique, de petites dimensions, comme celle du camp de vacances dirigé par les sulpiciens, à Contrecœur.

30 Restauration effectuée à l'atelier des sculptures et à celui des meubles du Centre de conservation du Québec, de décembre 1999 à juin 2006. Dossier S-98-16.

31 Vers 1700, les ursulines de Québec semblent être les seules à pratiquer cet art raffiné et complexe. Ultérieurement, d'autres communautés mettront sur pied des ateliers de dorure: les augustines de l'Hôpital Général de Québec, les ursulines de Trois-Rivières, les hospitalières de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal, les sœurs de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame.

32 À l'origine, la partie centrale de l'entablement s'avançait vers le spectateur. Retaillée grossièrement, elle a maintenant perdu sa dorure.

33 Le tabernacle du maître-autel de la chapelle de Wendake et celui de la chapelle de l'Hôpital Général de Québec, attribués l'un et l'autre à Noël Levasseur (1680–1740), vers 1722, adoptent un autre modèle de composition.

34 Dimensions estimées : hauteur : 230 cm; largeur : 270 cm.

SUMMARY

An Unknown Tabernacle by Jacques Leblond de Latour

CLAUDE PAYER AND GÉRARD LAVALLÉE

In a Roman Catholic church, or chapel, the tabernacle is a structure designed to house consecrated hosts and occupies the focal spot in the building. The tabernacle that was offered to the Musée d'art de Saint-Laurent in 1984 is of exceptional importance. It is of the highest quality and can be classed among the oldest extant works produced in New France. Its technical aspects make it stand out among those found in museum collections in Quebec.

Between 1999 and 2006, the tabernacle underwent major conservation which, among other things, uncovered its original gilding. Initially of unknown origin, the combined efforts of conservators and historians revealed its hidden secrets. They were able to characterize the inventiveness of its design and to postulate on the context of its creation, its transformations, and past use. At the outset it was easy to demonstrate that this tabernacle had been made in New France. The quality of the craftsmanship and decorative motifs such as the column capitals, shells, vine branches, garlands, etc., resemble other well-known tabernacles: that of the parish of L'Ange-Gardien, now in the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, and the Jesuit tabernacle from Quebec City now at the Musée de la civilisation. An attribution to the French sculptor, Jacques Leblond de Latour (1671–1715), who established himself in Quebec in 1690, was proposed. The presence of the Jesuit siglum (IHS surmounting a heart) in the monstrance that decorates the central door suggests it was commissioned by the Society of Jesus. We propose that this work of exceptional quality was made for the Jesuit chapel in Montreal, inaugurated in 1694; this would make it the oldest extant liturgical furnishing from Montreal. It was probably sold to the parish of Sainte-Geneviève in 1760, and from the mid-nineteenth century until 1886 it served as part of the main altar in the chapel of Notre-Dame-de-Bonsecours in Montreal. After this date, it was subjected to a substantial transformation for relocation to a smaller chapel, which not only reduced its width, but removed its lower (Eucharistic) reserve and decorative crowning elements, and saw the original gilding overpainted.

Evidence of these transformations came to light during the course of conservation treatment, confirming that this tabernacle was once much

larger. It also possessed a unique design feature: the second reserve, which housed the monstrance, was located at the rear of a niche at the level of the colonnade. Although some aspects of its original decoration and design remain conjectural, one thing is certain: this work testifies to both the originality and the excellence of sculpture in New France.

Translation: Michael O'Malley


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Big Art History: Art History as Social Knowledge

CAROLYN BUTLER-PALMER

Introduction

The College Art Association's published guidelines for tenure and promotion are the gold standard for the profession, even here in Canada.[1] They recommend "the following forms of publication (whether in print or electronic format) equivalent to single-authored books as vehicles of scholarly productivity: journal articles, essays and substantial entries in museum collections or exhibition catalogues, articles in conference proceedings, unpublished manuscripts, whether or not under contract with a publisher."[2] The guidelines' emphasis on single-authored work validates the notion that the most credible, if not *only* credible form of art historical knowledge resides within an individual. Knowledge that is produced in an overtly collaborative fashion, such as curating, object repatriation, or community-centred web publication, garners no comment and as a consequence seems less than credible.

But is the individual, in fact, the seat of art historical knowledge? This question emerges, in part, from personal experience and from accounts of other art historians who engage in collaborative programs of research, including curatorial projects. We study objects that originate in cultures such as First Nations cultures, in which the idea of individualism and the practice of single-voiced scholarship may be inappropriate, politically charged, and ethically problematic; and perhaps, practically impossible.[3] Our experiences suggest that some art historians have a hard time placing collaborative work: it seems difficult for them to position collaborative practices in relation to other art historical products such as single-author refereed articles, and in turn, the difficulty may affect academic processes such as tenure and promotion. The tensions between the merits of single-voiced and collaborative scholarship, I contend, are part of a much larger epistemological debate about whether the seat of knowledge is contained within an individual or a social system. In contrast to the College Art Association's characterization

Detail, the Health Centre in the newly renovated William James Mable Carriage Company Building, 713–715 Johnson St, Victoria, BC, ca. 2010. (Photo: Derek Ford)

of art historical knowledge as limited to the personal, I argue that our discipline has a long and largely overlooked history of social knowledge production. Examples include the oral art histories embedded in Giorgio Vasari's (1511–1574) *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, ed architettori* (1550 and 1569); the development of iconology by Aby Warburg (1866–1929), Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968), and Fritz Saxl (1890–1948); the founding of the Women's Art History Collective in 1972, which led to the co-authored work of Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistress: Women, Art and Ideology* (1981); and the work of Native arts activists, as evidenced by the collaborative work of Nancy Mithlo (Chiricahua Apache) and the Native Arts Alliance. Each of these practices is motivated by different reasons and manifest in distinctive ways; here I will consider those associated with the development of iconology.[4]

I begin this paper by looking briefly at the fate of the thesis that knowledge is personal within the history of modern epistemology as pursued in Western philosophy, since the discipline of art history emerged out of this theoretical framework. Recent studies on the nature of knowledge, especially those focused upon a twentieth-century innovation in knowledge production known as 'Big Science,' have introduced a characterization of knowledge as social. Big Science has helped to destabilize the theoretical monopoly that personal knowledge once held within the discourses of Western epistemology. I then turn to what I will call 'Big Art History,' an epistemological approach revealed through Panofsky's characterization of iconology as the product of an art historical team. A more recent example of Big Art History, a collaborative curatorial project involving dozens of co-creators at the ACCESS Health medical building in Victoria, British Columbia, presents a second and quite different case of social knowledge creation.

Before I delve further, I ought to clarify that I have taken up the issue of social knowledge in the field of art history at this juncture both to recover its roots and to articulate how this epistemological framework differs from that of personal knowledge. I focus on Western philosophical constructions of knowledge with the goal of opening space for the recognition of collaborative research, in general, as a means of reframing the still developing field of art history beyond the box of individualism. The epistemological argument pursued here would require much further extension along very different lines to engage systems of collective knowledge production, such as indigenous systems, with those of Euro-American cultural origin.[5]

PART 1: THE IDEAS OF PERSONAL AND SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE

The idea of personal knowledge, particularly for European cultures, is fixed in the work of natural philosophers René Descartes and Sir Isaac Newton.

The former considers knowledge to be the product of the reasoning powers and observations of the lone, capable individual mind.[6] In his 1637 *Discourse on Method*, Descartes presents the 'I' (the individual) as thinking and reasoning, and he even derogates any regard for others' research: he writes that, if work is "compounded and amassed little-by-little from the opinions of many different persons, it never comes so close to the truth as the simple reasoning which a man of good sense naturally makes concerning whatever he comes across." Knowledge on the Cartesian paradigm is, instead, a product of insights gained by the "natural light" of an individual's reason, through "long chains composed of very simple and easy reasonings, which geometers customarily use to arrive at their most difficult demonstrations."[7] Isaac Newton would do Descartes one better fifty years later, with the *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, a book that was *explicitly* arranged as a geometrical argument and generated by the mind of one man.[8] It is not entirely inappropriate to say that Newton *knew and made* his own science; the preface to his book makes it evident that he conceived it as his own. Unlike Descartes, he nevertheless allowed that he had learned something from predecessors that he could not have acquired alone, acknowledging that he stood "on the shoulders of giants."[9]

The seeds of personal knowledge sown by Descartes and Newton in the seventeenth century remained viable in analytic philosophy until the mid-twentieth. In that tradition, the analysis of knowledge frequently began with a schema that concerned the individual subject ("S") and a particular belief held by the subject, characterized in a sentence, or proposition ("p"). The schema suggests that, "*S* knows that *p*" if the following conditions hold:

i) *p* is true;
ii) *S* believes that *p*;
iii) *S* is justified in believing that *p*.

Knowledge, then, is a justified, true belief held in the mind of an individual subject, S. Attempts at interrogating and improving upon the conditions characterized in this simple formula were the primary subject of analytic epistemology.[10] But the assumption that knowledge resides squarely within the individual – captured in the phrase, "*S* knows that *p*" – was a presupposition that was not generally interrogated within that philosophical tradition, a tradition still pursued today.

As the practice of science became much more collaborative during the twentieth century, modes of investigation such as the Manhattan Project introduced a new era of "big science" and began to be recognized as qualitatively different from previous scientific endeavour.[11] It is just not conceivable that an individual subject could gather such knowledge: the lone

mind and hand would not suffice, and the individualist assumption captured in "*S* knows that *p*" would soon come under investigation. Other portions of the analytic schema would also face fundamental challenges: particularly point (iii), that justification pertains to, or is seated within, an individual.

Philosopher John Hardwig made the first of these two points elegantly, simply by reproducing one typical page of a 1983 issue of the journal *Physical Review Letters*.[12] The list of ninety-nine authors of the article, "Charm Photoproduction Cross-section at 20GeV," registers a variety of expertise in theoretical physics, experimental design, experimental practice, and data analysis that no one individual could be expected to be capable of grasping. All, or, at least, many of the 99 authors would be necessary for producing the knowledge, the work involved would consume more hours than could be available in the lifetime of any individual scientist, and the list of authors might also be extended to include unnamed graduate students, technicians, and janitors. Even if a single author had the ability to perform all of the requisite tasks, the necessary activity to produce this outcome – this knowledge – could not have been achieved: by analogy, were a single member of a string quartet capable of playing all parts, still, she could only play them sequentially, not synchronically. Thus, even if it might be said that each one of these ninety-nine authors can believe (as per point ii of the analytic formula), with justification (as per point iii), that the claims contained in the article are true (see point i), nevertheless, it is also clear from this case that, due to the length and co-ordination of tasks, as well as the degree of expertise required to accomplish each task, no single author alone could produce the justification in relevant detail, or produce the result. Thus, the knowledge produced in this work is ineluctably social.

Hardwig's straightforward argument is only the thin end of the wedge of the social challenge to individualist epistemology. Philosopher Miriam Solomon, among a vanguard of theorists, has directly challenged the position of the rational individual as the locus of science's rationality, or justification. Solomon has proposed that, "social groups can work to attain and even recognize epistemic goals without individual rationality or individual cognizance of the overall epistemic situation."[13] For example, like the 99 authors noted above, the editorial board of a peer-review publication is integral to knowledge production. Credibility and justification accrue to articles because they appear within the pages of peer-reviewed scientific journals, and so, because it plays a determinative role in the *justification* of a scientific knowledge claim, the board is not merely a mobilizing agent. After publication, the citations that the article comes to receive from other authors determine a claim's centrality to the field of knowledge over time, and perhaps its acceptability as knowledge. Consequently, the seat of justification

does not lie in the individual, and indeed, it is no longer a seat at all: it is distributed across a network of actors, including corporate bodies such as editorial boards that cannot even be accounted for as individual persons, and its justification changes over time due to the influences of actors distinct from the authors of the claim.

Solomon implicitly suggests that the individual subject might *never* be in the position to know, given that scientific knowledge is a thoroughly social product. *S* cannot know that *p*: rather, the system produces knowledge. Analysis of the development and deployment of knowledge-generating networks is the subject of study for sociologists and historians of science, such as Bruno Latour and Stephen Shapin.[14] Shapin traces the early development of science as a post-Cartesian practice that began with the founding of England's Royal Society of London for the Improving of Natural Knowledge in 1660. The Royal Society established a tradition in which certain "credible persons" accepted by the society are granted the privilege of reporting natural phenomena that others accept, within a "polity of science."[15] The Society's *Philosophical Transactions* (1665–forward), which has some reasonable claim as the first genuine scientific journal, presented the reports of these "credible persons." The development of a society that could grant scientific credibility is an early example of how knowledge was socially produced: indeed, Shapin argues that the Royal Society, as an emerging social and political institution, *generated* the category of credible reporting by others as a viable epistemological category – an epistemological concern to be weighed alongside the traditional first-person authority and demonstrative argument pursued by Descartes and Newton.

Thus, following the efforts of earlier philosophers of science – most notably Thomas Kuhn and Imre Lakatos – epistemologists and sociologists have chipped away at the very notion that knowledge is held and justified by individuals. Latour, Shapin, and Solomon lead us further, to the view that individual knowledge is no longer a viable paradigm.

PART 2: ART HISTORY AS SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE

What does this all mean for the production of art historical knowledge? Perhaps the most obvious marks of the social within the profession are evident in scholarly societies and journals: in professional societies such as the College Art Association (1912) and the Universities Art Association of Canada (1967), and their affiliated journals, the *Art Bulletin* and the *Canadian Art Review*. Art historians make claims that they might hope will receive status as knowledge, but they also create social networks that contribute to the shape

of art historical knowledge as it appears in a journal article or book, and these publications contribute justification and mobilize claims in ways similar to those noted above for science.

Eminent scholars within the discipline of art history have themselves interrogated the single-author paradigm. Erwin Panofsky's account of the development of iconology presents a case in point, called to my attention by Cindy Persinger's 2008 dissertation "The Politics of Style: Meyer Schapiro and the Crisis of Meaning in Art History." Her careful history provides clues to Panofsky's theory of learning and knowledge production, as suggested by the following remark published in his *Studies in Iconology* (1939): "The methods which the writer has tried to apply are based on what he and Dr. Saxl learned together from the late Professor A. Warburg, and have endeavoured to practice in many years of personal collaboration."[16] Panofsky's words suggest that he at least conceptualizes himself as a collaborative learner, and in the case of iconology's development, collaboration is a necessary component of his learning process. Yet, in this passage, Panofsky does not clarify whether he differentiates between 'learning' and 'knowing,' nor whether he sees the individual or the collective as the holder of knowledge.

Evidence of Panofsky's struggles with the individual-as-the-seat-of-knowledge paradigm are more clearly articulated some five years earlier in a 1932 letter that he wrote to William Ivins, curator of the Metropolitan Museum's Department of Prints. Panofsky launches into a straightforward critique of Ivins's characterization of iconology as the product of a single individual, specifically, Panofsky himself. Panofsky writes:

> I really fear that you overrate me a little. Please do not regard this as false modesty … I honestly think that you as well as some of my students give me the credit for what, in reality, is due to a scientific tradition of which I am a very modest part. Firstly, the material with which I deal was mostly gathered together by the united efforts of my friend Saxl and our common pupils and collaborators. Secondly, and this is more important, the very method of my work, a method which perhaps was not so well known in America, is almost a matter of course [in Germany], and I am indebted for it to my great teachers such as Wilhelm Vöge and Aby Warburg as well as to my friends and even to my own disciples … and I feel a little bit ashamed when you believe me to be a kind of innovator.[17]

Though Panofsky did not use the expression "social knowledge," his acknowledgment of the contributions made by Saxl and students resonates with the conception of corporate authorship noted in Hardwig's analysis. More importantly, Panofsky pinpoints a failure in the personal knowledge

paradigm: the failure to register the working realities of the creation of art historical knowledge – at least in the case of the formation of iconology.

Given Panofsky's view and his influence within the discipline, it is curious that the notion of the corporate author has not gained traction. Social knowledge deserves our attention and the discipline of art history has more reason to take this new understanding of knowledge production seriously as, over the past decade, an increasing number of art historians have worked to negotiate pressing issues such as cross-cultural engagement and have overtly embraced an array of collaborative practices. These new practices conflict with the modern paradigm of individual creative action, and include community-based research, participatory action research, curating, and histories of indigenous arts. Perhaps the difference between Panofsky and art historical collaborations in the present day is that we are more familiar with the notion of social knowledge, we have some familiarity with articulate challenges to the idea that the individual is the seat of knowledge, and we have access to theory such as the new historicism: theory that historically situates and uproots assumptions concerning the primacy of the individual in cultural understanding, and so, in epistemology.[18] We also have more access to, or take more seriously, our interactions with other cultures in ways that are respectful of different knowledge systems.[19]

I offer the recently completed installation of approximately forty works of art at the Cool Aid Community Health and Dental Clinics, located in the ACCESS Health Centre building on Johnson Street in downtown Victoria, British Columbia, as a case study in socially produced art historical knowledge. The brief characterization below presents an account of collaborative knowledge production that expands traditional reception theory, introducing a necessarily *social* example of reception (because of varied subject positions) that comes to be produced dialectically (through discussion among those holding the various subject positions). So, this case presents a significant departure from art history as an individualistic publishing venture. The account draws upon approaches in recent science studies: following Isabelle Stengers's lead, I attempt "to address the practices from which such knowledge evolves, based on the constraints imposed by the uncertainties [that participants in the production of knowledge] introduce and their corresponding obligations." The obligations at issue for each participant are both to other participants and to each himself or herself, in light of interactions with others and perceptions.[20]

The ACCESS Art project team involved 37 named individuals including myself, University of Victoria undergraduate and graduate students, University of Victoria Legacy Gallery staff, and Cool Aid Community staff. Not named in the acknowledgements were a host of others who were essential to the production, including clinic patients, janitorial staff at the clinic, and support

1 | The William James Mable Carriage Company Building, 713–715 Johnson St, Victoria, BC, occupied by a bingo parlor, ca. 2009. (Photo: Derek Ford)

2 | The Health Centre in the newly renovated William James Mable Carriage Company Building, 213–215 Johnson St, Victoria, BC, ca. 2010. (Photo: Derek Ford)

staff in the History in Art department, the Dean of Fine Arts offices, and the university gallery. The three-year ACCESS Art project began with a request presented by the Cool Aid Community Health Clinic to the Director of University of Victoria's Art collection for art that would help "brighten up" their clinic space in the newly renovated and reconstructed ACCESS Health Centre building.

The building stands as testament to Cool Aid's interest in creating a comfortable and aesthetically-pleasing environment for staff and clients. AIDS Vancouver Island partnered with Cool Aid in 2009 to renovate and rebuild what the ACCESS Health webpage describes as a "deteriorated and underused" old carriage factory constructed in 1908 for the William James Mable Carriage Company. Over the years the Edwardian-style building had been used for a variety of purposes including a furniture store, Salvation Army Thrift Shop, and bingo parlor, and by the early twenty-first century, it had fallen into a state of disrepair (Fig. 1). The preservation project aimed to stabilize the building's original brick façade and restore historic references, including painted signage for Mable carriages on the building's east end.

To accommodate the building's new role as a healthcare facility, the interior was gutted and redesigned. The newly-configured space was divided into reception areas, pharmacy, examination rooms, a sickroom, and a variety of administrative offices. The final result is very attractive; the interior has a mixture of exposed brick and plaster walls (painted with cream and

terra cotta coloured paint), and office spaces are equipped with streamlined storage cupboards and new furniture. The ACCESS Health Building was a carefully planned adaptive reuse project and in 2010 it received the local Hallmark Society's historic preservation award not only for the "quality of the restoration, but also because it was completed by non-profit partners actively engaged in improving the [city's] downtown core" (Fig. 2).[21]

When the new clinic facility opened the walls were bare. To fill in the blank spaces, the staff decorated the walls with medical and acupuncture charts, which staff members told me were mostly decorative, and not didactic, in their purpose. The curatorial triage begun by unknown clinic staff would be superseded by a collaborative design effort. I worked with Cool Aid's manager of community health services Irene Haigh-Gidora to develop a timeline that would work for the clinic and also serve University of Victoria students. We decided to focus on curating the ground-floor health clinic during the 2010–11 academic year and attend to the second-floor dental clinic the following year. Throughout 2009–11 I managed the relationships between the various constituencies and worked to ensure a sense of curatorial cohesion and the realization of the project.

During the planning stage (2009–10), I also worked with Caroline Riedel, Curator of the University Art Collections, to identify approximately sixty works of art that would fall within the university's risk-assessment parameters for works of art on loan and also meet the space limitations of the clinic site and provide the "calm aesthetic" that Cool Aid staff representatives expressed as their ideal. Understanding the parameters of what the clinic staff meant by a "calm aesthetic" was a major challenge that the team of students and staff had to negotiate. Apart from their desire to move away from medical charts, our only clue to the sort of art they sought was their rejection of Riedel's initial offer of a series of abstract paintings by local Victoria artist Pat Hardy (Fig. 3). Irene Haigh-Gidora let us know that clinic staff thought the images were too violent due to the thick and random brushwork and bold colours. Perception of violence was of particular concern because many clinic clients were violent-crime survivors. Thus, it seemed that Cool Aid Community Health staff sought an aesthetic that would divert the attention of their clientele from psychological wounds or physical ailments rather than provoke their contemplation.[22]

With these rough parameters in mind, Riedel and I pulled together a preliminary selection of images, mostly realistic representations and softer in hue than Hardy's paintings, with the idea that we would winnow down our preliminary selection as we engaged further with clinic staff. For example, during the 2010–11 academic year, seminar participants first consulted with staff members to identify images from our preliminary list that would suit spaces they frequented. The students drafted a plan that included an image

3 | Pat Hardy, *Untitled*, 1997, acrylic on canvas, 106.30 x 153 cm, University of Victoria Art Collections, Victoria, BC (U996.12.33). (Photo: Victoria Art Collections)

list drawn from Riedel's initial selection, and that identified the locations where works were to be installed within the health clinic. We subsequently presented our initial plan to a team of clinic staff members, and the staff voiced their concerns. One notable aspect of their input was discouragement of any representation of the human body, and specifically the female body, within the Cool Aid Health Clinic facility. One of the nurses felt that images of the body might prompt distress among their many patients who are victims of domestic violence (Figs. 4 and 5). In this way, the art historical conventions of reception theory took on new importance, and I assumed a new role as editor of the image list.

In light of this response, seminar students returned to class to substantially revise the plan. Working with our newly-configured image list, they continued research on individual works of art and the biographies of their creators. The discovery that one of the artists in our group became an artist to help overcome his own battle with diabetes informed our decision to put two of his images in a group therapy room in which diabetic patients gather to learn disease management strategies. Members of the clinic team were enthusiastic about this plan and especially about the didactic role the biography of an artist might play. Through this dialectical process, we gained insight into one way in which art historical research into the biography of an artist could perform a clinical function.

With this final plan in hand, gallery staff framed and helped to install the images. The post-installation period involved further refinements, however. Some images were hung too low, so that patients caught their hair in the frame or bumped their heads as they lay down on examination tables. We were also asked to remove one work from one of the examination rooms,

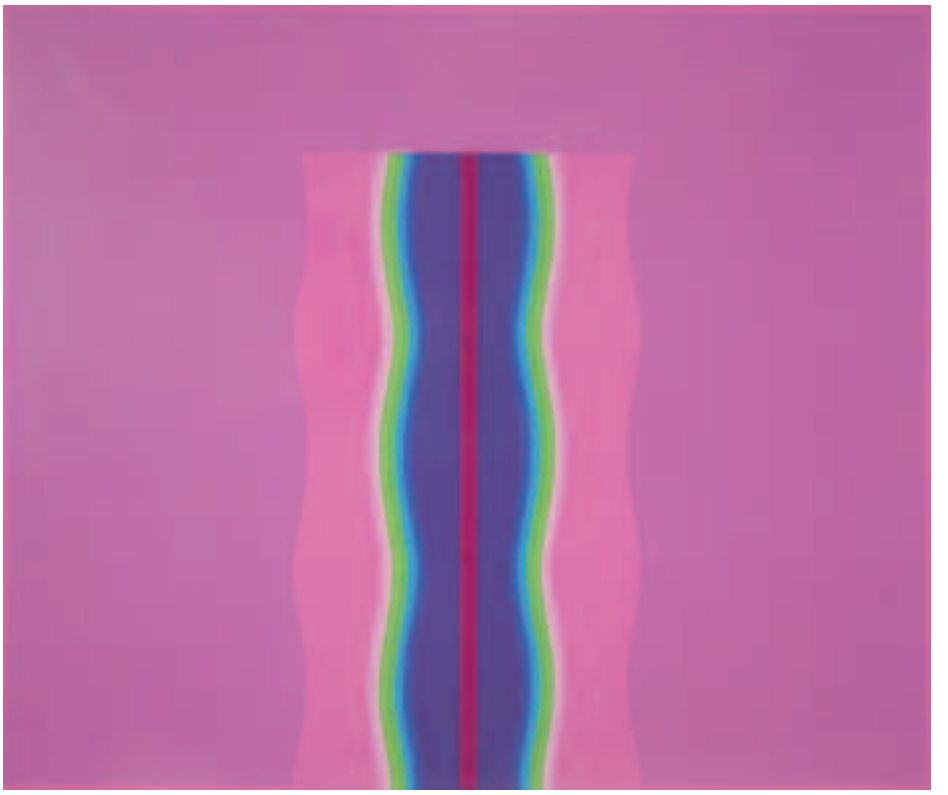
4 | Patricia Martin Bates, *Woman with Words in Her Head*, ca. 1900-50, ink, watercolour, and paper, 57 x 38 cm, University of Victoria Art Collections, Victoria, BC (U977.1.25). (Photo: Victoria Art Collections)

5 | Bruce Chic, *Betty*, 1977, lithograph, 57.3 x 39.5 cm, University of Victoria Art Collections, Victoria, BC (U985.20.12), formerly in the Patricia Martin Bates and Clyde Bates Collection. (Photo: Victoria Art Collections)

Gordon Smith's *For Alen Wallin* (n.d.), after Irene Haigh-Gidora let us know that one of the physicians found it to be "too pink" (Fig. 6).

Although no further details were provided as to why pink was such a problem, an important clue surfaced one year later during a discussion about *Conch Balance* by Torrie Groening, which was part of our preliminary installation plan for the dental clinic (Fig. 7). A member of the dental staff disapproved of the selection because the scalloped edges of the shells looked too "teethy" and might prompt discomfort among their clientele. The editorial interventions of the physician and dental clinic staff member thus added a layer of refinement to the rough parameters initially articulated by a nurse on the team of clinic staff members – to avoid representations of the body, and especially the female body in the case of *For Alen Wallin's* pink vaginal allusion.[23]

The ACCESS Art project is an example of knowledge production with similarities to Hardwig's observations on Big Science. The development of the project was parcelled among various actors: the ACCESS Art team



6 | Gordon Smith, *For Alen Wallin,* ca. 1900-50, serigraph, #16, print no. 50.52, 80 x 63 cm, University of Victoria Art Collections, Victoria, BC (U982.25.20). (Photo: Victoria Art Collections)

that included Legacy Gallery staff and Cool Aid Clinic staff had expert understanding of both design aspects and image reception; the students researched the life stories of artists, uncovering medical history of significance to the production; and I myself brought exhibit design and project management to the effort. Although it is possible that one individual may have been able to select works, frame, and hang them, it was only through the dialectical and collaborative process of image selection that the clinic aesthetic came to be known. The clinic's aesthetic was produced collaboratively: it was an experiment in 'Big Art History' that parallels the Big Science that Hardwig considers.

Although the ACCESS Art project – unlike the peer-reviewed article that you read here – does not fit neatly into the institutionalized standards set by professional organizations like the College Art Association, it clearly registers social knowledge precedents hinted at by Panofsky, and articulated in recent philosophical theories of social epistemology. The paradigm of

7 | Torrie Groening, *Conch Balance*, ca. 1985, planographic lithograph 56.25 x 38 cm, University of Victoria Art Collections, Victoria, BC (U996.12.33). (Photo: Victoria Art Collections)

social knowledge suits art history, and I have argued above that it particularly suits recent developments in art history's practice. One such development, the ACCESS Art project, presented ineliminably social advances in the study of artists' biography and in reception theory, and its collective construction might indeed be an example of work that deserves the title 'Big Art History.'

NOTES

1 This text is an expanded version of a paper that I presented at the 2012 annual meeting of the Universities Art Association of Canada at Concordia University, in Montreal.

2 See, for example "Standards and Guidelines for Retention and Tenure of Art Historians," last modified 25 Oct. 2009. Accessed 1 Nov. 2012, http://www.collegeart.org/guidelines/tenure.

3 Julie Ellison and Timothy K. Eatman, "Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Engaged University," *Imagining America* (Syracuse, ny: Artists and Scholars in Public Life Tenure Team Initiative on Public Scholarship, 2008), 22–23. Accessed 14 Nov. 2012, http://imaginingamerica.org/fg-item/scholarship-in-public-knowledge-creation-and-tenure-policy-in-the-engaged-university/. For further discussion of the 'modern individual' see Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

4 More detailed discussions of Vasari's, Parker and Pollock's, and Mithlo's activities can be found in the following publications: Marco Ruffini, *Art Without an Author: Vasari's Lives and Michelangelo's Death* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011); Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art, and Ideology* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981); Nancy Mithlo, ed., *New Native Art Criticism: Manifestations* (Santa Fe, nm: Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, 2012).

5 For epistemological studies in this vein, see the contributions in Sandra Harding, ed., *The Postcolonial Science and Technology Studies Reader* (Durham, nc: Duke University Press, 2011).

6 See René Descartes's exposition of such ideals in *Discours de la Méthode* (Leyde, 1637), and his demonstration of them in action, in *Meditationes de Prima Philosophiae* (Paris, 1641). For further explanation of Cartesian individualism in epistemology, see Miriam Solomon, "A More Social Epistemology," in *Socializing Epistemology: The Social Dimensions of Knowledge*, ed. Frederick E. Schmitt (Lanham, md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1994), 217–33.

7 John Cottingham et al., trans., *Discours de la Méthode,* Part 1 and Part 2, in vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 9.

8 Isaac Newton, *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (London, 1687). Descartes also makes a perfunctory attempt at a similar presentation of his metaphysics *more geometrico* in a few pages of his *Responsio ad Secundas Objectiones*, a supplement to the *Meditationes de Prima Philosophiae* (Paris, 1640), and Baruch Spinoza would develop this effort further, in *Descartes principium philosophiae Pars i et ii. more geometrico demonstratae* (1663).

9 Newton to Robert Hooke, 5 Feb. 1676. The admission may have been a backhanded insult to Hooke (who was of short stature), a mocking reference to Hooke's claims to priority in some areas in which Newton also worked.

10 For an account of such philosophical analysis, see, for example, Jonathan Jenkins and Matthias Steup, "The Analysis of Knowledge," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta. Accessed 14 Nov. 2012, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/knowledge-analysis/

11 Derek J. de Solla Price, *Little Science, Big Science . . . And Beyond* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963).

12 John Hardwig, "Epistemic Dependence," *The Journal of Philosophy* 82:7 (July 1985): 335–49.

13 Miriam Solomon, "Extensionality, Underdetermination and Indeterminacy," *Erkenntnis* 33:2 (September 1990): 219.

14 Bruno Latour, *Science in Action* (Cambridge: Harvard up, 1987). Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton, nj: Princeton University Press, 1985). Latour, Michel Callon, and others at the Centre de Sociologie des Mines are the primary exponents of the actor-network theory introduced in this paper.

15 Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air Pump,* 58, 332. See also Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1994).

16 Cindy Persinger, "The Politics of Style: Meyer Schapiro and the Crisis of Meaning in Art History" (phd thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 2007), 496–97, quoting from Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), v–vi.

17 Erwin Panofsky to William Ivins, 27 Feb. 1932. Dieter Wuttke, ed., *Erwin Panofsky Korrespondenz: 1910–1936* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2001), 486; as quoted in Persinger, "The Politics of Style," 154.

18 See Greenblatt (*op. cit.*) for a first inquiry into the social construction of the modern individual. The role of culture as a challenge to the primacy of the individual as both the seat of knowledge and the source of experiential authority is examined in Catherine Gallagher, *The Body Economic: Life, Death, and Sensation in Political Economy and the Victorian Novel* (Princeton, nj: Princeton University Press, 2009).

19 For example, major surveys of Canadian art history have shifted from the Euro-Canadian foci of J. Russell Harper's *Painting in Canada: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966) and Dennis Reid's *A Concise History of Canadian Painting* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973) to the multicultural approach of Anne Whitelaw, Brian Foss, and Sandra Paikowsky's edited volume *Visual Arts of Canada* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press Canada, 2010). In addition, some art history programs, such as the University of Pittsburgh's Department of History of Art and Architecture are redesigning graduate and research programs to emphasize collaborative practices: "Constellations." Accessed 4 Dec. 2012, http://www.haa.pitt.edu/research/constellations-foundations

20 Isabelle Stengers, "Preface," in *Cosmopolitics I*, trans. Robert Bononno (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), vii. For a related characterization of methodology and goals from the examination of Big Science, see Wesley Shrum et al., *Structures of Scientific Collaboration* (Cambridge, ma: mit Press, 2007), 1–4.

21 Victoria Cool Aid Society "Access Health Centre Celebrates History & Heritage Award." Accessed 20 Feb. 2013, http://www.coolaid.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=388&Itemid=1

22 Within European practices of medicine, there is a long history of images that visualize disease and ailments being used as part of the process of healing or to prompt empathy within the viewer. For example, as David Freedberg observes, *ex-voto* images depicted an accident or ailment and the Saint who intervened to restore health or safety, and the graphic portrayals of sores and wounds that characterize the *sacri mori* tradition of Northern Europe were designed to marshal a sense of empathy and affection within the beholder. For a more detailed discussion see David Freedberg's *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 136–40 and 168–75.

23 *For Alen Wallin* found a temporary home in the group therapy room; the following year, it was permanently installed in the dental clinic upstairs.

RÉSUMÉ

La méga-histoire de l'art : ou l'histoire de l'art en tant que connaissance sociale

CAROLYN BUTLER-PALMER

Comment font les historiens de l'art pour créer le savoir ? Les conventions disciplinaires reconnaissent communément que l'individu est le siège de la connaissance historique de l'art, les publications à auteur unique constituant la forme la plus crédible d'érudition. Toutefois, une longue histoire, largement ignorée, de la production collaborative de savoirs au sein de la discipline comprend, par exemple, les récits oraux de Giorgio Vasari; la recherche concertée sur l'iconologie d'Aby Warburg, d'Erwin Panofsky et de Fritz Saxl; les réalisations du Women's Art History Collective; et la formule coopérative retenue par Nancy Mithlo et la Native Arts Alliance. Le présent article examine en particulier les efforts d'Erwin Panofsky pour articuler son activité de collaboration, utilise les derniers travaux d'érudition pour élaborer une théorie sur la création de la connaissance sociale et présente une étude de cas sur un tout récent exemple de création collaborative de savoirs selon cette optique théorique.

Bien que le principe de la connaissance individualiste remonte à Platon, notre analyse commencera avec Descartes. Du reste, la production collaborative de savoirs n'a véritablement été prise en considération dans la philosophie occidentale que depuis une cinquantaine d'années, à la suite de l'essor de la collaboration scientifique à grande échelle marquée particulièrement par le projet Manhattan. Elle s'est développée dans les années 60, avec l'analyse de la structure sociale de la science du philosophe Thomas Kuhn et d'autres historiens des sciences. Le présent article élabore une théorie de la connaissance sociale pour la recherche en histoire de l'art. Il cerne d'abord le paradigme individualiste de la connaissance, puis il présente un compte-rendu de la connaissance sociale qui s'appuie sur des ouvrages d'érudition et de science de John Hardwig, de Miriam Solomon, de Stephen Shapin et de Bruno Latour. La critique « néo-historiciste », initiée par les théoriciens Stephen Greenblatt et Catherine Gallagher, est également évoquée pour miner l'autorité de l'individu comme siège de la connaissance et soutenir que certaines connaissances, comme le postulat déduit de rapports de laboratoire de physique sur les représentations symboliques développées dans le domaine de l'iconologie, ou la conservation, la conception et la

réception d'expositions à long terme et à grande échelle, sont bien souvent nécessairement sociales.

La théorie s'applique à une installation artistique collaborative instituée dans une clinique de Victoria, au Canada, de 2009 à 2011. Ce cas a pour objet d'indiquer des parallèles dans la production des connaissances entre la science collaborative – connue sous le nom de « mégascience » dans la littérature sociologique – et la conservation collaborative.

A New Pavilion for Quebec and Canadian Art at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

ANNE WHITELAW

On 14 October 2011, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) opened its newest building to the public. Incorporating the neo-Romanesque Erskine and American Church, the Claire and Marc Bourgie Pavilion of Quebec and Canadian Art adds over 2,000 square metres and six floors of exhibition space to the MMFA thereby producing, in the words of the museum's press release, "an emblematic and impressive 'lieu de mémoire'" for the city and the country. Clad in the same Vermont marble as the Hornstein and Desmarais Pavilions, the Bourgie Pavilion is a discrete addition to the MMFA's campus. Despite the shortage of available land behind the church, the new structure provides adequate space for the display of the 600 objects selected from the museum's collection of Quebec and Canadian art and an intimate concert hall been has fashioned out of the Erskine and American's original nave. The church has a long and intertwined history with the MMFA, its former congregation sharing class and ethnic identities with the founding figures of the Art Association of Montreal, the precursor to the MMFA. Indeed, those affinities are clearly evident on the top floor of the pavilion where unparallelled views up Mount Royal afford glimpses of the homes of many of the MMFA's current and past patrons. If the church provides a certain symbolic resonance to the new pavilion, the addition by Provencher Roy + Associés architects shapes the display in quite innovative ways. In what appears as a series of stacked boxes, the addition makes excellent use of a very small footprint, but in the process retools any previous image we might have of the conventional art gallery. Organized on a vertical rather than the traditional horizontal axis, the Bourgie Pavilion disrupts viewers' expectations by replacing spectatorial flow from room to room with self-contained galleries. Whereas in a more conventional room arrangement, the movement of viewers from one room to the next enables previews as well as backwards and sideways glances, at the MMFA, the viewer moves vertically from one 'box' to the next, with each floor a microcosm of a particular period

Detail, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, "Towards Modernism" gallery, Fall 2011. (Photo: MMFA, Denis Farley)

in Canadian art. Such a spatial organization has placed certain constraints on the hanging of the MMFA's collection and has had important effects on the institution's presentation of the narrative of Quebec and Canadian art history. As the most recent re-presentation of Canadian art, the Bourgie Pavilion is an opportunity to examine approaches to display and the presentation of Canadian art history as these are inflected by a sense of historical and geographic place, institutional and private collecting histories, and the incorporation of Aboriginal expressive practices.[1]

Overview of the Galleries

There are six floors of gallery space in the Bourgie Pavilion, with two main modes of access envisioned in the original plan: visitors would either enter through a new doorway on Sherbrooke Street, or from a passageway in the basement linking the Hornstein and Desmarais Pavilions. Since Fall 2012, however, all the MMFA's pavilions are accessible only through the Museum's main entrance in the Desmarais Pavilion, meaning that entry to the Bourgie Pavilion is through the lower galleries of the Hornstein building.[2] My analysis here reflects the original design. The main entrance on Sherbrooke takes visitors through what was once the basement of the Erskine and American church under the welcoming wings of David Altmejd's (b. 1974) sculpture *The Eye*, specially commissioned for the new pavilion.[3] From this entrance, viewers are greeted by Marcelle Ferron's (1924–2001) untitled stained glass work from 1972, placed to echo the famed Tiffany windows preserved in the concert hall above. Once through the glass doors into the gallery area, visitors are immediately faced with Jean-Paul Riopelle's (1923–2002) large painting *Gravity* (1956), a work that also features prominently at the beginning of the catalogue produced to mark the launch of the new pavilion. Painted by one of the nation's foremost artists, and dating from his classic 'mosaic' period, *Gravity* signals the tenor of the MMFA's display and the location of its narrative of Canadian art history *in* Montreal. Indeed, as viewers move past *Gravity* toward the elevators and the rest of the collection, they are presented with labelling and wall text indicating that this floor is "The Age of the Manifesto," a phrase that will immediately resonate with visitors familiar with the history of Quebec art as pointing to the period that saw not only the publication of the *Refus global* (1948) – traditionally viewed as the call to arms that prompted the Quiet Revolution – but also produced the *Prisme d'yeux* (1948) and the *Manifeste des Plasticiens* (1955).

Despite the considerable impact of such an opening statement, the MMFA staff have a different idea of how the collection should be experienced and visitors are encouraged to walk past *Gravity* (and Robert Roussil's [b. 1925]

1 | Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, "*Takuminartut*: Contemporary Inuit Art, 1948–Present," Fall 2011. (Photo: MMFA, Bernard Fougères)

large sculpture *The Family* [1949]), and take the elevator up to the fourth floor.[4] This top floor showcases the museum's Inuit collection in a display titled "*Takuminartut*: Contemporary Inuit Art, 1948–Present" (Fig. 1). Organized thematically, and with an emphasis on sculpture, the display is housed behind inclined white walls somewhat reminiscent of the snow walls traditionally used to shield igloos from Arctic winds. Although necessary to protect the prints and drawings from sunlight, the inclined walls and narrow entrance leading from the light-filled atrium to the dark interior space also recall the sense of mystery and exoticism that has historically accompanied exhibitions of so-called primitive art. This sentiment contradicts the claim in the introductory wall text that the curators are seeking to emphasize the contemporaneity of Inuit art both in terms of the genesis of its production as

art in the late 1940s, and as a reflection of the place of expressive culture in the everyday life of Inuit into the present.

The next floor in the pavilion's narrative is the "Founding Identities" gallery, presenting the museum's collection of works from the colonial period to 1880. Entering the space, the viewer is struck by the projection of a black and white video of a canoeist, paddling in the fog: this is the work *Portrait in Motion* (2001) by Algonquin artist Nadia Myre (b. 1974). Beyond the video, a trio of early Quebec religious sculptures dominates the first third of the gallery: a large sculpted crucifixion hangs from the ceiling while polychrome low relief statues of Saints Peter and Paul are placed on a bright blue wall. Moving further into the gallery, contemporary Cree artist Kent Monkman's (b. 1965) large painting *The King's Beavers* (2011) is on the viewer's right, its fantastical imagining of the politics of colonization as a battle over the economic and symbolic importance of the beaver creating a startling contrast with the colourful yet sombre religious sculptures that are its immediate neighbours. The rest of the gallery displays paintings and sculpture more conventionally associated with the colonial period: paintings of members of the Quebec bourgeoisie by Antoine Plamondon (1804–1895) and Théophile Hamel (1817–1870), anonymous *ex-votos*, reliquaries, historical paintings by Joseph Légaré (1795–1855), and François Malepart de Beaucourt's (1740–1794) portrait of Marie-Thérèse Zémire (1786). Formerly known as *Portrait of a Negro Slave* and now titled *Portrait of a Haitian Woman*, the work is on loan from the McCord Museum and hangs alongside the newly acquired portrait of an architect by the same artist.[5] In a small room in the centre of the gallery, religious and secular silverware from the period is displayed to great effect, with attention being paid to present the work of both settler and aboriginal silversmiths from the period.

In the back third of the gallery, the curators have hung work from the English colonial period to the late nineteenth century, with landscapes by Allan Edson (1846–1888), Homer Watson (1855–1936), and Cornelius Krieghoff (1815–1872), along with two large portraits of members of the Salishan nation by Paul Kane (1810–1871). In this latter part of the "Founding Identities" floor, viewers also see a selection of objects from the Northwest Coast First Nations mostly collected by F. Cleveland Morgan (1881–1962) while he was the self-appointed curator of decorative arts and material culture at the Art Association of Montreal's museum.[6] Acquired during a period when Aboriginal art from the Northwest Coast was considered the only accomplished form of primitive art in Canada, Morgan's purchases sit uneasily – both geographically and temporally – with the landscapes of Upper and Lower Canada on the walls. The mode of display contributes to this sense

of unease as fake trees placed at either end of the glass case cast overpowering shadows on the paintings behind.

The video by Myre and the painting by Monkman signal the intent of the "Founding Identities" display to disrupt the representations of Aboriginal peoples as a disappearing race of blood-thirsty warriors (Légaré), archaic primitives (Kane), or quaint characters inhabiting the landscape (Krieghoff). Specially commissioned for this space, Monkman's depiction of settlers and Natives killing and cradling the beavers in equal measure unbalances preconceived notions of 'good guys' and 'bad guys' that viewers might hold. At the same time, the painting comments directly on New France's colonial history making specific reference to events and figures and their iconic depictions. Meanwhile, Myre's hauntingly beautiful video loop of an unidentifiable figure slowly paddling out of the fog and then back into it juxtaposes traditional practices with contemporary technology to underscore the continuity of Indigenous ways of life from the past into the present. A similar juxtaposition is attempted in the back part of the gallery but with less success: *Untitled (The Snake)* (1969), a large painting on leather by Anishinaabe artist Norval Morrisseau (1931–2007), is hung next to the Kane portraits, while the Northwest Coast objects in the display case share space with a work from Brian Jungen's (b. 1970) *Prototype for a New Understanding* series.[7] The juxtaposition of Jungen's sculpture with the work of such figures as Charles (1839–1920) and Isabella (1858–1926) Edenshaw, Bill Reid (1920–1998), and other artists of Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian descent works well within the contained frame of the display case. However, in a space largely devoted to artists from the Quebec and Ontario regions, the dominance of contemporary and historical First Nations art from the Northwest Coast art fails to achieve the consideration of artistic exchange among cultures that the curators likely intended.

The next floor down is "The Era of Annual Exhibitions" gallery, which features paintings and sculptures from 1880 to 1920 (Fig. 2). The centre of the gallery is taken up by a raised platform that presents some of the MMFA's extensive holdings of bronze and plaster sculptures by Alfred Laliberté (1878–1953) and Louis-Philippe Hébert (1850–1917). With its bright white flooring and dark brown plinths, the platform provides a dramatic focus to the room as well as a singular vantage point from which to look at the paintings on the surrounding walls. On the left side of the gallery, paintings from the period are hung salon-style effectively illustrating the mode of museum display most common during the nineteenth century. At the far end of the room, two groupings of paintings by Ozias Leduc (1864–1955) and James Wilson Morrice (1865–1924) are on view while the final wall takes the display into

2 | Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, "The Era of Annual Exhibitions" gallery, Fall 2011. (Photo: MMFA, Marc Cramer)

the Impressionist period with works by Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Côté (1869–1937), Maurice Cullen (1866–1934), and Helen McNicoll (1879–1915). The startling thing on this floor, however, is the music. Consisting of period works by Canadian composers, the soundtrack is intended to evoke the mood of the Art Association of Montreal's annual Spring exhibitions

of contemporary art and Fall presentations of highlights from members' collections during which a chamber orchestra often played. Although the continuous presence of the music can become distracting, the link to past traditions, as well as to the adjoining concert hall cannot be overlooked.

On the next floor, "Towards Modernism" offers what might be the pavilion's most interesting recasting of the narrative of Canadian art history in its presentation of works from the 1910s to the 1940s. Often considered the golden age of Canadian artistic practice and centering on the work of Tom Thomson (1877–1917) and the Group of Seven, the MMFA reorients the conventional presentation of this period to focus on the contributions of Montreal's artists by opening its display with specific reference to the Beaver Hall Group and continuing with the work of members of the Contemporary Arts Society. It is only at the far end of the gallery space that one encounters the work of Thomson and Lawren Harris (1885–1970), with other Group of Seven members represented in the second half of the gallery. The display area is bisected by a floating wall and, on the right side of the room, three bays provide a somewhat crowded space for the presentation of paintings and other objects. These are intimate spaces, and as a result, the scale of the works on display is quite small and the amount of room available to step back to see anything is not ideal. A feeling of claustrophobia is averted by the use of off-white and light ochre walls in all but the bays, which are painted a surprising black. A sizable display of works by Marc-Aurèle Fortin (1888–1970) is found at the back of this gallery, the legacy of the donation of the contents of the Musée Marc-Aurèle Fortin to the MMFA in 2007.

Going down another storey, the viewer returns to the intended main entrance of the Bourgie Pavilion on the ground floor and "The Age of the Manifesto" display (Fig. 3). This is the floor that celebrates the emergence of Quebec's modern art history: the moment when the province's francophone artists rebelled against the dogma-filled curriculum of Church-governed art schools and struck out on their own. The display is largely chronological in this gallery, starting with the artists associated with Alfred Pellan (1906–1988) and the *Prisme d'yeux*; next is a large section devoted to the paintings of Paul-Émile Borduas (1905–1960) alongside a selection of works by his fellow Automatistes; around the corner are large paintings from the 1950s by Claude Tousignant (b. 1932) and Guido Molinari (1933–2004), while a selection of works by the members of the first generation of Plasticiens occupies a small wall at the centre of the gallery.[8] Sculptures are well represented in this gallery featuring smaller works by Charles Daudelin (1920–2001), Louis Archambault (1915–2003), Ulysses Comtois (1931–1999), and Anne Kahane (b. 1924). Meanwhile, a separate room dedicated to works from Jean-Paul Riopelle's most iconic period (1950–1975) underscores his national status.

3 | Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, "The Age of the Manifesto" gallery, Fall 2011. (Photo: MMFA, Denis Farley). Armand Vaillancourt, *Untitled*, 1958-60, © Armand Vaillancourt/SODRAC (2013) and Françoise Sullivan, *The Progress of Cruelty*, 1964, © Françoise Sullivan/SODRAC (2013)

"The Age of the Manifesto" is the largest of the galleries in the Bourgie pavilion. Located under what was originally the nave of the Erskine and American Church, the square footage is double that of any of the other galleries and as a result, there is a feeling of openness missing in the floors above. Encompassing only one province and a relatively short period of time, this gallery provided curators with more opportunity to examine the work of artists in detail, although some figures are treated in more depth than

others. The development of the work of Borduas is a case in point: the artist's oeuvre is presented from 1940 (the *Portrait de Mme Gagnon*) through the Automatiste period, ending with a strong showing of four works from the black and white period, as well as Borduas's "last" painting *Composition #69*, found on his easel upon his death in Paris in 1960. The focus on Borduas is not surprising. Montreal is where *Refus global* was written; understood to be a founding document of the Quiet Revolution, it was a strong imperative to Québécois to reject the Church's yoke and to see themselves as part of an international secularism that adhered to neither of the political ideologies that had dominated the preceding twenty years. If one of the slogans of the Quiet Revolution was "Québec sait faire," then this gallery is a clear indication of one field where Québécois achieved a high degree of innovation and success.

The last of the six galleries of the Bourgie Pavilion is in the basement. Titled "Expanding Fields," it is a long, corridor-like space that leads to the contemporary galleries in the basements of the Hornstein and Desmarais Pavilions. The space is high and wide enough to permit the display of large modernist works from the 1960s and 1970s; artists from Quebec and the rest of Canada include Jack Bush (1909–1977), Paterson Ewen (1925–2002), the stripe paintings of Tousignant and Molinari, Michael Snow (b. 1928), and Serge Tousignant (b. 1942). Spray paintings along with a large painted canoe bring Riopelle into this space as well, and tucked away next to the elevator the more observant viewer will find Alex Colville's (1920–2013) *Horse and Church* (1964). Startling by their absence from this gallery are works by women artists such as Joyce Wieland (1930–1988), Betty Goodwin (1923–2008), and Françoise Sullivan (b. 1925) whose equally large-scaled paintings would have provided an important counterpoint to the canonical figures on display.

Writing Canadian Art History at the MMFA

As the most recent reinstallation of Canadian art in a public art gallery, the MMFA's display raises a number of questions regarding mapping art history within the museological context: what role does geographic location play in narrating a national art history? To what extent do museums need to address (and potentially redress) their collecting histories in presenting a comprehensive history of Canadian art? And how can Canadian museums effectively incorporate the work of Indigenous artists in their permanent displays? Although emerging out of my consideration of the Bourgie Pavilion at the MMFA, such questions are equally pertinent to the consideration of other public art institutions across the country.

The sequence of displays firmly places the narrative as being *from* Montreal, whether through the lens of the MMFA's own history or through a focus on events that took place in the city. The first approach can be seen

to varying degrees in the didactic panels introducing the displays on the top four floors. Both the "*Takuminartut*" and the "Founding Identities" floors reference the collecting activities of the MMFA: the "*Takuminartut*" wall text identifies the donation of three pieces of Inuit sculpture in 1953 by Board chair and volunteer curator F. Cleveland Morgan as a milestone in the entry of Inuit art into Canadian art museums; and the panel introducing the "Founding Identities" display notes that nineteenth-century landscapes were the first *Canadian* works of art to be exhibited by the Art Association of Montreal and, as the catalogue notes, they were also the association's earliest acquisitions. There is a clearer correlation between the growth of art in Canada and the MMFA's historical role in that development in the "Annual Exhibitions" and "Towards Modernism" floors. In both cases, the wall text begins with the Art Association's activities: the institution's annual Spring exhibitions, inaugurated in 1880, enabled local artists, professional as well as amateur, to present their work to the public. Hung according to the display conventions of these annual exhibitions, the works featured in this room are presented within the context of the contemporary aesthetic ideals that originally framed them, rather than as examples of a conservative academicism as they might appear in the present. Meanwhile, the wall text accompanying "Towards Modernism" shifts the development of modern art in Canada from a narrative that begins with the Group of Seven to one that is oriented to the activities of the Montreal-based Beaver Hall Group and cites this as an example of the growing interest in modern art that accompanied the Art Association's move to its new premises on Sherbrooke Street in 1912.

In seeking to locate its curatorial narrative explicitly from a Montreal vantage point, the MMFA challenges the dominant view of Canadian art history that continues to be based on a lineage that leads to and departs from a notion of landscape most commonly associated with the Group of Seven. This is particularly striking in the "Towards Modernism" floor (Fig. 4) where sculptures by Henri Hébert (1884–1950) and figurative paintings by Edwin Holgate (1892–1977), Prudence Heward (1896–1947), Randolph Hewton (1888–1960), and Lilias Torrance Newton (1896–1980) are the first works on display, while figures generally considered anchors of the period – Thomson and members of the Group of Seven – only appear at the furthest end of the space. This welcome change from the conventional narrative draws on extensive writing by Quebec art historians on the different reactions to modernism in Quebec and Ontario. As writers such as Esther Trépanier have noted, the celebrated unpeopled landscapes of the Group of Seven had little resonance in a province that was intent on underscoring the resilience of its people and its culture.[9] Artists in Quebec depicted the inhabited landscape of Quebec, both rural and metropolitan, gradually shifting their explorations

4 | Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, "Towards Modernism" gallery, Fall 2011. (Photo: MMFA, Denis Farley)

from an atmospheric impressionism to a more modernist vocabulary to reflect both the growing urbanization of the province and the influence of international (read French) aesthetic practices. Such changes were part of a larger rejection of the regionalism that characterized Quebec at the turn of the twentieth century, when the Catholic Church dictated the means of cultural *survivance*. Through the 1920s and 1930s, however, new approaches to identity formation emerged more in line with the modern and with an internationalist outlook.

This view of the experience of modernity in Quebec is underscored in the selection of works on display in "Towards Modernism," most visibly in Adrien Hébert's (1890–1967) scenes of Montreal's nightlife and its bustling port. City scenes by Fortin on this floor also add to the image of Quebec's emergent modernity, and provide an important contrast to the images of

emptied wilderness in paintings by Thomson, Arthur Lismer (1885–1969), and Harris. But interestingly, it is the portraits and figurative works by artists associated with the Beaver Hall Group and the Contemporary Arts Society that predominate in "Towards Modernism." Members of the Beaver Hall Group and central figures in the development of art in Montreal, artists such as Edwin Holgate and Lilias Torrance Newton are represented in much Canadian art history through their association with the Group of Seven and its successor the Canadian Group of Painters rather than as members of a bilingual group of painters and sculptors seeking to bring public attention to modern approaches to their craft. As both the wall text and the catalogue essay on the Beaver Hall artists attest, the existing literature has consistently misrepresented the group as predominantly female and anglophone, thereby diminishing the formative role of the interaction of these artists on the shape of art in Montreal for many years to come. In contrast, the MMFA's presentation of the work of members of the Contemporary Arts Society emphasizes the work of its founder John Lyman (1886–1967) and other anglophone members but largely ignores the participation of numerous francophone artists, placing them instead on the floor below as part of a narrative of Quebec's coming of age.

Despite this skew in the presentation of the Contemporary Arts Society, the orientation of this part of the Bourgie Pavilion's display is a fascinating recasting of dominant Canadian art historiography: by centering much of its narrative around the history of the institution itself, the Art Association of Montreal's role either as supporter of the emerging modernism of the Beaver Hall artists or as a perceived bastion of academicism against which Lyman's Contemporary Arts Society could rail, works perfectly as an organizing principle for the display of a diverse grouping of artists. Institutional histories are often rendered invisible in permanent collection exhibitions, even though the narratives of these displays are contingent upon the collecting histories of these institutions. This is clearly illustrated in the "Founding Identities" floor where gaps in the MMFA's collection of paintings and sculpture from Nouvelle France resulted in a concerted acquisition plan linked to the opening of the new pavilion to ensure that this important period was represented in the display. That such works were absent from the collection speaks volumes about the tastes of the original members of the Art Association of Montreal as well as attitudes towards Canadian art history by the MMFA's subsequent directors and curators.[10] Indeed, paintings from the French colonial period originally entered the collection through the auspices of F. Cleveland Morgan's museum acquisitions committee whose purview encompassed decorative and traditional arts. "Traditional" in this instance included both the expressive production of Canada's Indigenous peoples along with the

paintings and sculptural works of early French-Canadian artists, a collocation that underscores attitudes towards the French-Canadian past not only by the elite members of the Art Association of Montreal's board but by early chroniclers of Canada's art history.[11]

Collecting taste also informs another striking aspect of the MMFA's new display: its integration of art by Aboriginal artists into the larger narrative of Canadian art history. This is not a new phenomenon in Canadian museums with the National Gallery launching its "Art of this Land" reinstallation of the Canadian Galleries in 2003, and the Art Gallery of Ontario entirely revising its Canadian display in 2008. These reinstallations used two distinct approaches to the incorporation of Aboriginal art into the display of Canadian art with different effects. The National Gallery's display is chronological and charts the development of artistic production in Canada from the pre-contact times to the 1970s. Objects of First Nations and Métis expressive culture are integrated into the display throughout, providing a juxtaposition of settler and Native art that illustrates the diversity of practices within given regions and periods across the country. The Art Gallery of Ontario, on the other hand, has chosen a more thematic approach and combines strategic presentations of contemporaneous objects (e.g. Haida model totem poles alongside late nineteenth-century paintings) with contemporary works by artists of First Nations descent that speak back to the works by settler artists on display.[12] The MMFA has combined aspects of both approaches: pairing settler- and Native-made objects in some areas, for example, the silver work from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and, in other areas, presenting contemporary works that disrupt viewers' expectations of the representation of First Peoples. This is an effective strategy in the "Founding Identities" floor (Fig. 5): immediately faced with the juxtaposition of Nadia Myre's paddler and the crucified Christ, viewers understand that this will not be a standard presentation of Early Canadian art. Monkman's painting is similarly unexpected and shapes viewers' perceptions of the rest of the exhibition. But while the display on this floor successfully accomplishes the task of bringing the aesthetic production of Indigenous peoples into dialogue with settler production, such a conversation is largely absent from the rest of the MMFA's display. "Founding Identities" should, of course, include the work of Aboriginal artists, but could this production not also be integrated into other parts of the pavilion? "The Era of Annual Exhibitions" floor presents several sculptures of Indian scouts and groupings – indeed the cover of the Bourgie Pavilion's catalogue features a reproduction of Louis-Philippe Hébert's *Algonquins* (1916), the model for a large sculpture commissioned for Quebec's Parliament Buildings. What kind of intervention could be made in this space to address the problematic use of Indigenous figures to

5 | Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, "Founding Identities" gallery, Fall 2011. (Photo: MMFA, Denis Farley)

valorize Quebec's national past? Similarly, portraits of First Nations peoples were regular subjects for members of the Beaver Hall Group, and paintings of Northwest Coast villages by Emily Carr (1871–1945) and Edwin Holgate are featured in "Towards Modernism." And while these latter works are placed alongside a Tsimshian dancing blanket in a nod to the importance of the *Exhibition of West Coast Art: Native and Modern* presented at the Art Association of Montreal in 1928, there is little reflection on the relations between contemporaneous modes of production and possible exchanges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists that may have occurred during this period.

Such omissions can certainly be justified by the institution's collecting history. Like most art museums, the MMFA has limited holdings of Indigenous art, although F. Cleveland Morgan's long association with the Canadian Handicrafts Guild resulted in the MMFA having more historical objects by First Nations artists in its collection than many other fine art museums

in Canada.[13] However, these objects reflect the taste of the period and the valorization of work from the Northwest Coast and, from the early 1950s onward, the Arctic. If the MMFA's aim is to present a Montreal-centred narrative of Canadian art history, and to have that narrative fully include representative work from First Nations artists from the area, then it will have to mount a strong campaign to encourage acquisitions in this area, as it did to redress the absence of works by French colonial artists. But the omission of works by First Nations artists – historical and contemporary – throughout the Quebec and Canadian art galleries raises another question: the status and perception of those objects within Canadian art history.

In an essay on *Meeting Ground*, the exhibition he curated in 2003 from the Art Gallery of Ontario's permanent collection, Richard W. Hill reflected on the challenges of incorporating Indigenous and settler art. His statement that "Aboriginal art off in a space of its own is not particularly threatening, but the notion that Aboriginal art might enter and trouble the established narratives of 'Canadian' art is something else"[14] expresses the importance of attending to the manner in which displayed objects are incorporated into permanent exhibitions. If objects by Indigenous artists function only as supplementary devices to illustrate settler art and are prevented from questioning the very values that have shaped Canadian art history through their mode of presentation, then the status of those objects is diminished and the canon of Canadian art remains untroubled. Contemporary art that speaks back to a history of colonialism also has its place in such displays, but it too can end up being an isolated device that seeks to emphasize how far we have come as a society; in other words, that we have left our colonial legacy behind and welcome contemporary critique. Both of these approaches further entrench perceptions of Aboriginal peoples and expressive cultures as being located in the past and rely on western aesthetic conventions of museum display to direct and contain the critical force such works might have. A similar point could be raised in relation to women artists, African-Canadian artists, and artists of Asian descent whose work has not been as actively collected as that of their white male counterparts but whose presence in institutional collections is not necessarily reflected in their representation in museums' permanent exhibitions. In the MMFA's current display, for example, the work of the female members of the Automatistes is limited to Maurice Perron's (1924–1999) photographs of Françoise Sullivan's *Danse dans la neige* (1948) in the main gallery of "The Age of the Manifesto" while Marcelle Ferron is represented by the post-Automatiste stained glass work at the Sherbrooke entrance of the pavilion. Shockingly, the "Expanded Fields" gallery proposes a vision of the 1960s and 1970s populated entirely by men, despite an extended discussion of Montreal artist Betty Goodwin in the

pavilion's catalogue. Artists of colour are represented to an even lesser degree although the presence of a painting by Robert S. Duncanson (1821–1872) in the "Founding Identities" gallery calls attention to the Quebec-based work of this important African-American artist. Until we seek to know more about the work of artists of colour in Canada, however, their presence in museum collections and permanent exhibitions will remain limited.

As the discussion of the representation of Indigenous artists, women artists, and artists of colour suggests, inclusion requires more than the addition of previously overlooked figures to an existing narrative of Canadian art history: it demands that we examine the foundations of that narrative and work to develop a new approach that can productively explore the wealth of objects of creative expression from across Canada's many cultures.[15] Indeed, it is imperative for museums as well as art historians to continue to reflect critically on the narratives that they construct. Written texts will always be more amenable to the kind of self-reflexive art history I am calling for because they are not constrained by a specific collection or requirements to display works from important donors. The public nature of museum exhibitions, however, means that curators have greater visibility for their interventions, allowing both for increased critical analysis from outsiders (such as this essay) along with greater opportunities to change perceptions of the history of artistic production in Canada. The MMFA has gone some distance in this attempt, presenting a history of art in Canada that locates its display firmly within the context of the city of Montreal and its own collecting activities. Indeed, the MMFA's installation reveals as much about the impact of institutional tastes on the production of Canadian art history as it challenges conventional narratives of that history. As such, despite some gaps in the material presented, the MMFA's Bourgie Pavilion is remarkable for calling attention to the role that museum collecting practices play in shaping our understanding of the development of artistic production, and for producing a narrative of Quebec and Canadian art that speaks clearly to the specificities of art's history in Montreal.

NOTES

1 I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the students in my Winter 2012 undergraduate seminar on the Montreal Museum of Fine Art's Galleries of Quebec and Canadian art to the writing of this essay. Their enthusiastic engagement with the material in seminar discussions and through their own research has informed many of the ideas presented in this essay, and for that I want to thank them by name: François Abbott, Sabrina Boivin, Béatrice Cloutier-Trépanier, Cliodna Cussen,

Roberto D'Andrea, Pauline D'Arcy, Arièle Dionne-Krosnick, Amina Joober, Sean Kershaw, Chantale Potie, Pascal Robitaille, Amira Shabason, and Geneviève Wallen.

2 The closure of all but the main entrance to the Desmarais Pavilion was due to budget cuts.

3 Altmejd's bronze sculpture is one of three works commissioned for the opening of the pavilion: the other two are Dominique Blain's (b. 1957) *Mirabilia* (2011), an installation on the Church's roof visible only from the windows of the pavilion's third and fourth floors; and Kent Monkman's painting *The King's Beavers*, visible on the "Founding Identities" floor.

4 There is no signage indicating the preferred route although attendants will recommend that visitors begin their tour on the top floor. The press release that accompanied the opening of the pavilion as well as the chronological hang of the collection further supports beginning at the top of the pavilion but alternate navigations of the space are easily performed.

5 The painting of Marie-Thérèse Zémire has long held an important place in histories of Canadian art as the best-known work by the country's first [native-born] artist, François Malepart de Beaucourt. Its display at the MMFA underscores this positioning, as the label text ignores the implications of this raced representation in favour of a discourse on provenance in which the former *Portrait of a Negro Slave* is used to confirm the dates of Beaucourt's sojourn in Haiti. For an extended analysis of Beaucourt's portrait in terms of race see Charmaine A. NELSON, "Slavery, Portraiture and the Colonial Limits of Canadian Art History," in *Representing the Black Female Subject in Western Art* (New York: Routledge 2012), 63–75.

6 The museum was housed in rooms on the left-hand side of the original Maxwell building and presented decorative art as well as the "primitive art" objects that Morgan argued were an essential component of any major museum. In this view, he was doubtless basing himself on the collecting practices of such institutions as the Victoria and Albert in London and the Metropolitan Museum in New York. See Norma MORGAN "F. Cleveland Morgan and the Decorative Arts Collection in the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts" (MA thesis, Concordia University, 1985).

7 There is also a small painting by Michael Merrill (b.1953) based on a display of posters in the passage between Place des Arts metro station and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. The posters in Merrill's painting announce Jungen's exhibition at the MACM in 2006 and feature Jungen's *Cetology* sculptures.

8 In Fall 2012, the early Plasticien works were moved to share the outside wall with early works by Molinari and Tousignant, and later geometric work by Automatiste members Fernand Leduc (b. 1916) and Jean-Paul Mousseau (1927–1999). A sculpture by Françoise Sullivan has also been placed in front of this wall. Landscapes by Jean Paul Lemieux (1904–1990) and Jacques de Tonnancour (1917–2005) have been placed in the inner wall of this gallery next to the sculptures

9 See for example, Esther TRÉPANIER, "The Expression of a Difference: The Milieu of Quebec Art and the Group of Seven," in *The True North: Canadian Landscape Painting 1896–1939*, ed. Michael Tooby (London: Lund Humphries in association with the Barbican Art Gallery 1991), 99–116; and François-Marc GAGNON, "La peinture des années trente au Québec," *Journal of Canadian Art History* 3:1–2 (1976): 2–20.

10 Collection gaps plague most museums and are addressed at different times in an institution's history. See, for example, this assessment of the MMFA's collection in

1961 as reported in the pages of *Canadian Art*: "A particular problem for the Montreal Museum has been that a lack of methodological purchasing in earlier years has left gaps in the presentation of the development of Canada's art. Therefore, by a policy decision, emphasis in the past eighteen months has been placed on buying works of the Group of Seven and significant examples of most members have been acquired. In addition to these, a number of works by the young artists of the Province of Quebec have also been purchased in the belief that while their subsequent evolution will indicate the realization of their promise, the public support of the Museum at this point may encourage or help them." "The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts," *Canadian Art* 18:3 (1961): 155.

11 Attention to the work of French colonial artists by an anglophone art historian was first given by J. Russell Harper in his 1966 *Painting in Canada: A History* and he garnered much of his information from Gérard Morisset's *La Peinture traditionelle au Canada Français*, published in 1960 with a foreword that chastised anglophone art historians for locating the origins of artistic production in Canada in the work of Paul Kane and Cornelius Krieghoff.

12 For an extended discussion of these displays see Anne Whitelaw, "Placing Aboriginal Art at the National Gallery of Canada," *Canadian Journal of Communications* 31:1 (2006): 197–214; and Ruth B. Phillips, "Modes of Inclusion: Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Canada and the Art Gallery of Ontario," in *Museum Pieces: Towards the Indigenization of Canadian Museums* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press 2011), 252–76.

13 On Morgan's acquisitions of Indigenous art see Bruce Hugh Russell, "Aboriginal Art," in *Quebec and Canadian Art: The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts' Collection*, ed. Jacques Des Rochers (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts 2011), 80–5.

14 Richard W. Hill, "Meeting Ground: The Reinstallation of the AGO's McLaughlin Gallery," in *Making a Noise: Aboriginal Perspectives on Art, Art History, Critical Writing and Community*, ed. Lee-Ann Martin (Banff: Walter Phillips Gallery/Banff Centre Press 2004), 54.

15 For a discussion of the issue of inclusion in relation to works by Indigenous artists see Lynda Jessup, "Hard Inclusion," in *On Aboriginal Representation in the Gallery,* ed. Lynda Jessup and Shannon Bagg (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization 2002), xiii–xxx.

Un nouveau pavillon d'art québécois et canadien au Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal

ANNE WHITELAW

Le 14 octobre 2011, le Pavillon Claire et Marc Bourgie d'art québécois et canadien était inauguré au Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal. Incorporant l'église de style néo-roman Erskine and American, dont la nef avait été reconvertie en salle de concert, le nouveau pavillon ajoutait 2 000 mètres carrés et six étages d'espace d'exposition pour la présentation de la collection de plus en plus importante d'art québécois, canadien et autochtone du MBAM. Il a fallu construire, dans l'espace disponible à l'arrière de l'église, des galeries empilées à la verticale qui dictent un parcours spécifique où l'histoire de l'art québécois et canadien est présentée sous forme de vignettes discrètes, en ordre chronologique, depuis l'époque de la colonisation jusqu'aux années soixante-dix. En commençant le parcours à l'étage supérieur, les visiteurs sont invités à regarder des œuvres de la collection d'art inuit du MBAM dans une exposition intitulée « *Takuminartut*: L'art inuit contemporain et actuel de 1948 à nos jours. » Malgré un mode d'exposition plutôt primitif, la galerie décrit l'œuvre des artistes inuits comme étant à la fois « contemporaine » et ancrée dans le mode de vie traditionnel. L'étage qui suit, en descendant, présente « Identités fondatrices » où sont réunies des œuvres d'artistes français et britanniques de la période coloniale à côté d'une sélection d'œuvres contemporaines ou anciennes par des artistes autochtones. Ce qui frappe particulièrement dans cet espace, ce sont les œuvres des artistes autochtones contemporains Nadia Myre, Kent Monkman et Brian Jungen qui tentent de briser le paradigme colonial dominant des sculptures religieuses, portraits et paysages de l'époque coloniale. Les deux étages suivants – « L'époque des Salons » et « Les chemins de la modernité » – retracent le développement de l'art au Canada depuis les années 1880 jusqu'aux années 1930, mais en modifient le discours traditionnel en le présentant selon une perspective montréalaise. Cela se fait soit en mettant l'accent sur la contribution d'artistes montréalais – des années vingt et trente, principalement l'histoire du Groupe du Beaver Hall et de la Société d'art contemporain –, soit en soulignant le rôle de l'institution elle-même – l'histoire du MBAM et de ses Salons de printemps d'art contemporain – dans la construction de l'histoire de l'art.

L'étage suivant intensifie le thème montréalais de l'exposition dans « Le temps des manifestes », qui célèbre l'arrivée de l'abstraction au Canada à travers l'œuvre de trois groupes d'artistes montréalais : les Automatistes, les Plasticiens et les artistes associés à Prisme d'yeux. Comme son nom l'indique, ce large espace célèbre l'arrivée à maturité de l'art québécois par d'importantes présentations d'œuvres de Paul-Émile Borduas, de Jean-Paul Riopelle et de membres des première et seconde générations de Plasticiens. La présentation de l'art québécois et canadien culmine dans le dernier étage, dans la longue galerie du sous-sol qui relie les Pavillons Bourgie et Hornstein. Cette salle présente les œuvres d'artistes principalement abstraits des années soixante et soixante-dix et se relie harmonieusement à l'exposition d'art canadien contemporain dans le sous-sol du Pavillon Hornstein.

Avec le réaccrochage des collections canadiennes au Musée des beaux-arts du Canada (2003) et à l'Art Gallery of Ontario (2008), le réaménagement du MBAM appelle à une réévaluation des principes fondamentaux du discours sur l'histoire de l'art canadien. Au MBAC et à l'AGO, l'objectif principal était l'incorporation d'œuvres d'artistes autochtones, que ce soit par l'inclusion d'œuvres contemporaines, au MBAC, ou par la juxtaposition d'art contemporain par des artistes autochtones en dialogue avec des œuvres coloniales. Bien que le MBAM ait utilisé les deux approches – spécifiquement dans la galerie « identités fondatrices » – le reste de l'exposition est étonnamment dépourvu de toute référence à l'œuvre d'artistes autochtones. La contribution la plus intéressante du MBAM à la reformulation de l'histoire de l'art canadien est l'effort concerté de situer le discours comme étant « de » Montréal. Le résultat est que le modernisme est imaginé moins comme le triomphe de grandes régions désertes que du point de vue de paysages habités et de représentations figurées d'artistes francophones et anglophones du Québec. En outre, l'histoire institutionnelle du MBAM est constamment mise de l'avant dans l'installation, aussi bien pour accentuer certaines tendances de la collection que pour souligner la place centrale des musées dans la construction d'histoires de l'art.

L'Art vivant. Autour de Paul-Émile Borduas

JEAN-PHILIPPE WARREN

Montréal, Boréal, 2011
224 p.

Louise Vigneault

Avant de découvrir *L'Art vivant. Autour de Paul-Émile Borduas*, j'avais été conquise par l'ouvrage que Warren avait livré en 2002, en collaboration avec É.-Martin Meunier, *Sortir de la Grande Noirceur. L'horizon personnaliste de la Révolution tranquille* (Septentrion). Le sociologue et le spécialiste des sciences religieuses levaient alors le voile sur certaines dimensions trop longtemps occultées de la place qu'auraient tenue les courants religieux de gauche dans l'essor de la culture progressiste et des mouvements révolutionnaires, reconsidérant ainsi les anciennes dichotomies rigides opposant l'artiste moderne et la communauté, l'accomplissement de soi et l'implication sociale. Les mouvements d'action catholique qui s'inspiraient de la philosophie personnaliste instiguée en France par Emmanuel Mounier trouvaient alors une application dans les méthodes d'enseignement auxquelles ont fait appel Borduas et autres guides de la jeunesse des années de duplessisme. L'ouvrage de Warren et Meunier a fourni aux historiens de l'art et de la culture une perspective nouvelle de réflexion et de considération de cette période charnière de la Révolution tranquille, où les forces de changement s'abreuvaient des espoirs et des actions concrètes, éclairées, de la jeunesse et des groupes sociaux jusqu'alors réduits au mutisme par le pouvoir ultramontain et duplessiste. Avec *L'Art vivant. Autour de Paul-Émile Borduas*, Warren se donne cette fois pour objectif de scruter plus profondément les pensées sociales et philosophiques qui ont forgé le concept d'« art vivant », véritable éthique de la création qui tend à réconcilier, plus qu'il ne l'a laissé croire, la quête esthétique et éthique de l'artiste-professeur. L'auteur part du constat selon lequel la rupture progressive que Borduas a opérée avec les milieux religieux et politiques était plus nuancée qu'on ne l'a prétendu. En tentant notamment de départager les points de convergence et de divergence qui l'opposaient aux différentes instances, et de dégager les croisements entre les réflexions des artistes de l'avant-garde et ceux des intellectuels catholiques progressistes, Warren réussit à cerner les tentatives communes de

réconcilier l'épanouissement individuel et l'ouverture à une conscience élargie, l'immanence et la transcendance, réconciliation thomiste qui se trouvera concrétisée à travers la matière et l'acte artistique. Entre les pensées de Jacques Maritain, d'Henri Bergson et d'André Breton, Borduas et ses collègues auraient en fait entretenu des idéaux communs, tout en se munissant d'armes idéologiques dont la portée s'est avérée toutefois inégalement efficace.

Pour livrer sa démonstration, Warren circonscrit d'abord la définition de l'« art vivant », cette expression tournée tout entière vers la plénitude de l'Être et la recherche continuelle (p. 68) qui a pris forme en Europe entre les deux guerres, dans les courants moniste et personnaliste en vigueur, pour nourrir par la suite les activités pédagogiques et pamphlétaires de Borduas et de ses collègues progressistes. La filiation qui avait d'abord lié l'artiste à son premier maître, Ozias Leduc, et au courant du renouveau de l'art sacré, ouvrait alors sur un univers spirituel que plusieurs ont qualifié de « mystique », mais qui engageait en réalité une démarche d'accomplissement de l'individu et une tentative de réconcilier matière et esprit, objectivation et transformation de l'Être. En s'abandonnant à l'inquiétude et au risque qui ont pour double effet de déstabiliser et de dynamiser le Sujet, les catholiques progressistes (Couturier, Hertel, etc.) ravivaient les valeurs de base du christianisme, celles de l'engagement et de l'ouverture à l'inconnu, sans toutefois sacrifier l'épanouissement personnel. Ainsi, la démarche humaniste et critique de l'existentialisme chrétien rejoignait, à certains égards, la quête d'absolu et les sacrifices de l'artiste moderne. Borduas tentera toutefois de repousser les contraintes émises aussi bien par les diverses instances religieuses et politiques que par les projets esthétiques jugés trop formalistes, afin de libérer sans compromis la sensibilité humaine et de l'exprimer directement dans la matière, comme il l'expliquait : « Le chant est la vibration imprimée à une matière par une sensibilité humaine. Cela rend la matière vivante. C'est de là que découle tout le mystère d'une œuvre d'art : qu'une matière inerte puisse devenir vivante » (p. 92).

Dans la troisième partie intitulée « La charge du peintre épormyable », un clin d'œil au modèle donquichottien mis en scène par Claude Gauvreau, Warren relate le parcours idéologique et pédagogique de Borduas, qui a mené à la radicalisation de ses actions à l'École du meuble comme à la Société d'art contemporain et au sein même des cercles progressistes. Si les méthodes personnalistes dites « intuitives » d'enseignement des arts et la valorisation de l'expression des enfants gagnent largement, à l'époque, le système éducatif occidental, la pleine compréhension de leur pertinence entre en conflit, au Québec, avec la chasse gardée académique et les valeurs rationalisantes de la tradition catholique. Ce conflit contribue alors à alimenter la mission légitime dans laquelle s'engage Borduas, au prix de sa propre marginalisation et de sa mise au ban. Cette rupture définitive est alors provoquée par son

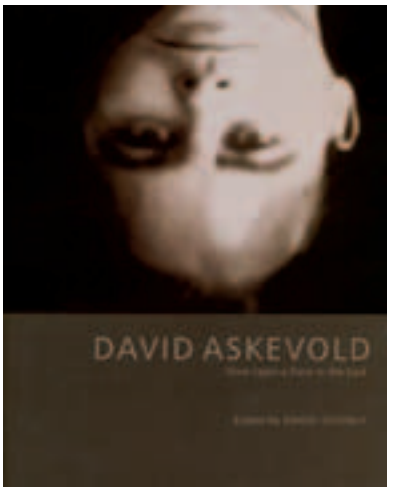
rejet de toute forme d'héritage et par son désir d'appliquer le principe de l'*art vivant* non seulement à l'activité artistique, mais aux autres sphères de l'existence.

Dans la dernière partie, intitulée « Quand mes rêves partent en guerre », Warren tente de retracer les causes de cette rupture définitive à travers les regards rétrospectifs que Borduas et ses collègues ont jetés sur le manifeste de 1948, mais aussi à la lumière des événements politiques et sociaux qui ont marqué la période de l'après-guerre : le renforcement du pouvoir conservateur, le conformisme de la guerre froide, l'essor du libéralisme et de la culture de consommation, et, en réaction à cet état de fait, le renforcement de l'existentialisme, de l'idée de faillite de la civilisation et autres visions eschatologiques en vigueur. Malgré ces tensions, la communauté aurait profité d'un enrichissement culturel grâce au flot de migration qui contribuera à compléter l'exercice de rattrapage culturel. À ce titre, la synthèse des avant-gardes, que Pellan s'est donné pour objectif de réaliser, fait figure de modèle exemplaire, alors que Borduas choisit de fixer sa quête dans l'absolu de l'automatisme. L'auteur sonde, avec détails et finesse, l'influence que Pellan a opérée sur le milieu de l'art, à son retour d'Europe, et la manière dont la reconnaissance de ses pairs et l'influence qu'il a exercée sur le milieu a jeté un ombrage indélébile sur les efforts de Borduas, contribuant à radicaliser les actions de ce dernier, mais aussi à diviser la colonie artistique tout entière. L'exercice comparatif des stratégies que les deux artistes ont déployées, chacun de son côté, pour ébranler les institutions et développer leur influence sur la jeune génération apporte un éclairage complémentaire sur les divergences de leur parcours. L'auteur conclut qu'au-delà des conflits qui ont fini par opposer Borduas à ses collègues, et même à ses anciens étudiants, leur révolte commune avait pour cœur une démarche éthique dont l'objectif était d'humaniser l'individu et de le rendre « meilleur », à la fois dans son autonomie et son engagement.

Si, en introduction, l'auteur prévient d'emblée le lecteur qu'il n'est pas un historien d'art et ne prétend pas offrir un « traité sur l'art abstrait », mais un compte rendu du cheminement intellectuel de Borduas, en prenant à témoin ses écrits et ses expériences d'échanges avec ses contemporains, une part importante de l'ouvrage est néanmoins consacrée à la question artistique. Warren justifie cette incursion par la nécessité d'articuler les sphères indissociables du problème de l'art vivant et de l'automatisme, de cerner le lien qui unissait les lectures formalistes de l'œuvre de Borduas et la compréhension du contexte sociohistorique dans lequel elles ont été réalisées. Bien que cet intérêt de l'auteur pour les considérations esthétiques demeure fertile et légitime, il produit par moment certaines méprises, notamment lorsqu'il tend à réduire les préoccupations des avant-gardes à l'imitation de la nature, et qu'il glisse des affirmations douteuses du type : « La question de la copie exacte

de la nature semblait avoir été résolue une fois pour toutes avec l'invention de l'appareil photo » (p. 46). Le lecteur sera peut-être agacé, également, du traitement réservé à certaines citations introduites abruptement, sans que leur auteur soit indiqué, occasionnant ainsi, par moment, des ruptures qui obligent à consulter les notes en fin de volume. Les suppléments d'une bibliographie et d'un index auraient également été utiles.

Les historiens d'art, qui trouveront, dans ce livre, un supplément intéressant aux ouvrages consacrés à ce jour au peintre automatiste et à son œuvre, s'attendront peut-être aussi, comme moi, à ce que l'auteur y articule les données contextuelles qu'il avait élaborées dans *Sortir de la Grande Noirceur. L'horizon personnaliste de la Révolution tranquille*, afin de saisir le lien qui les unissait et la pensée de Borduas. Ce manque constitue, peut-être, le seul maillon fragile de *L'Art vivant. Autour de Paul-Émile Borduas*, qui offre néanmoins un élargissement contextuel appréciable pour cette étude consacrée à l'artiste. C'est pourquoi je propose à mes collègues de conjuguer la lecture de *l'Art vivant* à celle du précédent ouvrage, qui en devient un complément solide et éclairant. Les détours interdisciplinaires qu'ils offrent tous deux permettent non seulement d'élargir la perspective sociohistorique des courants révolutionnaires québécois, mais également de fournir de nouveaux outils de réflexion sur certains aspects des parcours ardus et des non-dits qui sous-tendent la trame de la mémoire collective dissidente et évolutive.



David Askevold: Once Upon a Time in the East

DAVID DIVINEY (ED.)

Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions, 2011
141 p.

Adam Lauder

David Askevold (1940–2008) is internationally-recognized for his innovations in pedagogy. In the early 1970s his legendary Projects Class brought leading contemporary artists from the United States to work with students at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax – a jiu jitsu-like move that contributed to the rapid transformation of previously marginal Halifax into an important node in a newly global art network. However, when reports of the artist's untimely death circulated in 2008, his artistic legacy seemed to be less well-defined. Produced in conjunction with a retrospective exhibition of the same

title curated by editor David Diviney and organized by the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, *David Askevold: Once Upon a Time in the East* is a fruitful first assessment of the artist's elusive career as an artist and a teacher. Yet, as contributor Peggy Gale, who is a long-time observer of Askevold's work, openly admits, at the end of this particular project, "we remain unable to take the full measure of David Askevold" (55). The special achievement of *David Askevold* is to seize upon the contradictions and unresolved tensions that define Askevold's practice as an entry point for broader reflections on the paradoxes of conceptualism itself. At once logical and aleatory, Askevold's work emerges from this account as a synecdoche of conceptualism's founding fictions.

This dynamic emerges most forcefully from Ray Cronin's canny pairing of Askevold and conceptual founding father Sol LeWitt. If the New York conceptualist's mantra, "the idea becomes a machine that makes the art,"[1] has come to signify an art of logical rules and sober, documentary formats, the LeWitt cited by Cronin is perplexingly irrational, even mystical. In a similar spirit, Cronin observes that Askevold was repeatedly drawn to paranormal subject matter precisely for its capacity to undermine photography's pretensions to documentary transparency. The 1974–79 series *The Poltergeist*, a collaboration with Mike Kelley (1954–2012), appropriates conventions of nineteenth-century spirit photography to record that which inherently resists documentation. Such manoeuvres trouble modernist pieties of medium specificity as well as complacent readings of conceptualism as an art of facticity or 'documentation' narrowly defined.

Cronin's text also serves as an introduction to the vernacular discontents of Askevold's vexing oeuvre; for instance, the American-born artist's unlikely engagement with country singer Hank Williams. Viewed through Cronin's anti-essentialist lens, the artist's weird amalgam of performance, spirit conjuring, and video documentation no longer reads as deviation from the straight and narrow path of conceptualism, but rather as an important point of continuity with the narrative tactics of a subsequent generation of neo-conceptualists.

Peggy Gale revisits Askevold's media production, with particular emphasis on the Super 8 and video production with which the artist is probably most closely identified after his pedagogical experiments. Given that Askevold's students recorded several of the films and their improvised structure is consistent with the exploratory framework of his teaching, associations between the Projects Class and the artist's moving image work are well warranted. As Gale cautions, the apparent simplicity of these works is deceptive: the Super 8 films in fact document performances that were elaborate, if open-ended. Gale's text is at its most insightful when exploring continuities between the performance elements of Askevold's videos and the central role of narrative in his photo-

text pieces of the mid-1970s. Askevold, Gale reminds us, was an important contributor to the short-lived Story Art movement associated with the John Gibson Gallery in New York, whose impact on subsequent, narrative-based art has yet to be fully evaluated.

Gale rightly emphasizes that Askevold's art deliberately frustrates narrative closure but the tone of her assessment of the artist's tangential tactics sometimes verges on exasperation. While this faithfully reproduces the response that a first-time encounter with Askevold's work can inspire, this impact is conveyed at the expense of depth in Gale's analysis. The work of retracing connections between Askevold's marginal stratagems and the decentering tactics of the younger generation in whose formation he played a leading role is left to American artists Aaron Brewer and Tony Oursler.

Brewer presents a brilliant gloss on Askevold's politically-charged engagement with game theory at the height of the Vietnam War. Although the mathematics of two-person games emerged as a distinct field of study in the first half of the twentieth century, its most celebrated problem: the zero-sum game known as *prisoner's dilemma,* was developed by two employees of the military think-tank RAND in 1950. Brewer argues that the agonistic logic of *prisoner's dilemma* speaks to RAND's application of game theory to problems in foreign policy during the Cold War. Game theory also served as the basis for some of Askevold's earliest and most celebrated language games, such as his 1968 sculpture *3 Spot Game* and the schematic language work *Shoot Don't Shoot* (1970), with which he was represented at the seminal MOMA exhibition *Information* in 1970. Brewer's delirious analysis is at its paranoid best when uncovering parallels between the analogical systems of California occultists and neighbouring RAND Corporation employees. The mazy logic of Brewer's analysis itself speaks to the impact of Askevold's practice more persuasively than any scholarly study of his influence ever could. However, the author's marshalling of the political associations of game theory in support of an activist reading of Askevold's practice challenges the reader's suspension of disbelief.

Oursler's compact text is the most illuminating in the collection. He was a student of Askevold at CalArts and a collaborator on the late found-image project *Two Beasts* (2007–10), left unfinished at the time of Askevold's death. Oursler sheds new light on Askevold's five-year stint at the centre of the conceptual scene in Southern California during the late 1970s. Known for his own fractured narratives and haunting installations, Oursler insightfully situates works by Askevold, such as *Kepler's Music of the Spheres Played by Six Snakes* (1971–74) and *The Ghost of Hank Williams* (1979), as "prototypical of the art that would be produced later by my generation and the following one" (110).

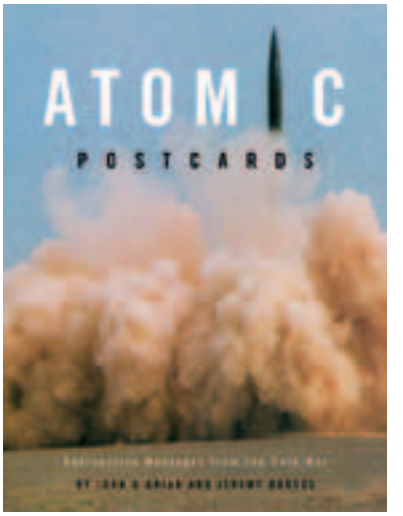
Interviews between Askevold and artists Mario Garcia Torres and Richard Hertz allow the reader to hear the artist

in his own words (or, at any rate, a respectful paraphrasing thereof). Hertz's interview is re-worked into a first-person narrative that blurs the boundary between fact and fiction in a fashion recalling Askevold's own destabilizing moves. A text by Los Angeles–based curator Irene Tsatsos about Askevold's computer-generated series from the 1990s, inspired by the mythology of Halifax Harbour, rounds out the collection.

David Askevold: Once Upon a Time in the East is required reading for anyone engaged in the current project of recovering the history of Conceptual art in Canada as well as those interested in challenging received ideas about the movement as a whole. The book offers a provocative, if uneven, portrait of an artist who has (so far) evaded the critical attention he deserves. The texts are most illuminating in those sections that follow the artist's lead by blending biography and myth. It is an unfortunate commentary on the state of Canadian art criticism and scholarship that an artist who did so much to put Canada on the map appears to be best understood by American artists.

NOTES

1 Sol LeWitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," *Artforum* 5:10 (Summer 1967): 80.



Atomic Postcards: Radioactive Messages from the Cold War

JOHN O'BRIAN AND JEREMY BORSOS

Bristol, UK and Chicago, USA: Intellect, University of Chicago Press, 2011
188 p.

Blake Fitzpatrick

"Wish you were here" takes on a dark and unsettling irony when discovered on the reverse side of a postcard depicting an atomic blast. In *Atomic Postcards: Radioactive Messages from the Cold War*, readers are presented with an opportunity to reflect upon the ways in which Cold War nuclear experience is visualized, commented, or left unsaid through the recto/verso of postcard images. In general, postcards tend to be folksy and humble photographic forms. In *Atomic Postcards,* a juxtaposition

of recto and verso, image and text, undermines one's sense of familiarity.

John O'Brian's very perceptive opening text introduces the reader/viewer to an implicit ambiguity at the heart of this collection. Here is a book of small-scale images and texts that have accompanied the bomb since the beginning of the nuclear era and have circled the globe with paradoxically upbeat messages of what might be interpreted as a warning of the end of the world. Visual artist Jeremy Borsos collaborated with O'Brian to scour flea-markets and eBay sites to amass an archive of postwar atomic postcards. O'Brian and Borsos remind us that the deceptively simple postcard is not to be taken for granted but rather seen and read as a most familiar, and hence perhaps most dangerous, discursive support for the lived actuality of atomic destruction itself.

The postcards compiled in this book trace an approximate chronology in the Cold War development of an atomic public image. The earliest postcards depict the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 and the volume concludes with images of missile tests in China in 1985. Between these two bookends, the nuclear era unfolds one postcard after another, cutting through popular culture with thematic constellations of visualized atomic experience. What does the nuclear era look like? According to this book, it first appears as an atomic cloud, which is followed by images of industrial plants, nuclear submarines and ships, launched missiles, B-52 bombers, nuclear reactor cores, atomic museums, nuclear power stations, more missile displays, and the explosive release of surface-to air, underwater-to-ground and ground-to-ground missiles. These images were published as postcards in Belgium, Britain, Canada, China, France, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Philippines, the Soviet Union, Switzerland, and the United States. Circulated around the globe, these postcards have conjoined senders and receivers to construct a linked and distributed nuclear world-view.

The image sequence of the book launches a historical narrative that begins in Japan with a postcard dated 1945/46 that depicts a cloud-like shape, caught in a vertical frame. There can be no mistaking its origins. The publishers have added the words "THE ATOMIC CLOUD" in both English and Japanese script across the image. The raw specificity of this descriptive term links event, text, and image. In the following pages, the atomic cloud is sequentially tied to a set of images recording scenes of destruction at ground zero. Depicted from a near aerial perspective, the burnt-out structure of the Nagarekawa Church in Hiroshima is paired with what remains of a building identified on the front of the card as the 'Industrial Hall in memory at the Atomic Bomb.' Located just 150 metres from the hypocentre, The Industrial Hall has since been renamed the Atomic Bomb Dome and it stands as an iconic monument to the atomic destruction of Hiroshima. The relationship of the cloud to destruction and ultimately to death is reinforced on the following

page as another image identified as an atomic cloud is juxtaposed with the now quite famous image of a dead man's shadow scorched as a dark silhouette on the steps of Osaka Bank, Hiroshima. This singular reminder of atomic death is a significant counterpoint to the other postcards in the book. It reveals an atomic subtext that is typically suppressed by the cheerful messaging of most atomic postcards. Here there are no handwritten comments, no offerings of familial connection or domestication between sender and receiver. The atomic postcards from Japan function as historical evidence that directs attention to itemized damage. These are the events that a postcard fails to domesticate while underlining the memorial charge of the postcard to "never forget."

The majority of the postcards in the book are from the 1950s and 1960s. Viewers are exposed to the self-promotion of American atomic cities – places where the incessant preparation for atomic war functioned to support a local economy while contributing to the massive American military industrial complex that produced and tested nuclear weapons during the Cold War. For example, there are four postcards of the elaborate industrial complex at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, the "City of the Atomic Bomb," complete with handwritten messages from Cold War tourists. The Oak Ridge complex was the top-secret industrial backbone of the Manhattan Project; the postcards are rather bland images of nondescript industrial structures. Echoing Bertolt Brecht's famous remark concerning a photograph of the Krupp Works, one might say that a photograph of the Clinton Engineering Works in Oak Ridge tells us next to nothing about this institution. Similarly, a postcard of the exterior of the Eldorado Radium and Uranium Extraction Plant in Port Hope, Ontario, functions to keep its secretive operations invisible within. The refinery in Port Hope was the conduit through which Canadian uranium was processed and exported to the United States for research in the Manhattan Project. Thus, a postcard of a nondescript factory on the shores of Lake Ontario hides the front end of an industrial process that would come to conclusion in the atomic leveling of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The handwritten commentary of Cold War tourists on the back of the Oak Ridges postcards is equally evasive, for example, one handwritten message reads: "Hi ya all! Having a great time here at Oak Ridge. Plan to leave tomorrow for Belvidere. Plenty Hot. Love Jim & Cher." That atomic realities are specifically *not* addressed in the handwritten comments of atomic tourists is of critical importance in this book. While the postcard images identify the massive scale of the nuclear weapons industrial complex, the handwritten comments suggest that, to the tourists, the meaning of these facilities is ambiguous at best. One of the eerie pathologies of the nuclear era is the juxtaposition of extraordinary authority and ordinary complacency. As O'Brian suggests, many Cold War atomic postcards reveal contradictions in which "the extraordinary keeps company with

the ordinary, the excessive with the banal" (12).

A confused sense of "what is it?" accompanies the viewing of many of the postcards in the book and this requires language and captioning to identify an answer. Language is a charged subject in nuclear matters. Critics such as Daniel Pick note that the language of nuclear war, including for example the personalization of the bomb dropped on Nagasaki as "Fat Man," may serve to domesticate unspeakable terror.[1] Language may be particularly necessary for subjects that cannot be seen by the human eye. This includes atomic phenomena that exist below the visible but it also extends to subjects such as nationalistic or humanistic ideals that supersede the visible and can rarely be directly pictured. For example, the book includes postcards depicting photographs of missiles that bear, without intended irony, the postal stamp "Pray for Peace" on the verso. Such juxtapositions serve to override the interpretive frame with an affixed national narrative that the atomic postcard may come to represent.

A crucial aspect of the authors' commentary is revealed through the viewing and reading of the fronts and backs of atomic postcards. The semantic play of image and text is most effectively revealed by two-page spreads in which the fronts of postcards are juxtaposed with the handwritten messages, postmarks, legends and titles printed onto the backs (inexplicably, the backs precede the fronts on the left side of the two-page spreads, so instead of an encounter with a recto/verso pairing we have an encounter with a verso/recto). In the case of postcards without handwritten messages, images are reproduced singly on a page, with titles and legends relegated to the Catalogue section at the end of the book. Relegating textual information to a separate section of the book is an aesthetic and conceptual design strategy that adds unencumbered visual appeal to the singular photographs and the insightful juxtaposition of the images provides the opportunity for visual commentary. However, detaching images from contextual information is a debatable strategy in photographic publishing, especially when such textual information might produce a critical counterpoint to the image or, at least, information leading to a fuller understanding of a work's cultural context. On this score, I found myself at odds with the design of the book, as I was compelled to flip from the image to its title and legend at the back of the volume for each and every postcard. A design strategy that engaged the reader in a series of recto/verso encounters would have added conceptual and material consistency, while heightening the reader's engagement with the cultural context of the book.

These recto/verso images and texts are the turning points that structure a tourist's relationship to the atomic world. For those of us on the outside of the nuclear establishment, there can be no unmediated public engagement with the secretive atomic world. We are reliant on the images and texts that have

been constructed about it. O'Brian and Borsos are to be commended for having produced a provocative and deceptively charming book. Their *Atomic Postcards* points to a neglected site of tension between the history and memory of the atomic era by directing our attention to the meaning of atomic experience as it might have arrived in the mail.

NOTES

1 See Daniel Pick, *War Machine: The Rationalisation of Slaughter in the Modern Age* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 263.

CAROLYN BUTLER-PALMER is the first occupant of the Williams Legacy Chair in Modern and Contemporary Arts of the Pacific Northwest at the University of Victoria. She teaches undergraduate and graduate students in the arts of the Pacific Northwest. She also conducts curatorial research in collaboration with the University of Victoria's Art Collection. Over the past few years, her curatorial research has focused on collaborative practices and the idea of community-making with exhibits through the production of exhibits such as *Regarding Wealth, Connect the Blocks*, and *Communities and Nations* as well as a permanent installation at the Cool Aid Community Clinic in Victoria. She is currently collaborating with Peter Morin (Tahltan), students in her undergraduate art history class, the Legacy Gallery, and Dance Victoria to produce, dance, exhibit, and give away the world's biggest button blanket. She has also published articles about art and identity and the idea of the Pacific Northwest that have appeared in journals such as *Frontiers, Buildings and Landscapes*, and as a chapter in the *Indigenous Cosmopolitans*. She is currently a board member of the Universities Arts Association of Canada.

BLAKE FITZPATRICK holds the position of Graduate Program Director in the Documentary Media (MFA) program at Ryerson University. He has exhibited his photographic work in solo and group exhibitions in Canada and the United States and his recent curatorial initiatives include *Arthur S. Goss: Works and Days* (2013), *War at a Distance* (2009), *Disaster Topographics* (2005), and *The Atomic Photographers Guild: Visibility and Invisibility in the Nuclear Era* (2000). His writing and visual work have appeared in *POV Magazine*, *Ciel Variable*, *Public*, *TOPIA*, *History of Photography*, *FUSE Magazine*, and in the anthology *The Cultural Work of the Photography in Canada* (2010). An active photographer, curator, and writer, his current research interests include the photographic representation of the nuclear era, visual responses to contemporary militarism, and images of disaster in landscape photography.

ANDREW HORRALL is a senior archivist at Library and Archives Canada and an adjunct professor of history at Carleton University. He attended Bishop's and McGill universities and earned a doctorate in History from the University of Cambridge. He has published on popular culture in Victorian and Edwardian Britain and cultural responses to war. He is currently researching art, cultural propaganda, and nationalism in twentieth-century Canada. His interest in the Dorothy Cameron case was sparked while working on his 2009 book *Bringing Art to Life: a Biography of Alan Jarvis*, which was lauded for setting "a new standard for cultural biography in Canada" and received the City of Ottawa Book Award.

LORNE HUSTON recently retired from Collège Édouard-Montpetit where he taught history and sociology. He gives a seminar to graduate students and manages the internship programme for teaching college-level history in the history department at the Université de Montréal. He also gives a seminar at the National Theatre School to students in the creative writing programme on the historical context of specific playwrights since the Renaissance. His doctoral thesis was on art exhibitions in Paris: 1864–1914 (History, Concordia, 1989). He is presently associated with the Centre de recherche interuniversitaire sur la littérature et la culture québécoises (CRILCQ) and is working on the critical reception of the performing arts in the English-language newspapers of Montreal during the 1920s.

ADAM LAUDER is W.P. Scott Chair for Research in e-Librarianship at York University, where he is developing an online catalogue raisonné of the work of IAIN BAXTER&, the IAIN BAXTER&,raisonnE. He is the editor of a book featuring new work by IAIN BAXTER&, *H& IT ON* (YYZ, 2012), that includes an essay by Lauder which outlines the first history of information art in Canada. He has also written a chapter on artist and marketing theorist Bertram Brooker (1888–1955) that appears in *The Logic of Nature, The Romance of Space* (2010). Lauder has contributed articles to *Canadian Art*, *Border Crossings*, *C*, *Hunter and Cook*, and *Millions* magazines as well as scholarly journals including *Technoetic Arts*, *Art Documentation*, *Journal of Canadian Art History*, *TOPIA*, and *Future Anterior.*

Depuis 1953, la carrière de GÉRARD LAVALLÉE se partage entre l'enseignement, la muséologie, la recherche et les publications. D'abord professeur en arts plastiques et en histoire de l'art au Collège de Saint-Laurent où il a fondé, en 1962, le Musée d'art de Saint-Laurent, il n'a cessé de poursuivre des recherches sur la sculpture ornementale et iconographique du Québec (1667–1867) et celle de la France (XVII^{e} et XVIII^{e} siècles) dans le but de découvrir les sources et l'originalité de l'art québécois ancien. Les fruits de ces recherches constituent un imposant fonds de documents maintenant déposés au Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. En 1988, la Société des musées québécois lui a décerné le prix Pratt & Whitney « pour l'excellence de son travail en muséologie au Québec ». En 2002, Robert Derome, assisté de ses élèves de l'Université du Québec à Montréal, lui a consacré un colloque hommage suivi de la publication des actes du colloque.

ERIN MORTON teaches in the Department of History at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, Canada. Her research broadly examines categories

and experiences of art and culture as being determined by and determining liberal capitalist modernity. She has published widely on historical and contemporary visual and material culture in Canada and the United States in such collections as *Global Indigenous Media* (Duke University Press, 2008) and journals such as *Utopian Studies* and the *Journal of Canadian Art History.* She is currently working on two books, the single-authored monograph *Historical Presenting: The Place of Folk Art in Late Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia*, and the co-edited volume, *Negotiations in a Vacant Lot: Studying the Visual in Canada*.

CLAUDE PAYER complète en 1982 une maîtrise en restauration à Queen's University à Kingston, après des études en histoire de l'art à l'Université Laval, entre autres avec John R. Porter. Entre 1982 et 1984, il est boursier du Conseil des Arts du Canada; il peut ainsi se perfectionner pendant deux ans en restauration de sculptures polychromes à l'Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique, à Bruxelles. À son retour, il restaure le maître-autel de l'Hôpital général de Québec. À la fin 1985, le Centre de conservation du Québec l'engage pour mettre sur pied l'atelier de sculpture. Il initie en 1991 le traitement de préservation du décor intérieur de la chapelle des Ursulines à Québec. Il mène en parallèle une étude systématique des tabernacles québécois des XVII^e^ et XVIII^e^ siècles. Ces recherches mèneront à la restauration de plusieurs tabernacles majeurs. On lui doit une trentaine d'articles touchant la sculpture ancienne du Québec qui offrent un regard neuf sur des œuvres connues ou inédites.

LOUISE VIGNEAULT est professeure au Département d'histoire de l'art et d'études cinématographiques de l'Université de Montréal. Spécialiste de l'art nord-américain, elle se consacre à la question des imaginaires collectifs, des mythologies et constructions culturelles, des stratégies de représentation identitaire. En 2002, elle publiait *Identité et modernité dans l'art au Québec. Borduas, Sullivan, Riopelle*, puis, en 2011, *Espace artistique et modèle pionnier. Tom Thomson et Jean-Paul Riopelle*. Ses recherches actuelles portent sur les productions artistiques autochtones au Québec.

ANNE WHITELAW is associate professor of Canadian art in the Department of Art History at Concordia University in Montreal. Her research examines the intersections of art historiography and cultural institutions in Canada, with a particular focus on practices of exhibition and collecting as a means of understanding the formation of nationhood. Whitelaw has published extensively on the display of Canadian art at the National Gallery of Canada,

on the integration of Aboriginal art in national museums, and on Canadian art historiography. She is co-editor with Brian Foss and Sandra Paikowsky of *The Visual Arts in Canada: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press). Whitelaw's current research includes a book on the relationship between federal cultural institutions and art galleries in Western Canada, and an exploration of the work of women's volunteer committees in North American museums.

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The *Journal of Canadian Art History* welcomes submissions of previously unpublished manuscripts. One printed copy and a digital file are required; both should include a short abstract. Send printed copies (including photocopies of images) to the editorial office address below. Send digital files to jcah@concordia.ca. Typescripts for articles should not exceed 8,000 words, excluding endnotes. Essays should not exceed 4,000 words. Reviews of exhibitions and books are assigned by the editor-in-chief; proposals from reviewers are invited.

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Double-space throughout, including text, extracts, quotations, and endnotes. *JCAH* follows the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th Edition, and *The Oxford Canadian Dictionary*.

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Knowledge & Networks: Canadian Art History, circa 2012

On 31 October 2012, twenty-seven Canadian researchers came together in Montreal for a study day: *Knowledge and Networks: Canadian Art History, circa 2012*, an event organized by the Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art at Concordia University. The participants (pictured above and below) came from the University of British Columbia, University of Manitoba, York University, University of Toronto, Carleton University, Université du Québec à Montréal, Concordia University, McGill University, University of New Brunswick, and NSCAD University. There were also representatives of national visual arts organizations, such as the Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art (Winnipeg) and Artexte (Montreal).

The reports of the study day have been published on the Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art website. The direct link to the reports is:

http://knowledgeandnetworks.concordia.ca/2012/en/introduction

We look forward to your response.

This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Savoir et réseaux : histoire de l'art canadien vers 2012

Le 31 octobre 2012, 27 chercheurs canadiens étaient réunis à Montréal pour une journée d'étude sur le thème *Savoir et réseaux : histoire de l'art canadien vers 2012*, organisée par l'Institut de recherche en art canadien Gail et Stephen A. Jarislowsky de l'Université Concordia. Les participants (ci-haut et ci-dessous) venaient de l'Université de la Colombie-Britannique, de l'Université du Manitoba, de l'Université York, de l'Université de Toronto, de l'Université Carleton, de l'Université du Québec à Montréal, de l'Université Concordia, de l'Université McGill, de l'Université du Nouveau-Brunswick et de l'Université NSCAD. Des représentants d'organismes nationaux consacrés aux arts visuels, comme le Centre de l'art contemporain canadien (Winnipeg) et Artexte (Montréal), étaient également présents.

Les rapports de la journée d'étude ont été publiés sur le site Web de l'Institut de recherche en art canadien Gail et Stephen A. Jarislowsky de l'Université Concordia. Le lien direct vers les rapports est le suivant:

http://knowledgeandnetworks.concordia.ca/2012/fr/introduction

Nous attendons avec impatience votre réponse.

Cette recherche a été financée par le Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines.