



Detail, Les Levine, *Slipcover: A Place*, 1966. Installation, Art Gallery of Ontario.
Image reproduced in the *Annual Report* of the Canada Council, 1966–1967, 57. With
permission of Les Levine. (Photo: author)

“If you do not grow you are a dead duck”:¹

Funding Art Publications in Canada

from the 1940s to the 1980s

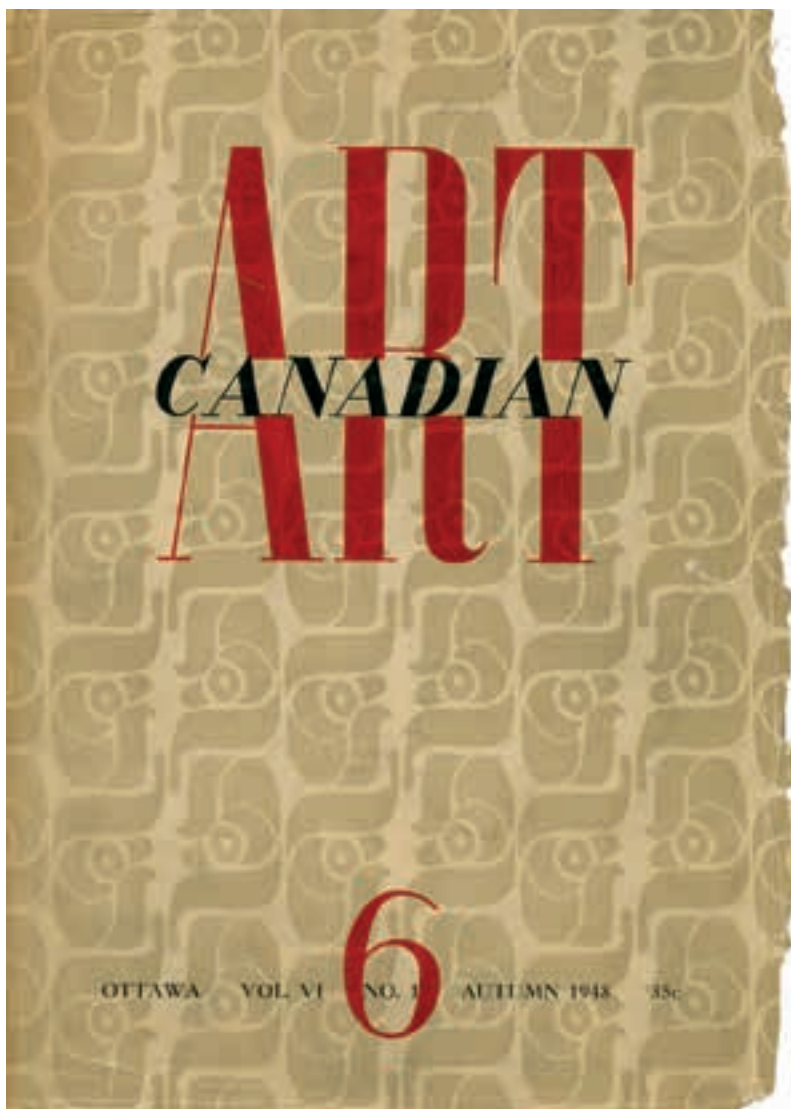
ANNE WHITE LAW

Introducing the first volume of a recent anthology of essays from the art journal *Parachute*, Alexander Alberro and Nora M. Alter argue: “Art periodicals today operate as vehicles for the evaluation and dissemination of artistic practices, as well as locations for the elaboration of interpretive approaches capable of addressing the extraordinary complexity and sudden tentativeness of art following the collapse of the modernist paradigm. Furthermore, they address a remarkably diverse readership comprised not only of artists and those connected with exhibiting and marketing their work, but also of academics and a general public increasingly interested in art and culture.”² These comments are particularly appropriate to describe *Parachute*, a bilingual journal published out of Montreal between 1975 and 2007 that played a pivotal role in introducing new theoretical paradigms and language to the Canadian art scene through often complex essays by local and international scholars, art critics and artists.³ Although written in the first decade of the twenty-first century, Alberro and Alter’s assessment of both the readership and the formative role of periodicals in the circulation of information about art could equally apply to magazines published long before the collapse of the modernist paradigm. In Canada, the oft-cited geographic dispersal of the nation’s populace, coupled with the relative paucity of art institutions until the 1950s, presented significant obstacles to the broad dissemination of knowledge about the visual arts. Publications such as *Canadian Art*, founded in 1943, and its predecessor *Maritime Art*, established in 1940, played key roles in making art visible to Canadians across the country during a time when newspapers and general interest magazines were more local in their coverage, and art institutions – with the notable exception of the National Gallery of Canada (NGC) – were still building their programming and did not have the finances or the staff to make their activities better known. The founding of the Canada Council for the Arts in 1957 enabled more systematic circulation of information about the arts in Canada through the contents of its annual reports, while its subsidy of exhibition catalogues as part of broader funding for temporary exhibitions (heretofore overlooked by federal and provincial funding bodies), and the

availability of funding for periodicals, expanded the number and scope of art publications in Canada.

This article seeks to map the intersections of visual arts publishing and federal government funding in Canada from the 1940s through the 1980s.⁴ The focus on funding underscores the challenges faced by visual arts practitioners in Canada in making their work visible to national and international audiences, and points to the impact of federal organizations and policies on the visual arts in Canada in the 1960s and 1970s. The Canada Council's programs were invaluable in assisting the country's artists to broaden their knowledge and expertise through travel, and assisted arts organizations in both acquiring and disseminating the work of contemporary Canadian artists. Other federal funding initiatives, including the monies used to support the programs launched under the National Museums Policy of 1972, also assisted the publication goals of Canadian artists and organizations, particularly through the encouragement to institutions to produce exhibition catalogues as part of their extension activities. Even before the creation of these federal funding programs, the National Gallery gave significant financial support to *Canadian Art*, an indication of the value ascribed to publications and their ability to establish visual arts networks in Canada. Although the bulk of this essay will focus on the granting programs that supported publishing in the visual arts, a brief consideration of *Canadian Art* as the first major visual arts publication in the country, will help map the intersections of funding and content in visual arts publishing in Canada.

Canadian Art (Fig. 1) was created in 1943 when Walter Abell brought his largely regional periodical *Maritime Art* to the National Gallery of Canada when he accepted the position of supervisor of education at the gallery. Although *Maritime Art*, established in 1940, prided itself on the cross-country coverage of its essays and in the inclusion of such non-Maritime authors as Lawren Harris, Robert Ayre, and Blodwen Davies, the move to the National Gallery allowed it to argue convincingly that it had gone national.⁵ The relocation and renaming of the publication also contributed to a centralization of power over Canadian art discourses that would only increase with the post-Massey Commission creation of Ottawa-based arts organizations tasked with supporting the creation of a national culture.⁶ *Canadian Art*'s funding came from the National Gallery as in-kind contributions for hosting production facilities and, through funding from the Carnegie Corporation, payment of Abell's salary. Other institutions such as the Vancouver Art Gallery, keen to increase their national visibility,⁷ also provided funds for the publication in exchange for small advertisements within the magazine and free copies for distribution to museum members. The magazine, however, also received money from the newly established Federation of



1 | Cover of *Canadian Art* 6:1 (Autumn 1948). (Photo: author)

Canadian Artists (FCA), which claimed *Canadian Art* as a pivotal organ for its activities and fought regularly with the NGC leadership for control over the magazine's content and orientation. Following Abell's resignation from the NGC in 1944, the editorship of *Canadian Art* was the subject of intense debate, with concerns among senior members of the FCA that somebody with NGC allegiances would be appointed and would turn the magazine into a mouthpiece for the gallery rather than fully represent the activities of the nation's artists.⁸ In 1944 art critic and FCA member Robert Ayre, along with art historian, photographer, and future head of the National Industrial Design Council Donald W. Buchanan, were appointed co-editors of *Canadian Art*, positions they would hold until 1959.

COAST TO COAST IN ART

Rent a Painting from Your Public Library

Thirty or forty years ago, the conception of a public library that would lend books to any citizen of the community had only begun to take root in many Canadian cities. But today their establishment is widespread, and we feel that a town or city is, indeed, backward which does not possess one. They have progressed, too, in function; from many of them you can now borrow documentary motion pictures and recordings of good music as well as books.

Why then should they not lend out paintings also? This question the administrators of the Windsor Public Libraries recently asked themselves. They have answered it now by embarking on a picture rental scheme. While the collection they have begun with is a modest one, it does include originals by A. V. Jackson, John Alsen and Dorothy Stevens, and many fine framed reproductions. Monthly rentals range from 25c for reproductions to \$1.25 for the larger paintings.

If this method of introducing more of our citizens to the direct appreciation of art in their own homes proves successful, then a fruitful

new field of activity will be open to our more enterprising libraries everywhere.

Child Art in Creative Education

Art by Saskatchewan youth, as turned out both by children in primary grades and by adolescents in high school, continues to attract a "good press" as a newspaperman would say.

For the second time recently, the publication listing broadcasts to Saskatchewan schools, printed by the provincial department of education, is using on its cover a colour plate of an amusing drawing by a school child (see below). This was done during a regular classroom period for free art expression at the Darwin Public School in the city of Regina.

Then the *Star-Phoenix* of Saskatoon writes of an exhibition of 'teen age paintings sponsored by Wynona Mulcaster of the Saskatoon Normal School. It opened at the Saskatoon Art Centre in August and was then offered to school superintendents in the province. It was immediately booked for months ahead, especially for teachers'

The Big Fire, Painting by Alan Murray, age 7, Regina.



BARBARA HEPPWORTH
Two Standing Nudes
Drawing, Pencil

From the "Exhibition of Contemporary British Drawings" organized for Canada by the British Council at the request of the National Gallery and now on tour of the Dominion. It will be seen in London, Ontario, in January, in Edmonton in March.



conventions, where it is being used for discussion and study of new approaches in creative education.

The Economics of Design

Following the imposing of exchange restrictions brought on by the shortage of American dollars, Canadian manufacturers have found that, among the many resulting adjustments that they have had to make, the re-designing of household products looms large.

When imported American fittings were being used, then the simplest solution was usually to adopt some variation of a standard American design. Now, however, this dependence on American designs and designers has become, from a strictly economic point of view, less and less desirable.

A few individual manufacturers have accordingly begun to discuss, with universities and with research officials, the problem of finding trained talent for this purpose in Canada. Because of the urgent need to conserve American dollars, the Dominion Government, too, has become interested, since foreign exchange statistics show that relatively substantial sums are being and have been spent by Canadian manufacturers in obtaining product designs from United States sources.

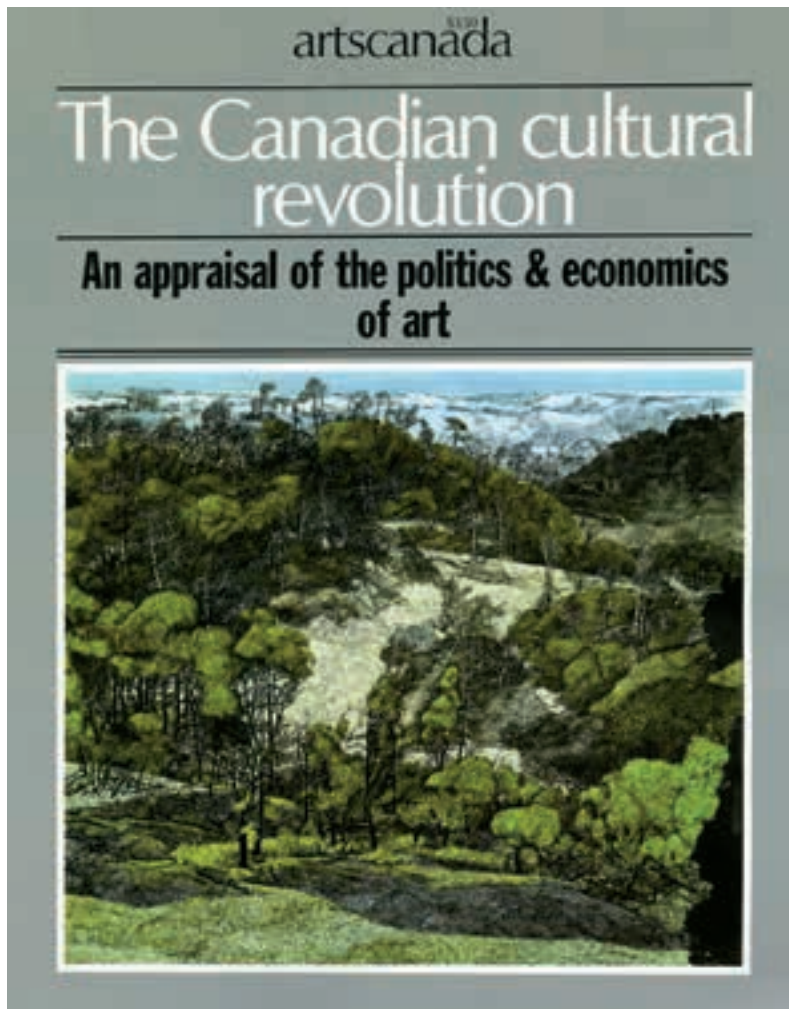
Several meetings to discuss these problems were held during the past year in Ottawa, and, as a result, a new and active National Industrial Design Committee has been established, its purpose to exchange information and promote research and development in this important field. Sitting on it are manufacturers, representatives of universities and of government departments interested, and of the newly formed Association of Canadian Industrial Designers. For the first year, at least, it is being supported with the aid of a small grant from the Dominion Government. The chairman is Donald B. Cruikshank of The Steel Equipment Company Ltd., Ottawa and Pembroke, and the Secretary is Donald W. Buchanan, Ottawa.

West Meets East

From the Maritime Provinces, comes word that an exhibition representative of the best work of Maritime artists has been selected and will be sent on tour of Western Canada. This continues the exchange of exhibitions which was initiated last year by R. W. Hedley of the Edmonton Museum of Fine Arts.

Sponsored by the Maritime Art Association, this exhibition was open to all artists of the region. Arrangements were in charge of Laverne

The first ten years of *Canadian Art* featured news about artists, art organizations (museums, galleries, and artists' associations such as the FCA), reviews of exhibitions, as well as in-depth analyses and presentations of the work of art institutions. Representative articles from the period included "Community Art Centres: A Growing Movement" from volume 2, number 2 (December 1944/January 1945), an overview of the Art Gallery of Toronto's collection by Andrew Bell from volume 5, number 4 (Spring 1948), and "The Press Debates the Massey Report" by Robert Ayre from volume 9, number 1 (Autumn 1951), along with the regular feature "Coast to Coast in Art" (Fig. 2) that compiled brief informational items on the activities of art galleries, associations, and artists from across the country. Written by gallery directors, artists, and critics from all regions, this compendium of viewpoints and activities constitutes a veritable history of contemporary Canadian art in its mapping of the issues that preoccupied writers from different parts of the country. As records of exhibitions, acquisitions, and front-of-mind concerns, the feature articles, as well as the shorter news and events columns, position *Canadian Art* as a bridge between periodicals and exhibition catalogues: at a time when few art galleries produced catalogues of exhibitions or of their collections, the magazine provided that service, richly illustrating shows (albeit usually in black and white) and presenting new acquisitions by museums across the country. In 1956, *Canadian Art*'s monopoly as a national art magazine was challenged by the publication of *Vie des arts*, a Quebec-based magazine that despite its early focus on historical and contemporary French Canadian art, quickly expanded its purview to include the work of artists from across the country.⁹ Despite the competition, *Canadian Art* largely retained its leading role in the Canadian art world, tracking and presenting contemporary art activity from across the country and providing an important reference point for artists and gallery directors alike. That dominance would continue through the magazine's change of name to *artscanada* in 1966, an effort to downplay perceptions of the magazine as "an unread coffee-table item"¹⁰ and new editor Barry Lord's reconfiguration of the content to be more responsive to topical issues in contemporary Canadian art. Lord left the publication in 1967, and was replaced by Anne Trueblood Brodzky who reverted to a more traditional magazine format but retained the sense of topicality. By the mid-1970s, *artscanada* was once again facing criticism for being too mainstream. Writing in *Studio International*, *Only Paper Today*'s associate editor Jennifer Oille described *artscanada* as "an official organ . . . purely Canadian in content [that] depends on a select body of writers (mainly academic) and reflects on what one could call official Canadian culture."¹¹ (Fig. 3) Oille's complaint extended beyond *artscanada*'s



3 | Cover of “The Canadian Cultural Revolution,” *artscanada* 32:200/201 (Autumn 1975). With permission of Ivan Eyre. (Photo: author)

content to the enormous share of Canada Council and Ontario Arts Council funding the magazine received to the detriment of the many smaller art magazines then emerging. Artist Greg Curnoe was similarly critical of *artscanada*’s presentation of Canadian art issues in his essay “Feet of Clay Planted Firmly in USA,” yet differed from Oille in his call for the magazine’s funding to be withdrawn for *not* sufficiently showcasing Canadian content.¹²

The appearance of *Vie des arts* on the Canadian publishing scene virtually coincided with the establishment of the Canada Council in 1957.¹³ One of the major recommendations of the Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (aka the Massey Commission), the Canada Council became possible through the estate taxes of Sir Isaac Walton Killam and Sir James Dunn that provided an endowment fund able to

support individual artists, scholars, and the organizations that disseminated their work to the larger public – art galleries, theatre and opera companies, and periodicals. In the “General Observations” section of its first annual report, the Council summarized its challenge: “Material prosperity alone will not make a great nation. As we press on to push back the frontiers of material progress, we must aim to advance on the spiritual front, and advance in our artistic progress as a nation. It was to help in this process that the Canada Council was created.”¹⁴ One of its earliest challenges was to decide whether its role was to “raise or spread” – a phrase taken from a 1958 lecture given by Sir Kenneth Clark under the auspices of the Council that addressed the question of whether funding was better spent raising the standards of a select number of organizations and artists who already showed promise of achievement, or whether the limited funds available should be spread across the country in order to assist more organizations in their cultural endeavours. Due to the concentration of major arts organizations in larger cities – specifically Montreal and Toronto – the concern about the first approach was that those cities would unduly benefit from the Canada Council’s funds, and the Council’s mandate to stimulate artistic production across the country would be compromised. The incentive to spread resources across the country was equally unappealing as it might reinforce the status quo and prevent regional organizations from reaching for greater quality and professionalism.¹⁵ From the beginning, however, the Council reiterated its policy that its funds should not replace existing support from municipalities and community groups, but should rather build on existing sponsorship in order to allow the organization to expand and enrich its programming. It also strongly encouraged the development of municipal and provincial funding, praising the formation of Quebec’s ministère des Affaires culturelles in 1961 as a sign of the province’s commitment to culture at the same time as it noted the marked lack of financial support for the arts from other parts of the country.¹⁶

Publications were funded from the first year the Canada Council was in operation, with \$34,500 distributed between ten journals of art, literature, poetry and culture.¹⁷ Assistance was to be given for the production of special editions, to pay contributors, and to purchase copies for general distribution and for additional distribution if this would help secure advertising for the journal and extend its circulation. In this first cycle, arts journals were allocated a total of \$22,300 with *Canadian Art* receiving \$10,000 and *Vie des arts* \$6,000; the other significant recipient of funding was *Tamarack Review*, a literary magazine, that received \$3,000. Over the next 10 years, funding for visual arts periodicals – specifically *Canadian Art* and *Vie des arts* – would significantly outstrip monies allocated to other types of culture periodicals, strengthening the Council’s view that “If art magazines like art books are, in

Malraux's phrase, museums without walls then *Canadian Art* and *Vie des arts* are two of our most important museums."¹⁸ In line with other statements by the Canada Council regarding its mandate not to replace existing funding but to supplement it in accordance with high (viz international) standards, *Canadian Art* was praised after four years of funding for having "been transformed into a publication in which Canada may take pride, for it can now hold its own with similar publications anywhere in the world."¹⁹

In the early years, the Canada Council justified its investment in periodicals in several ways: periodicals were the most effective means of broadly disseminating information on Canadian art; they reached remote communities with no other access to visual arts; and in so doing they helped build national culture. In these aspirations, the Canada Council reiterated the opinion of the Royal Commission on Periodicals whose May 1961 report identified the crucial role of periodicals in supporting the development and dissemination of Canadian culture, "to bring a sense of oneness to our scattered communities."²⁰ Formed in September 1960 "to enquire into and make recommendations concerning the position of and prospects for Canadian magazines and periodicals,"²¹ the Commission's sphere of enquiry addressed concerns that Canadians were overly exposed to publications that originated in the United States. Echoing earlier fears over the potentially deleterious effects of American radio and television programming, voiced in the 1929 and 1955 Royal Commissions on broadcasting²² and the Massey Commission, the Royal Commission on Publications report argued that the solution was a strengthening of Canadian publishing, rather than a demonization of foreign-owned periodicals.²³ Nevertheless, the commissioners recognized the impact of American magazines on Canadian life:

It is but necessary to note the veritable deluge of US publications submerging Canadian print on our newsstands to understand the magnitude and, in the past, the impossibility, of their task. So pervasive, indeed, is this penetration, so obviously fraught with social and economic consequences, no examination of any aspect of Canadian communications can fail to take it into account. Here, inescapably, is the stuff of national concern.²⁴

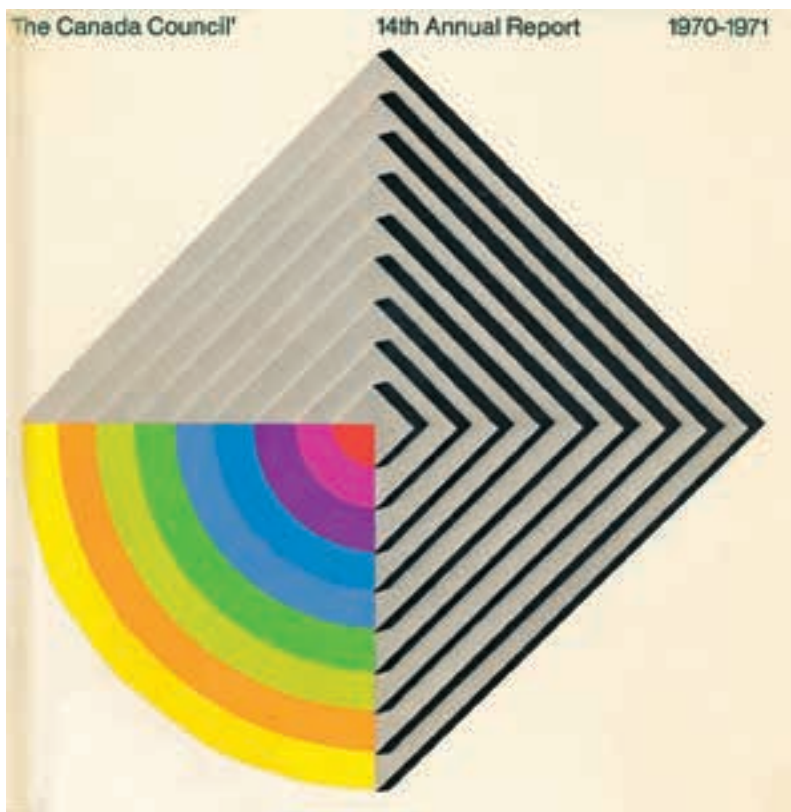
The Canada Council's annual report for 1960–61 made frequent reference to the findings of the Royal Commission, and emphasized the "importance of a strong periodical press which can do much to bind the various elements of our diverse and attenuated population and to provide the substance and stimulus for an informed examination of all aspects of Canadian life."²⁵ A

quick examination of funding allocated to publications in the 1960s and 1970s reveals the Council's commitment to visual arts periodicals.

By 1965, *Canadian Art* was receiving \$21,000 in funding from the Canada Council; when the publication rebranded itself as *artscanada* the following year, Council funding increased to \$30,000, an amount that had doubled by 1970 and had doubled again to \$130,000 by 1972. In 1976, it received an extraordinary \$160,000 from the Canada Council – over 75 times the amount it had received only 10 years earlier. To put these numbers into the broader context of Council funding over this ten year period, when *Canadian Art* received \$21,000 in 1965–66, *Vie des arts* obtained \$17,000, meaning that these two art magazines were awarded the bulk of the \$51,000 the Canada Council distributed to magazines that year. It is worth bearing in mind that the total funds distributed to the visual arts by the Council that year was \$147,000, meaning that periodicals received a quarter of the funding available for the support of the visual arts. By 1975–76, when *Canadian Art*'s successor *artscanada* received \$160,000, the Canada Council was funding 52 periodicals to a total amount of \$888,018 – and of this total, half (at least \$440,000) was going to visual arts magazines – thus cementing the agency's view of their ongoing centrality to culture building in Canada.

I've been focusing up to this point on *Canadian Art/artscanada* but by the 1970s, other visual arts magazines received funding as they emerged, reflecting the increased diversity of artistic production in Canada as well as the organizations supporting them. In 1975–76, funding went to *Cinema Canada* (\$16,100) and *Cinéma Québec* (\$18,200); *OVO Photo* (\$27,500), *Séquences* (\$9,000), and *Take One* (\$11,000), as well as the more mainstream *artscanada* (\$160,000) and *Vie des arts* (\$92,400). The following years saw even more entries in the list of periodicals funded, including *Criteria* (\$5,000 in 1977–78), *FILE* (\$4,800 in 1977–78), *Parachute* (\$30,000 in 1977–78),²⁶ and *Parallelogramme* (\$3,637 in 1976–77). In 1981, *artscanada* lost its funding due to widespread perceptions that it was no longer responding to new directions in contemporary Canadian art, freeing money up for other magazines that more accurately represented the changing constituency of the country's visual arts scene.²⁷

This lengthy account of the Canada Council's history of periodical funding in the 1960s and 1970s highlights several things: first, that the Canada Council valued periodicals in particular for their capacity to connect the visual arts to communities across the country. In the early years, this ability was described as central to “binding Canada's diverse and attenuated population” in large part because the small number of art publications in circulation – namely *Canadian Art* and *Vie des arts* – meant that these periodicals could create a national readership and constitute a common point



4 | Cover of the *Annual Report* of the Canada Council, 1970–1971. (Photo: author)

of reference. By the 1970s, as the number and range of journals expanded, the Council’s rationale for supporting periodicals shifted from building *a* national culture to fostering the expansion of Canadian art practice across the country. Indeed, in the face of a reduced appropriation due to the impact of economic inflation, the 1974–75 *Annual Report* noted that periodicals in particular were feeling the pinch and argued that it would need significantly more funding to support “this essential component of a healthy arts community.”²⁸ This shift reflects the larger changes in rhetoric at the Council, which by the 1970s was advocating the arts as enabling “self-expression” and furthering creativity and experimentation. By 1977, Council Chair Gertrude Laing responded to concerns that the agency was funding Quebec artists with separatist leanings by reiterating the arm’s length principles on which the Council was established and asserting that it was not in the business of giving grants to “people of the separatist opinion or any other particular political faith.”²⁹ Subsequent *Annual Reports* would reiterate the Council’s independence, as well as its accountability to Parliament, to artists, as well as to the public, further distancing itself from any appearance of supporting federal goals of national identity or unity.

A second reason that the Canada Council was so enthusiastic in its support for publications is that periodicals, more than travel grants or aid to cultural institutions, fed into the Council's desires for concrete outcomes from the projects it funded. Periodicals were products: much like the Canada Council's own annual reports (Fig. 4), they were material documentation of activities – both the activities of artists in Canada (many of whom were also receiving Council travel and practice grants) and of the Council itself. Indeed, the annual reports of the Canada Council provide a fascinating overview not only of the development of contemporary art in Canada, but of the discussion around innovative and experimental approaches to art making that were occurring in the 1960s and 1970s. We see a glimpse of this focus on the new in the *Annual Report* of 1965–66 looking back on the Council's first eight years and contemplating the gains afforded by the influx of funds from the successful request for a regular parliamentary appropriation over and above the income from the original endowment. Characterizing its efforts as trying to “keep the avant-garde at least in sight,” the Council complains that it “frequently experienc[es] the loneliness of the long-distance runner”³⁰ in its efforts to stay current. The avant-garde it was keeping in sight was revealed over the course of two meetings in 1966 called “Soundings” where Council staff and contemporary artists exchanged views on emerging developments in the visual arts and the ways that the Council could better support them.³¹ Ideas raised during the meetings included shifting support for artists from individual fellowships to purchases of works of art and providing funds to facilitate mixed media practices – including asking the Council to use its influence to get artists into experimental laboratories and industry facilities.³² Less than two years later, funding for Vancouver's Intermedia began, touted in the 1968–69 *Annual Report* as the Council's “most important undertaking in experimental areas . . . [that] gives embodiment to the long felt desire of many artists to bring the different arts together.”³³ The Council's funding of Intermedia is often viewed as a pivotal moment in the establishment of artist-run culture in Canada³⁴ and indeed that year, the Council also funded new print ateliers in Montreal, Winnipeg, and Vancouver, as well as an experimental foundry in Montreal. But the same annual report also noted \$642,000 of funding going to public art galleries, mostly in support of library collections, photographic and cataloguing facilities, and conservation labs, as well as educational and experimental activities; this level of support suggests that the Council believed that traditional art galleries continued to play a formative role in the development of contemporary art in Canada. Telling of the Council's combined approach is the photograph of Les Levine's environment *Slipcover: A Place*, shown at the Art Gallery of Toronto in 1966, reproduced on page 57 of the 1966–67 *Annual Report* and intended to picture

The performance over the past decade is shown in tabular form as follows:					
Year Ending	Annual Income (Income taxes)	Market Value	Realized Gains	Income before taxes (after 1966-67)	Income after taxes and realized gains (1966-67)
UNIVERSITY FUND					
1957-58	\$2,549	\$15,155	\$ 854	\$1,007	\$4,299
1958-59	2,719	54,840	3,107	3,809	3,820
1959-60	2,836	30,881	3,028	—	321
1960-61	2,818	39,003	2,371	3,824	3,937
1961-62	2,556	56,557	3,151	2,706	4,385
1962-63	3,013	56,679	3,271	3,387	2,999
1963-64	3,089	57,647	4,022	3,264	4,505
1964-65	3,154	59,621	6,004	2,886	5,234
1965-66	3,306	58,358	3,899	915	1,250
1966-67	3,346	59,491	3,837	845	3,214
Two-year Total	\$19,781				\$34,419

In summary, the income on the original Endowment Fund capital over the ten-year period yielded 5.95% overall; in 1966-67 the yield was 6.73%. If augmented by realized or unrealized profits (or reduced by losses), the average annual return over the decade amounted to 7.23%.

The University Capital Grants Fund

This Fund, as required by the Act, has been invested only in Government of Canada direct or guaranteed securities. Because of the expected short life of the Fund it was decided as a matter of Council policy to limit the holdings to short-term bonds or Treasury Bills. All but \$1.2 million of the available money had been allotted by March 31, 1967, although \$9.5 million of grants made remained unpaid at that date.

The position of the Fund at the end of 1966-67 is summarized in the following table:

Original Capital	\$50,000,000
Income earned in decade	15,962,000
Profits realized in decade	3,744,000
	69,706,000
Grants made to March 31, 1967	66,500,000
Balance at March 31, 1967	3,217,000
Grants unpaid at March 31, 1967	9,450,000

Based on average capital available over the decade, the return on the Fund averaged 5.2% per annum, based on combined income and profits.



5 | Pages 56–57 of the *Annual Report* of the Canada Council, 1966–1967, featuring a photograph of Les Levine, *Slipcover: A Place*, at the Art Gallery of Ontario. With permission of Les Levine. (Photo: author)

the Council’s advocacy of experimental work in the visual arts (Fig. 5). Reflecting on the history of artist-run culture, AA Bronson would refer to the policies of the Canada Council during this period as “inspired and future-oriented”³⁵ and argued that the patterns of Council funding – particularly in the visual arts – indicated a willingness to endorse experimentation and risk to a degree not seen in other national contexts. The analysis in Bronson’s important volume *From Sea to Shining Sea* captures both the achievements of the Council during this period and the positive reaction of Canadian artists to the agency’s support for fledgling, sometimes ad-hoc, organizations:

[The Canada Council’s] ability to adapt to artists’ needs and to support new forms is legendary in the visual arts: the Visual Arts Section

has funded every form of hybrid, interdisciplinary and experimental activity, even outside its own disciplines. . . . When artist-initiated organizations began to appear in the mid to late 60s it was the Canada Council Visual Arts Section, then in the person of David Silcox, who actively encouraged and funded them. Otherwise, it is doubtful that the established network of artist-run centres we have today would exist.³⁶

The hybrid and experimental activity of these new organizations produced different kinds of publications and the artists' magazines that emerged from the early 1970s onwards constituted a clear signal of the desire to reproduce in printed form the critical perspectives of artist-run centres across the country – whether or not they were officially linked with any of these centres. Running the gamut from photocopied newsletters to more slick publications such as *Only Paper Today* and *FILE*, these periodicals functioned as much as informational documents of ongoing activities as manifestos for a new way of thinking about contemporary art.³⁷ Reviewing the recent appearance of *Only Paper Today* and *Parachute* in *Quill and Quire* in 1976, Paul Stuewe praised their ability to engender critical debate around contemporary art before concluding that both periodicals “exhibit their contents in forms that are intrinsically attractive as well as appropriate to their respective messages.”³⁸ Russell Keziere similarly argued for the importance of criticality in contemporary art writing in his analysis of what he describes as “the proliferation of art periodicals in Canada.”³⁹ For Keziere, whose overview ranged from “glossies” like *artscanada* and *Vie des arts*, and house organs of such disparate art institutions as Arton in Calgary (*Centrefold*, precursor to *Fuse*) and the Vancouver Art Gallery (*Vanguard*), to independent magazines *Parachute* and *Criteria*, the most successful art publications in the country were those that took risks, remained true to their readership, and actively sought to stimulate discussion and debate. All funded by the Canada Council, which described them as “articulate trade magazines” for the new “parallel” galleries,⁴⁰ these periodicals quickly developed their own identity and established themselves as important voices in contemporary art production in Canada, eventually working independently of, though often in parallel with, the artist-run centres that had created them. The Council's aim to build a strong culture of visual arts periodical publishing appears to have been successful.

If periodicals are fundamental instruments for the regular and continuous dissemination of information on art, exhibition catalogues provide in-depth explorations of artistic activities and function as long-term records of temporary events. Early Canada Council funding went to catalogues of

museum and gallery collections or to the production of brochures or small booklets to accompany tours of art society exhibitions – the Canadian Group of Painters, for example, received \$1,500 in 1958–59 to produce a catalogue and to assist with an exhibition that circulated to the Vancouver Art Gallery and the London Public Library and Museum; the catalogue was a small 6-page document listing artists' names and the titles of works on display. The Canada Council's annual report for that year addressed more broadly the policy for assisting organizations presenting the visual arts, indicating that it would focus its funding on those projects that could be described as “extension activities’ which go beyond the more passive function of showing a permanent collection.”⁴¹ Support for extension activities included the regional circulation of exhibitions, the development of slide collections in larger galleries, assisting with children's art classes, and the production of catalogues of works of art in Canadian galleries and museums “where it can be shown that they are of more than local significance and are of a standard to justify distribution abroad.”⁴² Indeed, like its funding for periodicals, the Canada Council's support for exhibition catalogues was closely tied to their dissemination function, their ability to increase knowledge of Canadian art nationally and internationally, and their success in giving greater visibility to the work of Canadian artists. Over the course of the 1960s, this interest in dissemination grew in importance: where Council funding in the late 1950s and 1960s had heavily supported individual artists, by 1970 grants to senior artists had been eliminated in order to ensure subsidy to all the Council's programs. Funding to public art institutions as well as artist-run centres can also be understood as part of a larger rationale for the importance of dissemination activities, the Council recognizing the different audiences each organization could reach. In the same 1969–70 report that praised the VAG's satellite exhibition space The Racetrack Gallery for its experimental way of presenting art to residents of Vancouver's East End, the Council also argued that even in a time of austerity there was a need for federal operating grants to public art institutions, noting that “Canada's art galleries and museums have been the most aggressive cultural institutions in the process of diffusion and democratization of the arts.”⁴³ Although such diffusion was not solely to be achieved through exhibition catalogues, these were important elements of the Council's broader plan of support to contemporary Canadian art.

A similar rationale for the value of diffusion and democratization can also be found in the funding programs of the federal National Museums Corporation (NMC), whose subsidy of museum activities outside of Ottawa was strongly oriented towards outreach and extension. It is interesting to note that the term “democratization” appears yet again in this context. Established under the Trudeau Liberals in 1972, the NMC's National Museums Policy

(NMP) operated under the ideological umbrella of “democratization and decentralization” to enable the broader circulation of the national collections to all parts of the country. In the words of Secretary of State Gérard Pelletier, who implemented the policy, the NMP would allow objects “hidden away in the equivalent of basements and attics” of the National Museums to be “dusted off and sent out for display to the people who owned them.”⁴⁴ A second aim of the NMP was to assist regional institutions to expand their programming and to play a larger role in disseminating culture to smaller organizations in surrounding communities. Extension and education programs were the key components of democratization and decentralization, and significant funding was distributed to museums and galleries to produce touring exhibitions, the majority of which were destined for the smaller institutions in each region. Catalogues played an important role in the NMP, clear evidence of the circulation of cultural objects and knowledge throughout the country, and a means of further increasing that circulation through their status as published records available for sale in museum book and gift shops, as well as through the offices of the NMC.⁴⁵

Although a financial boon to many regional museums, the NMP was often criticized for its emphasis on extension activities and the claim that such a focus – and the attendant funding – came at the expense of the development and maintenance of museums’ own collections because human and financial resources were almost entirely diverted to galleries’ extension services. Commenting on funding received from the National Museums Corporation for the travelling exhibition *Certain Traditions*, Edmonton Art Gallery director Terry Fenton complained:

[I]t becomes apparent that NMC funding is a curse as well as a blessing. Their insistence that organizing galleries charge no fees to participating galleries disrupts the marketplace. It also means that organizing galleries are unable to recoup production overruns by charging participants. Their insistence upon fully bilingual catalogues (not just translated inserts) even when exhibitions do not travel to French speaking areas creates an additional expense and complicates catalogue productions enormously.⁴⁶

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria director Roger Boulet also regretted that federal funding was so closely earmarked for extension services, noting that the gallery’s ability to develop its own programming had been constrained by the NMP’s policies of democratization and decentralization.⁴⁷

By the early 1980s, funding patterns for exhibition catalogues shifted once again as the Canada Council and the NMC realigned their priorities

and moved to a project-based funding model that allowed art institutions of any stripe – artist-run centre or museum – to compete for support of exhibitions. In addition, the two agencies determined to decrease instances of double-dipping by orienting Canada Council funding exclusively towards contemporary art projects and keeping NMC funding (since 1972 located within the Museums Assistance Program) for exhibitions of historical interest. What had once been a means of making art more accessible to a broad public became mired in bureaucratic restrictions, and art institutions that had once hailed the Canada Council for its “forward thinking and experimental outlook” now found themselves struggling to shape their activities to better fit federal funding models. For the Edmonton Art Gallery, whose contemporary art exhibitions remained committed to the exploration of modernist painting and sculptural practices, the policy shift resulted in a significant decrease in funding that the institution rationalized as evidence that the Canada Council, through its jury system, was “playing curator of contemporary art for Canada.”⁴⁸ By contrast, artist-run centres were able to leverage the new funding structures to develop exhibitions that often rivalled the programming of larger museum institutions, in the process establishing themselves as the guiding figures in contemporary Canadian art. The catalogue for the 1987 exhibition *From Sea to Shining Sea: Artist-initiated Activity in Canada 1939–1987* underscores this role. Curated by AA Bronson, with essays chronicling regional developments by Glenn Lewis, Peggy Gale, and René Blouin, as well as an essay on video art by Renée Baert and Bronson’s lament for the corporatization of artist-run culture, “The Humiliation of the Bureaucrat,” *From Sea to Shining Sea* provides an overview of artistic activity in Canada that unwittingly recalls “Coast to Coast in Art,” *Canadian Art*’s feature from the 1940s and 1950s. The 1987 catalogue, however, offers a detailed chronicle of Canadian artists’ reaction *against* the mainstream art world from John Lyman’s founding of the Contemporary Arts Society in 1939 to the release of *Infermental VI* and the exhibition *Canadian Holography in Kingston*, both 1987; the chronology also cements the fundamental role of artist-run centres – less visible in the pages of *Canadian Art/artscanada* – in the writing of contemporary Canadian art history. That such a narrative was impossible without federal government funding is evident in the frequent references to such programmes as Opportunities for Youth (OFY) and Local Initiatives Programme (LIP) throughout the volume, as well as the presentation of graphs in Appendix A documenting Canada Council support to artist-run centres from 1972 to 1987. Itself funded by various levels of government including the Canada Council as well as by private and corporate sponsors, *From Sea to Shining Sea* remains one of the most important sources of information about Canadian art but also reminds us of the continuing relevance of government

funding for the support of the visual arts in Canada and argues for a return to the days when the Canada Council was praised for its “future-oriented” outlook and its willingness to endorse experimentation.

NOTES

- 1 The Canada Council, *Annual Report* 1963–64, II. Copies of all the annual reports issued by the Canada Council are available on its website: <http://canadacouncil.ca/council/about-the-council/annual-reports>.
- 2 Alexander ALBERRO and Nora M. ALTER, “Introduction,” in *Parachute: The Anthology (1975–2000) Museums, Art History and Theory*, vol. 1, ed. Chantal Pontbriand (JRP/Ringier & Les Presses du réel, 2012).
- 3 Lon Dubinsky conducts an exemplary analysis of *Parachute* (and three other Canadian art magazines) in his unpublished doctoral dissertation “Canadian Visual Art Magazines as Cultural Formations,” McGill University, 1991. It is worth noting that *Parachute* was the recipient of significant funding from the Canada Council as well as the Conseil des arts du Québec.
- 4 This essay will only focus on federal funding strategies and will not address provincial or municipal funding of arts publications. For the most part, provincial art agencies directed their funding to the support of artists and to arts organizations tasked with making artwork accessible across provincial territories. Municipalities have a long history of providing in-kind support to arts organizations in the form of rental subsidies and operating costs. Until the mid-1970s, the dollar amount of federal arts funding consistently outpaced provincial and municipal funding, with the significant exception of Quebec’s ministère des Affaires culturelles, established in 1961 and providing extensive funding to artists, arts organizations, and publications. For an account of provincial and federal arts funding in western Canada, see my *Spaces and Places for Art: Making Art Institutions in Western Canada, 1912–1990* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, forthcoming); for the origins of Quebec’s Ministry of Cultural Affairs, see Fernand HARVEY, “Georges-Émile Lapalme et la politique culturelle du Québec: genèse, projet et désillusion,” *Les Cahiers des dix* 64 (2010): 1–46. Harvey notes that Quebec’s funding body was modelled on the arm’s length tradition of the Canada Council, while inspiration for the creation of a ministry of cultural affairs came from André Malraux’s establishment of the same in France in 1959. HARVEY, “Georges-Émile Lapalme et la politique culturelle du Québec,” 14.
- 5 Sandra PAIKOWSKY, “‘From Away’: The Carnegie Corporation, Walter Abell and American Strategies for Art in the Maritimes from the 1920s to the 1940s,” *Journal of Canadian Art History* 27 (2006): 36–75; Kirk NEIRGARTH, “Missionary for Culture: Walter Abell, *Maritime Art*, and Cultural Democracy, 1928–1944,” *Acadiensis* 36:1 (Autumn 2006): 3–28.
- 6 Both the National Library and the Canada Council for the Arts came directly out of the Massey Commission’s 1951 recommendations. The Report also identified the National Gallery of Canada, the National Film Board, and the CBC (among other

federally-funded institutions) as central to the maintenance and dissemination of a national culture to the regions. I examine this in greater length with particular reference to western Canada in *Spaces and Places for Art*.

- 7 Original subscribers to *Canadian Art* were the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Art Association of Montreal, and the Art Gallery of Toronto. Founded in 1931, the Vancouver Art Gallery was particularly eager to establish itself as a key art institution nationally and viewed sponsorship of the magazine as facilitating that goal. Minutes of the Vancouver Art Gallery Council meeting, 16 Oct. 1943, Vancouver Art Gallery Council Minutes, 12 May 1941 – 28 Apr. 1946, VAG fonds, VAG Archives.
- 8 Rumoured candidates included NGC curator of prints and drawings Kathleen Fenwick, whose suitability was questioned by FCA President Lawren Harris. Writing to Frederic Taylor, he argued: “Walter [Abell] states that Miss Fenwick would be just the wrong person to take over the Editorship. Harry McC[urry] suggested her name to me. So we must be prepared to kill that idea.” Lawren Harris to Frederic Taylor, 18 June 1944, Federation of Canadian Artists papers, Queen’s University Archives, Box 1. Both Harris and Taylor were keen to see Robert Ayre appointed as *Canadian Art*’s editor.
- 9 Louise MOREAU, “Making Art Modern: The First Decade of *Vie des arts* magazine and its Contribution to the Discourse on the Visual Arts in the 1950s and 1960s” (MA thesis, Concordia University, 1977), 32.
- 10 Robert GRAHAM, “Understanding *artscanada*: History, Practice, and Idea” (MA thesis, McGill University, 1988), 54.
- 11 “A Survey of Contemporary Art Magazines,” *Studio International* 192:983 (September/October 1976): 177.
- 12 Greg CURNOE, “Feet of Clay Planted Firmly in USA,” *Canadian Forum* 61:661 (May 1976): 9–11. Specifically, Curnoe was criticizing Brodzky for asking an American writer, Dale McConathy, to assess the state of Canadian culture for the “Canadian Cultural Revolution: An Appraisal of the Politics and Economics of Art” issue of *artscanada* (32:200/201 [Autumn 1975]).
- 13 Louise Moreau suggests that Andrée Paradis’s appointment to the Canada Council in its first year was instrumental to *Vie des arts*’s early survival. Paradis wrote for the magazine from its inception and served as its editor-in-chief from 1964 until her death in 1986. MOREAU, “Making Art Modern” 37.
- 14 The Canada Council, *Annual Report* 1957–58, 18.
- 15 In a speech to the Canadian Conference for the Arts (CCA) *Seminar ’65* conference, the Canada Council’s Assistant Director, Arts, Peter Dwyer, noted that it was less a question of raise OR spread, but of doing both. By 1965, this statement was accompanied by the assertion that the only way such a policy could be achieved was in cooperation with private interests and with stronger financial support from provincial and municipal governments. “Some Present Problems of Subsidy” a talk given by Peter Dwyer to the CCA Seminar ’65 conference in Sainte-Adèle, QC, 20 Jan. 1965. Reprinted in the Canada Council *Annual Report* for 1964–65, 91.
- 16 In its 1962–63 *Annual Report*, the Council emphasized the disparity in provincial and municipal funding for the arts, noting that where Quebec had allocated \$375,000 in 1961, the rest of the provinces combined had only spent \$195,000; municipally, Montreal’s contribution consisted of \$220,000 of the total \$540,000 spent by Canadian municipalities on the visual and performing arts.

- 17 The other journals were *Canadian Geographical Journal* (\$30,000 over three years); *Écrits du Canada français* (\$3,000); *Emourie* (\$2,000); *Tamarack Review* (\$3,000); *The Canadian Music Journal* (\$5,000); *The Fiddlehead* (\$1,500 over three years); and *The Phoenix* (\$2,000).
- 18 The Canada Council, *Annual Report* 1964–65, 13.
- 19 The Canada Council, *Annual Report* 1960–61, 3.
- 20 Canada, Royal Commission on Publications, *Report*, 1961, 6.
- 21 Excerpt from Order in Council P.C. 1960–1270, cited in *ibid.*, i.
- 22 The Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting (The Aird Commission), 1929, and the Royal Commission on Broadcasting (The Fowler Commission), 1955.
- 23 Identifying the problem as one of economies of scale, the federal government implemented several policies designed to assist the Canadian periodical press, including changes to the Income Tax Act in 1965 that disallowed deductions to American publishing companies for advertising directed at Canadian consumers in foreign-owned publications and further amending the Income Tax Act in 1975 to target the Canadian editions of *Time* and *Reader's Digest* that had both been exempt from the 1965 ruling. See Lon DUBINSKY, "Periodical Publishing," in *The Cultural Industries in Canada: Problems, Policies, and Prospects*, ed. Michael Dorland (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1996), 35–59.
- 24 Royal Commission on Publications, *Report*, 6.
- 25 The Canada Council, *Annual Report* 1961–62, 16.
- 26 In 1982–83, *Parachute* received \$143,750 in funding.
- 27 Lon Dubinsky cites former Canada Council employee Luc Jutras who commented in 1986 that the Council "had the courage to eliminate magazines that clearly were not serving the arts community. *artscanada* is an example. The community just could not take it any longer. With this money we helped *Vanguard*, *Fuse*, a whole range of publications which to an extent were suffering from the largesse of the Canada Council vis a vis *artscanada*." Luc JUTRAS, "Report of the Canada Council's Programme of Aid for Promotion Campaign of Periodicals," *Canadian Periodical Publishers Association Newsletter*, 42, 6; DUBINSKY, "Canadian Visual Art Magazines," 85.
- 28 The Canada Council, *Annual Report* 1974–75, 83.
- 29 The Canada Council, *Annual Report* 1976–77, x.
- 30 The Canada Council, *Annual Report* 1965–66, 5.
- 31 Continuing with the military theme of the avant-garde, the impetus for Soundings was described in the Council's *Annual Report* as follows: "We have been concerned at the present time of change in the arts that our distant early warning system of new needs should not become insensitive. We have therefore begun to use some of our new funds, and the additional staff they have brought with them, to spread our germ welfare into neglected areas so that the Council can continue to work and plan effectively. We started last year in the field of the visual arts by a flanking manoeuvre around the tired and untrue to bring us into a more lively encounter with artists themselves and to find out how they live and work." *Ibid.*, 6.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 7.
- 33 The Canada Council, *Annual Report* 1968–69, 34.
- 34 See Keith WALLACE, "A Particular History: Artist-run Centres in Vancouver" in *Vancouver Anthology: The Institutional Politics of Art*, ed. Stan Douglas (Vancouver:

- Talon Books, 1989), 23–44; Scott WATSON, ed., *Intertidal: Vancouver Art and Artists* (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, 2005).
- 35 AA BRONSON, ed., “Introduction,” in *From Sea to Shining Sea* (Toronto: The Power Plant, 1987), 13.
 - 36 BRONSON, “Chronology of Artist-initiated Activity in Canada, 1939–1987,” in *ibid.*, 24.
 - 37 For an in-depth discussion of the role of artists’ magazines in the formation of contemporary art, see Gwen ALLEN, *Artists’ Magazines: An Alternative Space for Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011).
 - 38 Paul STUEWE, “Small Magazines,” *Quill and Quire* 42:10 (August 1976): 21.
 - 39 Russell KEZIERE, “Cdn Art Mags: Implications and Consequences of the Proliferation of Art Periodicals in Canada,” *Criteria* 3:3 (1977): 9.
 - 40 The Canada Council, *Annual Report* 1976–77, xii.
 - 41 The Canada Council, *Annual Report* 1958–59, 23.
 - 42 *Ibid.*, 24.
 - 43 The Canada Council, *Annual Report* 1969–70, 77. The following year, the Racetrack Gallery was replaced by The Satellite Gallery and, as the Council retrospectively noted in its 1970–71 *Annual Report*, “with [the Council’s] assistance offered still more opportunities for adults and children from all parts of the city to express themselves in a number of informal workshops.” The Canada Council, *Annual Report* 1970–71, 10. The Satellite Gallery was described by the Vancouver Art Gallery as a “Gallery Without Walls,” and shared premises with Intermedia in a deconsecrated church on the corner of 1st Avenue and Semlin. Minutes of the Board of the Vancouver Art Gallery, 17 September 1970. Vancouver Art Gallery fonds, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives.
 - 44 National Museums of Canada, *Annual Report* 1973–74, 4.
 - 45 The NMC had a Marketing Services Division that coordinated the distribution and sale of all publications produced by the National Museums. In addition to bookstores in the National Museums, publications would have been available by mail order and through independent bookstores.
 - 46 “The Edmonton Art Gallery Mandate” document produced for Future Directors Workshop for Board of the EAG in c. 1985. Edmonton Art Gallery Board of Trustees files.
 - 47 Roger BOULET, *Plan for Development*, submitted to the Board of Governors of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1979, 67.
 - 48 Edmonton Art Gallery, Summary of Program Grants and Project Grants for the Board of Governors of the Edmonton Art Gallery, 3 June 1985. Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton Art Gallery Files.

« Sans croissance, votre chien est mort vous êtes fini » :
le financement des publications artistiques au Canada des
années 1940 aux années 1980

ANNE WHITELAW

La dispersion géographique de la population canadienne et la relative rareté des institutions artistiques jusque dans les années 1950 ont été des obstacles de taille à la diffusion généralisée des connaissances sur les arts visuels au Canada. Des publications comme *Canadian Art*, fondée en 1943, et son ancêtre, *Maritime Art*, créée en 1940, ont joué un rôle de premier plan en donnant à l'art une visibilité auprès des Canadiens, à une époque où les journaux et magazines d'intérêt public avaient une portée plutôt locale, et où les institutions artistiques – à l'exception notable de la Galerie nationale du Canada (Musée des beaux-arts du Canada) – en étaient encore au stade de l'élaboration de la programmation et ne disposaient pas des ressources financières ou humaines nécessaires pour faire connaître leurs activités. La création, en 1957, du Conseil des arts du Canada a permis une diffusion plus systématique de l'information sur les arts dans l'ensemble du pays grâce à la publication de ses rapports annuels. En accordant des subventions pour les catalogues d'exposition dans le cadre du financement à plus large échelle des expositions temporaires (alors largement négligées par les organismes de financement fédéraux et provinciaux) et en finançant les périodiques, le Conseil des arts a également favorisé l'accroissement du nombre et de la portée des publications sur l'art au Canada. Le présent essai établit les recoupements entre les éditions sur les arts visuels et le financement par le gouvernement fédéral canadien depuis les années 1940 jusqu'aux années 1980. L'accent sur le financement met en évidence les difficultés des professionnels des arts visuels du Canada à rendre leurs œuvres visibles à un public national et international, ainsi que l'influence des organisations fédérales et des politiques sur les arts visuels au Canada dans les années 1960 et 1970. Les programmes du Conseil des arts du Canada ont contribué de façon inestimable à élargir les connaissances et l'expertise des artistes canadiens grâce aux voyages, et aidé les organismes voués aux arts à acquérir et à faire connaître les œuvres d'artistes canadiens contemporains. D'autres initiatives de financement fédérales, y compris les sommes d'argent utilisées pour appuyer les programmes lancés dans le cadre de la *Politique nationale des musées de 1972*, ont secondé les projets de publication d'artistes et d'organismes

canadiens, notamment en encourageant les institutions à réaliser des catalogues d'exposition comme prolongement de leurs activités. Même si ces programmes se sont en définitive montrés efficaces pour soutenir la diffusion de l'information sur l'art contemporain au Canada, contribuant ainsi à son essor, la comptabilisation des allocations de fonds effectuées au fil des années démontre que le financement des premières décennies se concentrait sur les publications d'envergure, comme *Canadian Art* et *Vie des arts*, qui étaient perçues comme plus à même d'unifier le pays. Cependant, alors qu'il cherchait de plus en plus à appuyer une plus grande expérimentation dans les arts – ainsi que de nouveaux programmes fédéraux pour les musées – le Conseil des arts du Canada a adopté, dans les années 1980, un modèle de financement des projets qui a favorisé l'émergence de publications novatrices de plus petite envergure, comme *FILE* et *Criteria*. Grâce en partie au financement du Conseil des arts du Canada, ces périodiques ont rapidement affirmé leur identité et sont devenus d'importantes voix de l'art contemporain au Canada, finissant par travailler indépendamment – bien que souvent en parallèle – des centres d'artistes autogérés qui les avaient lancés.