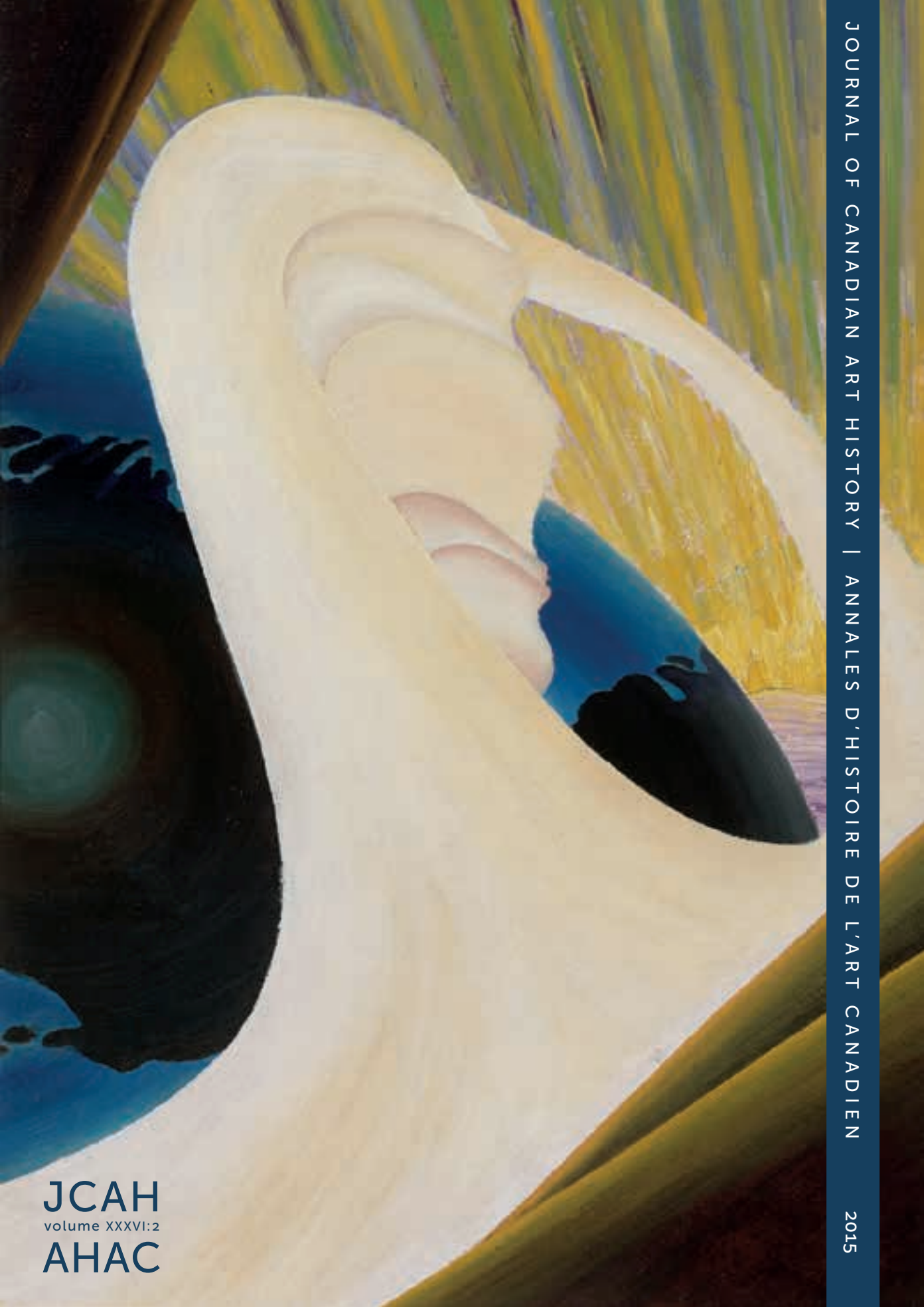




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Montréal, Québec, Canada H3G 1M8
(514) 848-2424, ext. 4699
jcah@concordia.ca
<http://jcah-ahac.concordia.ca>

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EDITORIAL | ÉDITORIAL 6

Martha Langford

ARTICLES

Jean-Antoine Aide-Créquy (1749–1780) : matériaux et technique picturale | 11

*Élisabeth Forest, Marie-Claude Corbeil et Elizabeth Moffatt*A Postscript to the David B. Milne Biography and *Catalogue Raisonné*
of the Paintings | 49*David P. Silcox, C.M.*“These Diminished Waters”: Conservation, Camera Hunting, and
Settler/Indigenous Conflict in Lorene Squire’s Wildfowl Photography of
Northern Canada | 57*Karla McManus**Subconscious Selling*: Bertram Brooker and the Visual Culture of Couéism | 93*Adam Lauder*The National Gallery Lands a Jackson Pollock: A Case Study in
Curatorial Agency | 119*Ian Ferguson*

REVIEWS | COMPTES RENDUS

James King, *The Life of David Milne* | 134*Liz Wylie*Garry Neill Kennedy, *The Last Art College: Nova Scotia College of Art and
Design, 1968–1978* | 138*Robin Simpson*Edited by Jacques Des Rochers and Brian Foss, *1920s Modernism in Montreal:
The Beaver Hall Group* | 150*Alicia Boutilier*

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES | NOTICES BIOGRAPHIQUES 156

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES | LIGNES DIRECTRICES 160

A mixed issue is an occasion as well as a test of the editorial mission. The range of topics and approaches found in this issue demonstrate both the scope and the depth that the *Journal of Canadian Art History/Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* strives to maintain. Honouring the very high standard set by founding editor Sandra Paikowsky, *JCAH/AHAC* aims with every issue to get “better and better.”

The restoration of two works by Jean-Antoine Aide-Créquy (1749–1780) done by Élisabeth Forest, Marie-Claude Corbeil, and Elizabeth Moffatt at the Centre de conservation du Québec has unearthed a wealth of information about the working methods of this priest and painter, claimed as the first painter born in Canada – *avant la lettre* to be sure. This article extends a very strong tradition in *JCAH* of attention to object, a mission confirmed by the thematic issue on the frame not so long ago.

David Silcox's return to the subject of David Milne (1881–1953) will both interest and surprise devotees of this modern Canadian artist. A new fact about Milne's life sets the record straight and reminds us of the circumstances in which he grew up and made his first paintings – rather a long way from New York. Silcox is both a Milne biographer and the compiler of his catalogue raisonné. The ongoing interest in Milne within the field and in the broader Canadian culture is confirmed by James King's new biography of the artist, reviewed in this issue by Liz Wylie.

Other interests have been excited by the monumental exhibition *1920s Modernism in Montreal: The Beaver Hall Group*, organized by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. The culmination of a decade of research by co-curators Jacques Des Rochers and Brian Foss, the exhibition and its accompanying publications are reviewed with brio by Alicia Boutilier who finds much to celebrate in the curatorial approach. Members of the Beaver Hall Group (the ‘other’ Group, as Boutilier reminds us), who were mainly though not exclusively women, are now firmly inscribed in the pantheon. Significantly, for this reader, the project's reconstruction of the exhibition history of the Beaver Hall Group is underscored by Boutilier. We are given glimpses of Canadian art experience – the shock of the modern sometimes delivered, sometimes suppressed.

The history of Canadian art includes the histories of its art institutions. Ian Ferguson's account of the National Gallery of Canada's acquisition of a Jackson Pollock painting will be nothing short of enthralling for students of Canadian cultural policy and internal bureaucratic manoeuvres. The main actors are NGC director Jean Sutherland Boggs and the institution's first curator of contemporary art, Brydon E. Smith, both committed to an expansion of the National Gallery's collection to reflect the broader North American context – in this case, an iconic figure of American abstract expressionism.

Un numéro mixte est à la fois une opportunité et un test pour la mission éditoriale. L'éventail de sujets et d'approches que vous trouverez dans ce numéro témoigne de l'étendue et de la profondeur que les *Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* cherchent à conserver. En suivant les normes très élevées établies par l'ancienne rédactrice en chef et fondatrice de la revue, Sandra Paikowsky, *JCAH/AHAC* vise à s'améliorer avec chaque numéro.

La restauration de deux œuvres de Jean-Antoine Aide-Créquy (1749–1780) par Élisabeth Forest, Marie-Claude Corbeil et Elizabeth Moffatt au Centre de conservation du Québec a permis de découvrir une mine de renseignements sur les méthodes de travail de ce prêtre artiste qui serait le premier peintre né au Canada – avant la lettre, bien sûr. Cet article poursuit la très forte tradition des *Annales* de prêter attention à l'objet, mission confirmée par le récent numéro sur le thème de l'encadrement.

En revenant sur le sujet de David Milne (1881–1953), David Silcox intéressera et surprendra les admirateurs de cet artiste canadien contemporain. De nouvelles données sur la vie de Milne rétablissent les faits et nous rappellent dans quelles circonstances il a grandi et exécuté ses premières œuvres – un chemin assez loin de New York. Silcox est à la fois le biographe de Milne et l'auteur du catalogue raisonné consacré à son œuvre. La nouvelle biographie de l'artiste par James King, revue dans ce numéro par Liz Wylie, confirme l'intérêt soutenu pour Milne dans le domaine de l'art et la culture canadienne en général.

D'autres sujets d'intérêt sont nés de l'exposition monumentale *La couleur du Jazz. Une modernité des années 1920 Montréal, le Groupe de Beaver Hall*, au Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal. Point culminant d'une décennie de recherches par les co-commissaires Jacques Des Rochers et Brian Foss, l'exposition et la documentation d'accompagnement sont brillamment étudiées par Alicia Boutilier, pour qui l'autorité de la recherche des commissaires mérite d'être honorée. Les membres du Groupe du Beaver Hall (l'« autre » Groupe, comme le rappelle Boutilier), qui étaient principalement mais pas exclusivement des femmes, sont maintenant fermement inscrits dans le panthéon. Fait important, pour nous, Boutilier souligne le projet d'histoire des expositions du Groupe du Beaver Hall. Nous y percevons des fragments de l'expérience artistique canadienne – le choc de la modernité, parfois livrée, parfois supprimée.

L'histoire de l'art canadien comprend l'histoire de ses institutions artistiques. Ian Ferguson donne un compte-rendu de l'acquisition d'un tableau de Jackson Pollock que les étudiants des politiques culturelles et des manœuvres bureaucratiques canadiennes trouveront tout à fait passionnant. Les principaux acteurs sont la directrice du Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, Jean Sutherland Boggs, et le premier conservateur de l'art contemporain de l'institution, Brydon E. Smith, tous deux déterminés à ce que la collection du Musée reflète le plus large contexte nord-américain – dans ce cas particulier, une figure emblématique de l'expressionnisme abstrait américain.

Being modern – in this case, being a modern woman – sent photographer Lorene Squire in quite the other direction, following the waterfowl that were her passion from the American Midwest to the Canadian North. Technology of course took her there: modern transport and communications, and the camera. Karla McManus explores the factors that subtended Squire’s short, but productive career as a nature photographer, including commissions from the Hudson’s Bay Company magazine, *The Beaver*, and the growing awareness of the earth’s fragility after the four drought events of the Dirty Thirties. McManus’s transnational research is contributing to the expansion of Canadian photographic studies by delving into print culture and its archives.

Adam Lauder’s fascination with the twentieth-century mind has yielded great riches in the pages of this journal, first shining light on the practice of Iain Baxter (b. 1936), and in this issue, correlating the work of a polyphonic Canadian creator Bertram Brookner (1888–1955) with the influential psychological boosterism of French psychologist Émile Coué. An echo of the Coué method can be felt in my opening paragraph. Lauder’s development is considerably subtler.

Big ideas yield big books that require considerable unpacking. Robin Simpson’s review essay of Garry Neill Kennedy’s *The Last Art College* gives this weighty tome its due, reconstructing the pedagogical experiment of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (now NSCAD University) as presented by the former president and impresario of NSCAD’s extraordinary star performance. Sometimes reading against the grain, and with a sharp eye for omissions, Simpson performs yeoman service, demonstrating that the story of NSCAD is yet unfolding.

To be continued.

Martha Langford

Être moderne – dans le cas présent, être une femme moderne – a poussé la photographe Lorene Squire dans une tout autre direction, celle de la passion de la sauvagine, du Midwest américain jusqu'au nord canadien. C'est naturellement la technologie qui l'y a amenée : les moyens de transport et les communications modernes, et l'appareil photo. Karla McManus explore les facteurs qui sous-tendent la brève mais fructueuse carrière de Squire comme photographe naturaliste, y compris les commandes pour *The Beaver*, la revue de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, et la prise de conscience croissante de la fragilité de la terre après les quatre sécheresses des années trente. Par ses recherches transnationales dans les archives de la culture de l'imprimé, McManus contribue à l'expansion de l'étude de la photographie au Canada.

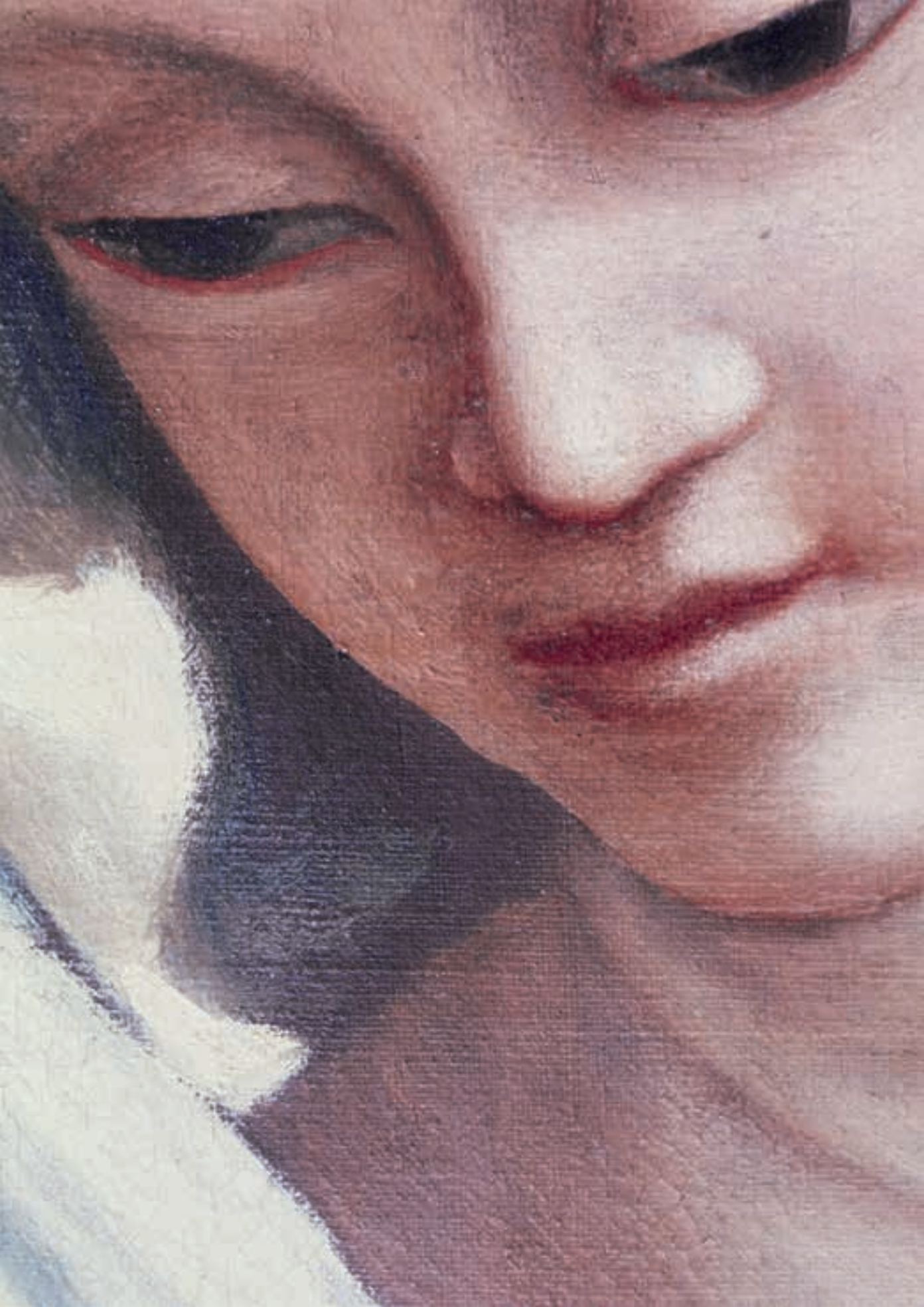
La fascination d'Adam Lauder pour l'esprit du vingtième siècle a enrichi les pages de cette revue, tout d'abord en mettant en relief la pratique d'Iain Baxter (n. 1936) et, dans le présent numéro, en reliant l'œuvre d'un créateur canadien aux nombreux talents, Bertram Brooker (1888–1955), à l'influente méthode d'autosuggestion consciente du psychologue français Émile Coué. On peut discerner un écho de la méthode Coué dans le premier paragraphe de cet article. L'essai de Lauder est beaucoup plus subtil.

Les grandes idées donnent de gros livres à déballer. Dans son essai sur *The Last Art College* par Garry Neill Kennedy, Robin Simpson rend justice à ce volumineux ouvrage, reconstruisant l'expérience pédagogique du Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (maintenant NSCAD University) telle que présentée par l'ancien président et imprésario de l'extraordinaire prestation vedette du NSCAD. En lisant parfois entre les lignes, et attentive aux omissions, Simpson fait un travail remarquable et montre que l'histoire du NSCAD est encore en développement.

À suivre.

Martha Langford

Traduction : Élise Bonnette



Jean-Antoine Aide-Créquy (1749–1780) : matériaux et technique picturale

ÉLISABETH FOREST, MARIE-CLAUDE CORBEIL
ET ELIZABETH MOFFATT

Introduction

Jean-Antoine Aide-Créquy (1749–1780) est un artiste important de la seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle. Il serait¹ le premier peintre né au Canada à œuvrer au pays, et cela dans les années qui suivirent la Conquête anglaise alors que, faute de pouvoir importer des œuvres de France comme il était de coutume, une peinture locale s'ancre plus fermement au pays. Ce mouvement avait été amorcé au cours de la première moitié du XVIII^e siècle. Bien que, vu la rareté des commandes, la majorité des artistes retournent en France, certains demeurent, comme Jean Jacquiès dit Leblond (1688–1723?), ainsi que d'autres à qui l'on doit des tableaux d'église, des portraits et des peintures votives².

L'historien d'art Gérard Morisset s'est intéressé très tôt à la carrière et à l'œuvre d'Aide-Créquy, les résultats de ses recherches ayant été publiés en 1936³. Quelque cinquante ans plus tard, John R. Porter publiait une étude savante dans les *Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien*^{4,5}.

La restauration de deux grands tableaux d'église effectuée par le Centre de conservation du Québec⁶ a été l'occasion d'entreprendre l'étude des matériaux et des techniques d'Aide-Créquy, étude qui a permis d'enrichir les connaissances de cette période de l'art canadien et de déterminer, entre autres, quels étaient les matériaux alors disponibles pour la peinture.

De la douzaine de tableaux qu'aurait peints Aide-Créquy, huit nous sont parvenus et font l'objet de la présente étude⁷. Six ont été peints entre 1774 et 1780 pour deux communautés religieuses de Québec – les Ursulines et les Augustines de l'Hôtel-Dieu – et pour les maîtres-autels des églises de Saint-Louis de L'Isle-aux-Coudres, de Saint-Joachim, de L'Islet et de Saint-Roch-des-Aulnaies, qui avoisinent Baie-Saint-Paul où Aide-Créquy était curé⁸. Il s'agit d'huiles sur toiles de grand format signées et datées. Ces tableaux se trouvent toujours dans le lieu de culte pour lequel ils étaient destinés. Deux autres tableaux sont des huiles sur carton non signées et non datées, dont l'attribution à Aide-Créquy est moins que certaine (voir Description des œuvres étudiées).

L'Annonciation, détail du visage de l'archange Gabriel : la préparation rouge laissée à nue délimite les contours des motifs. (Photo : Élisabeth Forest, CCQ, 2000)

Aide-Créquy, curé et peintre

Issu d'une famille de maîtres-maçons, Jean-Antoine Aide-Créquy est né à Québec le 6 avril 1749. Il étudia au Séminaire de Québec et entra dans les ordres en 1771. Il fut ordonné prêtre le 24 octobre 1773 et aussitôt nommé curé à Baie-Saint-Paul en plus d'être chargé de la desserte de Saint-François-Xavier-de-la-Petite-Rivière (aujourd'hui Petite-Rivière-Saint-François).

Selon Porter, il est probable qu'Aide-Créquy ait accédé à la prêtrise de manière accélérée : « le changement de régime colonial avait entraîné une baisse sérieuse des effectifs ecclésiastiques et [...] dès lors, le recrutement reposait sur les seules ressources de la population locale, sans l'apport traditionnel des prêtres venus de France⁹ ». À cette époque, il y avait aussi pénurie de peintres. Avant la Conquête, les communautés religieuses et les paroisses importaient le plus souvent de France les tableaux religieux et les gravures destinés à soutenir les dévotions. Désormais, pour combler les besoins en matière picturale, elles devaient se tourner vers des personnes de la colonie qui avaient du talent et un certain savoir-faire pour cet art. Cette réalité des faits expliquerait en partie l'émergence d'une carrière artistique comme celle du peintre Aide-Créquy. Selon Porter, « les besoins de la colonie ont joué pour beaucoup dans l'épanouissement de l'art et de la carrière d'Aide-Créquy¹⁰ ».

Aide-Créquy mourut dans la fleur de l'âge, ne réalisant ainsi qu'un petit nombre de peintures. Il avait une santé fragile et sa double charge de curé et de peintre, en plus des conditions de vie difficiles qui prévalaient à l'époque, contribuèrent à son décès prématuré. En juin 1780, malade, il retourna à Québec où il mourut quelques mois plus tard à l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec, le 6 décembre 1780¹¹.

Formation artistique et matériaux d'artiste

Selon Morisset, Aide-Créquy apprit à peindre en analysant certaines compositions du frère Luc (1614–1685) qui ornaient les églises de paroisses se trouvant sur sa route entre Baie-Saint-Paul et Québec, ainsi que certains tableaux conservés au Séminaire et dans les communautés religieuses de Québec¹². Porter note que toutes les peintures d'Aide-Créquy « sont des tableaux religieux inspirés de gravures ou de toiles auxquelles il pouvait facilement avoir accès dans la colonie, que ce soit à Québec (chez les Ursulines, chez les Augustines de l'Hôtel-Dieu et chez les Récollets) ou à Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, une paroisse située à mi-chemin entre Baie Saint-Paul et Québec¹³ ». Ainsi, faute d'école et comme le feront d'autres artistes

canadiens suivant la Conquête, Aide-Créquy se servit d'œuvres européennes, peintes ou gravées, comme modèles. Toutefois, Morisset et Porter soulignent qu'Aide-Créquy ne fut pas « un copiste servile », mais bien qu'il apporta une touche personnelle à chacune de ses œuvres¹⁴.

Était-il autodidacte ou avait-il reçu une formation? Porter penche pour la seconde hypothèse, mais aucun document n'en témoigne ni ne renseigne sur la source et la teneur d'une soi-disant formation. Morisset, également, s'interrogeait : « Où prend-il ses couleurs en un temps où les Anglais, soupçonneux, tiennent le monopole de tout commerce? De quel artiste tient-il la connaissance de son art?¹⁵ ».

La réalisation d'une huile sur toile requérait non seulement du talent en dessin et en peinture, mais aussi la maîtrise d'un ensemble de techniques et de règles ainsi qu'une bonne connaissance des matériaux et de leur mise en œuvre : la longévité de l'œuvre en dépendait. La réalisation de grands formats ajoutait à cette complexité et obligeait d'avoir un espace d'atelier assez vaste et bien éclairé, sans compter les difficultés que posait le transport d'un grand tableau, surtout lorsqu'on devait le faire par bateau. Dans une petite paroisse comme Baie-Saint-Paul, avec les ressources très limitées de l'époque, sans tenir compte de la charge de son ministère, il semble incroyable qu'Aide-Créquy ait réussi à peindre chaque année une, voire deux œuvres de grand format.

Aide-Créquy a pu apprendre à peindre auprès d'un artiste de passage ou résidant à Québec. Comme c'était la coutume, et comme l'ont supposé Morisset et Porter, il a sans aucun doute appris par l'étude et la copie de gravures et de tableaux à sa disposition. À ce titre, les œuvres du frère Luc ont été une source d'inspiration pour lui : incidemment, sa manière de peindre, d'appliquer la couleur est semblable à celle du frère Luc. Il a probablement consulté quelques traités de peinture alors disponibles au Séminaire de Québec et chez les Ursulines de Québec¹⁶. Ces dernières possédaient une excellente connaissance de la peinture et de la dorure, réalisant de nombreuses commandes pour les églises et les communautés religieuses. Elles possédaient également une riche collection de peintures et de gravures mise à la disposition des artistes. Alors qu'il était curé, de 1773 à 1780, Aide-Créquy semble avoir entretenu de bonnes relations avec les religieuses, et sans doute y a-t-il eu plusieurs occasions d'échange et de partage d'information sur le métier. Selon les livres de comptes des Ursulines, Aide-Créquy leur a confié à deux reprises la dorure d'éléments de décor sculptés pour l'église de Baie-Saint-Paul¹⁷. En 1775, il peignait un grand tableau représentant la fondatrice de l'Ordre des Ursulines, Angèle Mérici, puis, en 1776, une *Annonciation* pour l'Islet, peinte d'après une gravure conservée chez les religieuses (voir

Description des œuvres étudiées). Les livres de comptes des Ursulines indiquent également que le curé-peintre approvisionnait chaque automne les religieuses en anguilles salées¹⁸.

La question de la provenance des matériaux qu'Aide-Créquy utilisait pour peindre demeure jusqu'à présent sans réponse. Il faut rappeler qu'au moment où il réalisait ses tableaux, la province de Québec, tout en s'adaptant aux importants changements politiques, économiques et sociaux résultant de la Conquête, était confrontée à l'incertitude engendrée par la guerre entre la Grande-Bretagne et les États-Unis qui clamaient leur indépendance. Les Américains ont d'ailleurs envahi une partie de la province en 1775-1776. Il ne fait aucun doute que l'achat d'articles secondaires comme des matériaux d'artiste s'en trouva compliqué.

Les livres de comptes des Ursulines constituent à nouveau une source précieuse de renseignements. Ils consignent les matériaux que les religieuses achetaient chaque année pour les ouvrages de dorure, de peinture ou de broderie, sources importantes de revenus pour la communauté¹⁹. Bien que les informations données sur la nature de ces matériaux soient souvent générales et ne précisent pas toujours la source d'approvisionnement, elles donnent néanmoins une indication de ceux qu'on pouvait alors se procurer à Québec. Par exemple, de juin 1774 à juin 1779, période pendant laquelle Aide-Créquy était actif, les Ursulines ont acheté chaque année (sauf en 1776, année du siège de Québec par les Américains) des pièces de toile d'Irlande ou de Russie d'un négociant de Québec, François Baby (1733-1820)²⁰. Il s'agit de toile de lin dont l'usage, qui peut être multiple, est aussi connu pour la peinture sur toile^{21, 22}.

La restauratrice Rustin Steele Levenson, dans une étude sur les matériaux et les techniques des peintres à Québec de 1760 à 1850, mentionne que plusieurs firmes spécialisées dans les matériaux d'artiste ont été fondées après la Guerre de Sept Ans, en Angleterre, dont Reeves & Sons vers 1766, et que la plupart des marchands de Québec impliqués dans l'import vendaient des matériaux d'artistes²³. Nous avons pour preuve une publicité de H. Taylor, chirurgien et apothicaire à la Basse-Ville, parue dans la *Gazette de Québec* du 30 mai 1765 et qui donne une indication des matériaux pour la peinture et la dorure alors disponibles dans la capitale : bleu de Prusse, or en feuilles, brosses en poils de chameau, vermillon, orpiment jaune, craie, terre à foulon, litharge, noir de fumée, noir d'ivoire, laque, ocre rouge et jaune, colophane noire et jaune, creusets de toutes sortes, huile de noix et huile de lin cuite, etc.²⁴ Il faut cependant attendre quelques années, notamment le retour de France, en 1781, de François Baillairgé (1759-1830) et la tenue de son journal, à partir de 1784, pour être mieux informé sur la pratique de la peinture à Québec et sur les matériaux qu'on y trouvait²⁵.

Puisqu'Aide-Créquy était en contact avec les Ursulines, il est probable qu'il se soit, à l'occasion, approvisionné chez elles en matériaux. On pourrait même imaginer un système d'échange entre l'artiste et les religieuses, par exemple la réalisation du tableau représentant Angèle Mérici en 1775 en échange de matériaux de peinture, car les livres de comptes des Ursulines ne font aucune mention de la commande, du don ou du paiement du tableau à Aide-Créquy, alors que chaque année y est consigné l'achat, somme toute anodin, d'anguilles salées auprès de « Mr Criquy prêtre ». De plus, on remarque pour l'année 1775 des achats importants de matériaux de peinture et de dorure²⁶. Par ailleurs, Aide-Créquy semble avoir peint ses œuvres à titre personnel, car le livre de comptes de la fabrique de Baie-Saint-Paul²⁷ ne fait aucune mention de recettes venant de la vente des tableaux²⁸ ou de dépenses pour l'achat de matériaux d'artiste.

Description des œuvres étudiées

La plus ancienne œuvre connue d'Aide-Créquy est une *Vierge à l'Enfant* conservée au monastère de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec (Fig. 1). Ce tableau diffère des autres peintures sur toile par son format, à la fois petit et ovale²⁹. On trouve au revers du tableau l'inscription « Pinxit Créquy/ 1774 » dont la calligraphie est semblable aux autres signatures de l'artiste. Toutefois, la toile sur laquelle on trouve cette inscription n'est pas l'originale, mais bien une toile de rentoilage, appliquée en 1926 lors de la restauration du tableau par les Sœurs du Bon-Pasteur à Québec³⁰. Il est donc probable que cette inscription soit présente au dos de la toile originale et qu'elle ait été recopiée sur la toile de rentoilage. Le châssis n'est pas, lui non plus, d'origine et date sans doute de la restauration. Les bords originaux de la toile ont été coupés lors du rentoilage ; la toile originale n'est donc pas visible. Il est malheureusement impossible d'apprécier les qualités esthétiques du tableau, car il a été largement surpeint lors de cette « restauration ».

En 1775, Aide-Créquy peint pour les Ursulines de Québec le grand tableau la *Vision de la bienheureuse Angèle Mérici* (Fig. 2) béatifiée le 30 avril 1768³¹. L'œuvre représente la fondatrice de la Compagnie de Sainte Ursule, la première congrégation religieuse établie en Nouvelle-France vouée à l'éducation des jeunes filles. Toujours conservé au monastère des Ursulines de Québec, le tableau est accroché dans un corridor de l'ancien couvent, alors qu'il ornait jadis la chapelle des saints. D'après une note de Morisset³², l'artiste aurait pris pour modèle une image italienne de 1768 gravée par Marcus Carloni d'après une peinture de Sancti Lariccia, et conservée chez les Ursulines. Égarée durant des années, ce n'est que tout récemment qu'elle a été retrouvée



1 | *Vierge à l'Enfant*, 1774, huile sur toile, 84 × 66 cm, collection du Monastère des Augustines de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec (MAHDQ), œuvre surpeinte et rentoilée. (Photo : MAHDQ)

(Fig. 3)³³. Aide-Créquy a copié assez fidèlement cette gravure (28,4 × 20,5 cm) en adaptant cependant quelques éléments, sans doute à la demande des religieuses : sur le tableau, Angèle Mérici porte le costume des Ursulines de Tours, instauré au milieu du XVII^e siècle et qui a perduré pendant plus de 300 ans ; les vierges visibles à droite de la gravure sont devenues des religieuses ; par pudeur, l'angelot à l'avant-plan de la gravure a été plus convenablement vêtu avec un drapé qui lui cache désormais le haut de la cuisse et la taille. Aide-Créquy a opté pour un format un peu plus large que celui de la gravure



2 | *Vision de la bienheureuse Angèle Mérici*, 1775, huile sur toile, 210 × 173 cm, collection du Monastère des Ursulines de Québec, signée et datée au revers de la toile, en bas à gauche « *Pinxit Créquy 1775* ». (Photo : Élisabeth Forest, CCQ, 2012)

3 | *Angela Merici*, gravure de Marcus Carloni d'après une peinture de Sancti Lariccia, 1768, 28 × 21 cm, Musée des Ursulines de Québec, collection du Monastère des Ursulines de Québec. (Photo : Élisabeth Forest, CCQ, 2016)

de façon à donner plus d'espace aux angelots et au groupe de religieuses. Le tableau est en bon état de conservation. La toile et le châssis sont intacts et le montage de la toile sur le châssis est toujours celui d'origine. De plus, il n'y a pas de déformations ou de défauts de tension.

En 1776, Aide-Créquy exécute *L'Annonciation* pour l'église Notre-Dame-de-Bonsecours, à L'Islet (Fig. 4). Pour ce tableau, il prend ses sources dans deux gravures faites d'après une œuvre du peintre français François Lemoyne (1688–1737) conservées au monastère des Ursulines de Québec³⁴. En fait, on peut maintenant affirmer qu'il a copié fidèlement l'une d'elles (Fig. 5). Lors de la restauration du tableau au Centre de conservation du



4 | *L'Annonciation*, 1776, huile sur toile, 352 × 242 cm, Église Notre-Dame-de-Bonsecours, L'Islet, signée et datée dans le coin inférieur droit « A. Créquy pter pinxit 1776. ».
(Photo : Michel Élie, CCQ, 2001)

5 | *L'Annonciation*, gravure de Lucas d'après une peinture de François Lemoyne (1727, Winchester College, Grande-Bretagne), collection du Monastère des Ursulines de Québec.
(Photo : Michel Élie, CCQ, 1999)

Québec, en 2001, on a observé que les dimensions du tableau (352 × 242 cm) correspondaient parfaitement à quatre fois celles de la gravure (88 × 60,5 cm). Fait remarquable, la toile et le montage original sur le châssis étaient toujours en bon état et ont été préservés lors de la restauration au CCQ. Ce tableau orne toujours le maître-autel de l'église réalisé par François Baillairgé de 1782 à 1786.

L'année suivante, Aide-Créquy reçoit une commande de la paroisse de Saint-Roch-des-Aulnaies, voisine de L'Islet, pour une *Vision de saint Roch* (Fig. 6) dont la composition semble avoir été empruntée à un tableau accroché



6 | *Vision de saint Roch*, 1777, huile sur toile, 290 × 205 cm, Église Saint-Roch, Saint-Roch-des-Aulnaies, signée et datée dans le coin inférieur droit, « *J.A. Créquy p^rter p^xit 1777.* ». (Photo : Michel Élie, CCQ, 2001)



7 | Détail, Charles I Grignion, d'après Richard Short, *Vue de l'intérieur de l'église des Récollets*, 1761, eau-forte, 37 × 53 cm (papier), 32 × 50 cm (image). Collection Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (1954.159). (Photo : Patrick Altman, MNBAQ)

8 | Claude Simpol (1666–1716), *Saint Roch et l'ange*, Église Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs, Paris. Source : https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saint_Paul_Saint_Roch_et_l%27ange.jpg

dans la chapelle des Récollets de Québec en 1759³⁵. Ce tableau, en autant qu'une gravure représentant l'intérieur de la chapelle permette d'en juger (Fig. 7), pourrait s'inspirer d'une composition de Claude Simpol (1666–1716), un élève du frère Luc (Fig. 8)³⁶, avec laquelle le tableau d'Aide-Créquy a beaucoup plus en commun. Il n'est pas exclu qu'un tableau de l'atelier du frère Luc, aujourd'hui disparu, ait pu servir de modèle à Aide-Créquy, puisqu'on sait que le frère Luc enseignait dans son studio parisien et avait des assistants³⁷ et qu'il a continué de peindre pour les missions canadiennes après son séjour en Nouvelle-France³⁸.

Ce superbe tableau d'Aide-Créquy ornait le maître-autel de l'ancienne église. Il est maintenant accroché à l'entrée de l'église actuelle, sur le mur de façade. Il a été restauré par le CCQ en 2001³⁹. Le montage de la toile sur le



9 | *Saint Louis tenant la couronne d'épines*, 1777, huile sur toile, 160 × 191 cm, Église Saint-Louis, L'Isle-aux-Coudres, signée et datée dans le coin inférieur droit, « J. A. Créquy P^{ter} / pinxit. 7^à Die Aug. 1777 ». (a) Vue d'ensemble et (b) détail. (Photo : (a) S.P. Barrette, 2016 ; (b) Marie-Claude Corbeil, ICC, 2007)

châssis était toujours d'origine, mais, à cause de l'affaiblissement mécanique de la toile originale et de soulèvements de la couche picturale, il a été nécessaire de renforcer la toile à l'aide d'un doublage.

Le 7 août 1777, Aide-Créquy apposait sa signature sur le *Saint Louis tenant la couronne d'épines* de l'église Saint-Louis, à L'Isle-aux-Coudres (Fig. 9). Ce tableau représente le jeune roi de France Louis XV (1710–1774) tenant la précieuse relique, dans un décor architectural non identifié. Morisset a déjà supposé que le modèle dont se serait inspiré Aide-Créquy était une copie d'un tableau de Largillière (1656–1746) par André Tremblain⁴⁰, conservée à l'Hôpital-Général de Québec⁴¹. Le tableau de l'Hôpital-Général est en fait une copie d'un portrait du jeune Louis XV attribué à Pierre Gobert (1662–1744)⁴². Il aurait été offert par le colonel de Salaberry (1778–1829) à Mlle de Saint Ours qui l'a elle-même donné aux religieuses de l'Hôpital-Général de Québec⁴³, donc bien après le décès d'Aide-Créquy.

Porter rapproche avec justesse le tableau d'Aide-Créquy et les portraits peints par Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659–1743)⁴⁴. Il est vrai qu'il existe de nombreuses similitudes entre le tableau d'Aide-Créquy et deux portraits

peints par Rigaud alors que le roi est encore un enfant⁴⁵ et que son image a été diffusée par le biais de la gravure⁴⁶.

Il est fort probable qu'Aide-Créquy se soit inspiré de plusieurs portraits et ait combiné des éléments empruntés à ces modèles, de façon plutôt maladroite. Ceci pourrait, entre autres, expliquer l'aspect disproportionné du jeune roi, la partie inférieure du corps semblant trop petite par rapport au haut du corps.

Le tableau est actuellement accroché dans l'église, du côté droit de la nef, mais il ornait jadis le maître-autel de la vieille église érigée en 1771, le temple actuel datant de 1885. Toujours d'après Morisset⁴⁷, le tableau aurait été remisé au grenier de la sacristie avant d'être restauré pour ensuite être transféré à l'évêché de Chicoutimi où il se trouvait toujours en 1983⁴⁸. Bien que le tableau n'ait pu être décroché pour l'examen du revers, on a pu néanmoins constater que la toile n'était pas rentoilée, que les bords de tension étaient encore souples, mais que le châssis d'origine avait été remplacé.

En 1779, Aide-Créquy s'inspira de deux tableaux du frère Luc et de son atelier, de l'église de Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, pour réaliser son *Saint Joachim présentant la Vierge au temple* (Fig. 10) : saint Joachim emprunte la posture du même personnage que le tableau du lieu de pèlerinage, tandis que la petite Vierge Marie correspond assez fidèlement au personnage central de *l'Ex-voto de Marie-Anne Robineau de Bécancour*⁴⁹ daté 1675 et signé Jacques Gaillot (vers 1640-?), un élève du frère Luc⁵⁰. Le tableau orne toujours le maître-autel de l'église de Saint-Joachim, construite en 1779. Le revers n'a pu être examiné, car il est caché par un dos protecteur fait de planches de bois.

En 1983, Porter attribue à Aide-Créquy deux huiles sur carton non signées et non datées, *Saint Pierre* et *Saint Paul*, conservées à l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec. L'attribution repose alors sur un autre tableau qu'Aide-Créquy a peint des deux mêmes saints pour l'ancienne église de Baie-Saint-Paul et qui était signé au revers de la toile^{51, 52}. En 1998, lors du dépôt de sa thèse de doctorat, l'historien d'art Laurier Lacroix a réattribué les deux œuvres à Joseph Légaré (1795-1855) grâce à un document fiable⁵³. Nous avons pris le parti de conserver les deux œuvres pour les fins de la présente étude afin de lever l'ambiguïté concernant leur attribution.

Conditions d'examen et techniques d'analyse

À l'exception des deux tableaux restaurés au Centre de conservation du Québec en 2000 et 2001 (*L'Annonciation* et *la Vision de saint Roch*), les autres tableaux ont été examinés in situ dans des conditions plus ou moins favorables qui ne permettaient pas toujours un examen de toutes les parties des tableaux.



10 | *Saint Joachim présentant la Vierge au temple*, 1779, huile sur toile, 230 × 170 cm environ, Église Saint-Joachim, Saint-Joachim, signée et datée dans le coin inférieur droit « A. Créquy p^{re}xit 1779. ». (Photo : Michel Élie, CCQ, 2015)

Des prélèvements des matériaux constitutifs ont été effectués sur tous les tableaux. Là encore, la quantité et la qualité de ceux-ci variaient beaucoup selon l'accessibilité du tableau. Les échantillons de toile ont été analysés par microscopie en lumière polarisée. Le test d'enroulement au séchage⁵⁴ a été utilisé pour distinguer le lin du chanvre. Les échantillons de préparation et de peinture ont été analysés par microscopie électronique à balayage couplée à la spectrométrie des rayons x à dispersion d'énergie, puis par une ou plusieurs des techniques suivantes : spectroscopie infrarouge à transformée de Fourier, diffraction des rayons x, spectroscopie Raman et microscopie en lumière polarisée. Des coupes transversales ont été préparées à partir de certains échantillons pour examiner la superposition des couches. Les coupes ont été observées à l'aide d'un microscope en utilisant la lumière réfléchie ainsi que la radiation bleu-vert permettant de provoquer la fluorescence de certains matériaux.

Matériaux et technique

HUILES SUR TOILE

Support de toile

La grande majorité des tableaux analysés ont été peints sur des toiles de grand format montées sur châssis (Figs. 11 et 12), à l'exception de la *Vierge à l'Enfant* qui est de petit format. La toile originale de ce tableau, cachée par un rentoilage, n'a pu être examinée, de même que la toile et le châssis du *Saint Joachim* dont le revers était caché par des planches. Les quatre autres grands formats ont tous été réalisés à l'aide de toile de lin de bonne qualité⁵⁵, à armure toile, au tissage assez régulier, exempt de nœuds, et de contextures similaires. Les fils sont de grosseur fine à moyenne et le tissage plutôt serré compte de 13 à 14 fils au centimètre pour la chaîne et de 15 à 17 fils au centimètre pour la trame⁵⁶. En France, les toiles à peindre, généralement faites de chanvre au XVII^e siècle, ont graduellement été remplacées par des toiles de lin, et ce, à partir de la première moitié du XVIII^e siècle. À l'époque où Aide-Créquy peignait, les deux types de toile étaient encore en usage en France⁵⁷. Le commerce du lin étant alors bien implanté à travers toute l'Europe, les toiles utilisées par Aide-Créquy pouvaient provenir de divers pays ou régions telles l'Irlande, la Russie, la Hollande ou encore les Flandres et l'Écosse, par l'intermédiaire de la Grande-Bretagne.

Pour obtenir les toiles de grand format, deux pièces, ou lés de toile, ont été assemblées à l'aide d'une couture parallèle à la lisière, la largeur d'un lé (lisière à lisière) étant imposée par la taille du métier à tisser. Il s'agit d'une façon de faire traditionnelle pour la réalisation de grands formats, les métiers



11 | (a) revers de la *Vision de la bienheureuse Angèle Mérici* ; (b) revers de la *Vision de saint Roch* avant restauration. Toiles, châssis et montages originaux. (Photos : (a) Marie-Claude Corbeil, ICC, 2005 ; (b) Michel Élie, CCQ, 2001)

à tisser étant de taille réduite à cette époque, très souvent autour d'un mètre de largeur. Les coutures sont également traditionnelles et de deux types (Fig. 12b) : à surjet simple de lisière à lisière, c'est-à-dire que le fil de couture a été fauflé le long des lisières alors que les deux pièces de toile étaient superposées (les deux pièces ont ensuite été ouvertes) ; à surjet rabattu, c'est-à-dire que les deux toiles ont été superposées et cousues le long des bords (dépourvus de lisière) en laissant dépasser un excédent de toile qui a été rabattu au revers, de part et d'autre de la couture, une fois les deux pièces de toile déployées. L'artiste doit tenir compte du sujet de son tableau, notamment de la position des personnages, pour déterminer l'emplacement de la couture qui laisse inévitablement une déformation visible sur la face de l'œuvre. Pour chacune de ses œuvres, Aide-Créquy a planifié l'assemblage des pièces de toile en tenant compte de la composition générale du tableau. Nous avons pour preuve les coutures qui évitent toujours les visages des personnages.

Par l'examen des coutures et des bords de tension, nous pouvons voir la présence ou non de lisière et ainsi déterminer la largeur des lés. La largeur précise des lés a pu être établie pour *L'Annonciation* (102 cm) et la *Vision de saint Roch* (107 cm). La toile de ce dernier tableau est formée de deux lés de



12 | (a) revers de *L'Annonciation* ; (b) détail des coutures des lés de toile. La couture verticale est à surjet simple, lisière à lisière ; la couture horizontale est à surjet rabattu avec faufileage des bords pour éviter l'effilochage. (Photos : Michel Élie, CCQ, 1998)

pleine largeur dont les lisières sont préservées : la couture verticale et centrale est effectuée à surjet simple le long des lisières et les bords de tension ont plus ou moins 5 cm de largeur. Dans le cas de *L'Annonciation*, qui a un format beaucoup plus grand que les autres tableaux, quatre pièces de toile ont été assemblées avec soin : trois verticalement, avec deux coutures à surjet simple le long des lisières, et une quatrième horizontalement dans le bas, avec une couture à surjet rabattu et dont les rabats ont été faufileés pour éviter qu'ils ne s'effilochent (Fig. 12b). Le lé central (lisière à lisière) est de 102 cm de largeur⁵⁸.

On estime que les lés utilisés pour la *Vision de la bienheureuse Angèle Mérici* font au moins 102 cm de largeur et pour le *Saint Louis*, au moins 106 cm de largeur. Dans le premier cas, la présence d'une seule lisière (côté gauche, vu du revers) et d'une couture à surjet rabattue ne permet pas d'établir la largeur exacte des lés⁵⁹. La toile du *Saint Louis* est formée de deux pièces de toile cousues horizontalement le long des lisières. La couture n'est pas

centrale et passe au niveau de la taille du personnage, évitant ainsi le visage et les mains⁶⁰.

Pour le *Saint Joachim*, dont la couture verticale est située au centre du tableau, la largeur des lés n'est qu'hypothétique, l'accès aux bords et au revers étant impossible⁶¹.

L'examen des œuvres révèle qu'Aide-Créquy employait des toiles de qualité qu'il faisait assembler avec soin tout en tenant compte de la composition du tableau. Les toiles de lin présentent des caractéristiques semblables, et nous savons qu'au moins deux largeurs de lés ont été employées, soit 102 cm et 107 cm. Il est possible que le même lot de toile ait été utilisé pour le tableau représentant Angèle Mérici et celui de *L'Annonciation*, car la largeur des lés et la contexture concordent. Pour la majorité des œuvres de grand format dont le revers a pu être examiné, la toile était encore souple et les coutures en excellent état. À ce jour, au moins deux tableaux possèdent leur montage original sur le châssis et ne présentent toujours pas de défauts de tension, *L'Annonciation* et la *Vision de la bienheureuse Angèle Mérici*. La toile de *La Vision de saint Roch* a dû être doublée lors de sa restauration en 2001⁶².

Châssis et montage de la toile

Trois tableaux sur six possédaient toujours leur châssis et leur montage d'origine au moment de l'examen : la *Vision de la bienheureuse Angèle Mérici*, *L'Annonciation* et la *Vision de saint Roch* (Figs. 11 et 12). Le revers et les bords du *Saint Joachim* n'étaient pas visibles lors de l'examen. Quant à la *Vierge à l'Enfant* et au *Saint Louis*, les châssis ont été remplacés au début du ^{xx}^e siècle (voir Description des œuvres).

L'artiste a sans doute fait appel à un menuisier ou à un charpentier pour la fabrication de ses châssis. Ceux de la *Vision de la bienheureuse Angèle Mérici* et de la *Vision de saint Roch* sont de construction semblable et rudimentaire et s'apparentent aux châssis employés en France durant les ^{xvii}^e et ^{xviii}^e siècles. Ils sont fixes, faits de montants étroits en bois résineux assemblés à angle droit et à tenon et mortaise, puis renforcés de traverses d'angle fixées avec des clous forgés (Fig. 11). Dans le cas de la *Vision de saint Roch*, il y a deux longues traverses d'angle et une traverse horizontale qui solidifient la structure rectangulaire du format à oreille. Le châssis de *L'Annonciation*, de forme cintrée et de très grande dimension, se distingue par sa facture robuste et soignée (Fig. 12a). La largeur et l'épaisseur des montants (7,5 cm et 2,5 cm), la qualité des assemblages à tenon et mortaise, la présence d'un large croisillon, d'une traverse supérieure ainsi que de traverses d'angles dans le bas, contribuent à la stabilité du châssis. De plus, on a pris soin d'arrondir l'arête

extérieure du châssis, côté face du tableau, afin d'éviter que la toile ne s'use ou ne se déchire à cet endroit vulnérable.

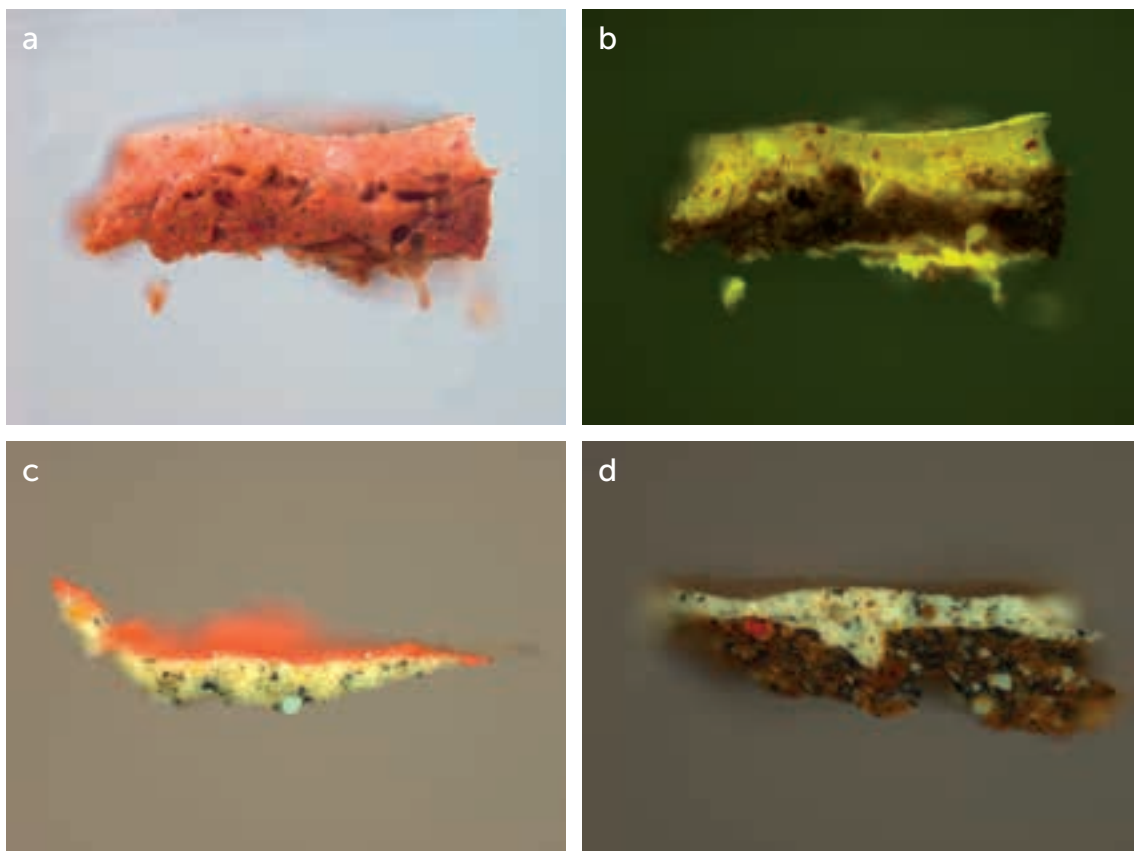
De façon générale, pour ces trois tableaux, la toile est tendue et fixée sur les côtés du châssis à l'aide de clous à tête plate en fer forgé et qui sont espacés aux 4 cm environ dans le cas de la *Vision de la bienheureuse Angèle Mérici* et de *L'Annonciation*. Pour la *Vision de saint Roch*, les clous étaient espacés aux 10 cm environ. Par ailleurs, l'examen des bords de tension de ces trois œuvres indique que l'artiste a appliqué l'encollage et la préparation alors que la toile était déjà montée sur son châssis : ces couches ont été appliquées jusqu'au périmètre du châssis sans déborder sur les bords de tension ou alors que très légèrement. De plus, il n'y a pas d'autres trous de semences aux bords de tension pouvant indiquer un montage provisoire sur un bâti ou un cadre de travail⁶³. C'est un constat plutôt surprenant, car cela signifierait que les trois œuvres ont été transportées jusqu'à leur destinataire, par bateau, montées sur leur châssis.

Préparation

L'encollage et la préparation sont des couches essentielles qui préparent la toile à recevoir les couches de couleur à l'huile. L'encollage, difficile à voir à l'œil nu, rend la toile moins absorbante et bloque l'action oxydante de l'huile sur les fibres de la toile tout en assurant une bonne adhésion de la préparation au support. La présence d'une couche d'encollage a été confirmée par l'analyse dans le cas du tableau *La Vision de la bienheureuse Angèle Mérici*, une mince couche transparente à base de protéine étant visible dans l'une des coupes transversales préparées à partir des échantillons prélevés sur ce tableau (Fig. 13b).

Dans le cas des huiles sur toile, la couleur, la structure et la composition de la préparation sont conformes aux pratiques de l'époque en France. Les peintres employaient alors, et ce depuis le XVII^e siècle, des préparations colorées, sur lesquelles une seconde couche de préparation était parfois appliquée⁶⁴. L'analyse de la préparation d'un grand nombre de tableaux de l'École française des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles a révélé plusieurs faits intéressants : les préparations rouges étaient fréquemment utilisées, alors que les préparations jaunes et brunes l'étaient moins ; un même artiste employait souvent des préparations de couleurs différentes ; la composition des préparations variait considérablement⁶⁵. Les préparations colorées seront graduellement remplacées à la fin du XVIII^e siècle par des préparations de couleur claire⁶⁶.

Aide-Créquy a employé une seule couche de préparation colorée, souvent rouge, parfois jaune ou brune (Tableau 1 et Fig. 13). La préparation doit sa couleur à un pigment de type terre, c'est-à-dire un oxyde de fer dont la



13 | (a) coupe transversale provenant de la carnation d'un chérubin montrant la préparation rouge de la *Vision de la bienheureuse Angèle Mérici*, vue sous éclairage incident ; (b) la couche d'encollage sous la préparation est mise en évidence en employant un filtre d'excitation bleu qui provoque la fluorescence de certaines couches ; (c) coupe transversale provenant de la nappe rouge montrant la préparation jaune de *Saint Joachim présentant la Vierge au temple* ; (d) coupe transversale provenant du carrelage beige montrant la préparation brune de *Saint Louis tenant la couronne d'épines*. Les coupes ont été photographiées au même grossissement. (Photos : Marie-Claude Corbeil, ICC, 2005, 2007, 2008)

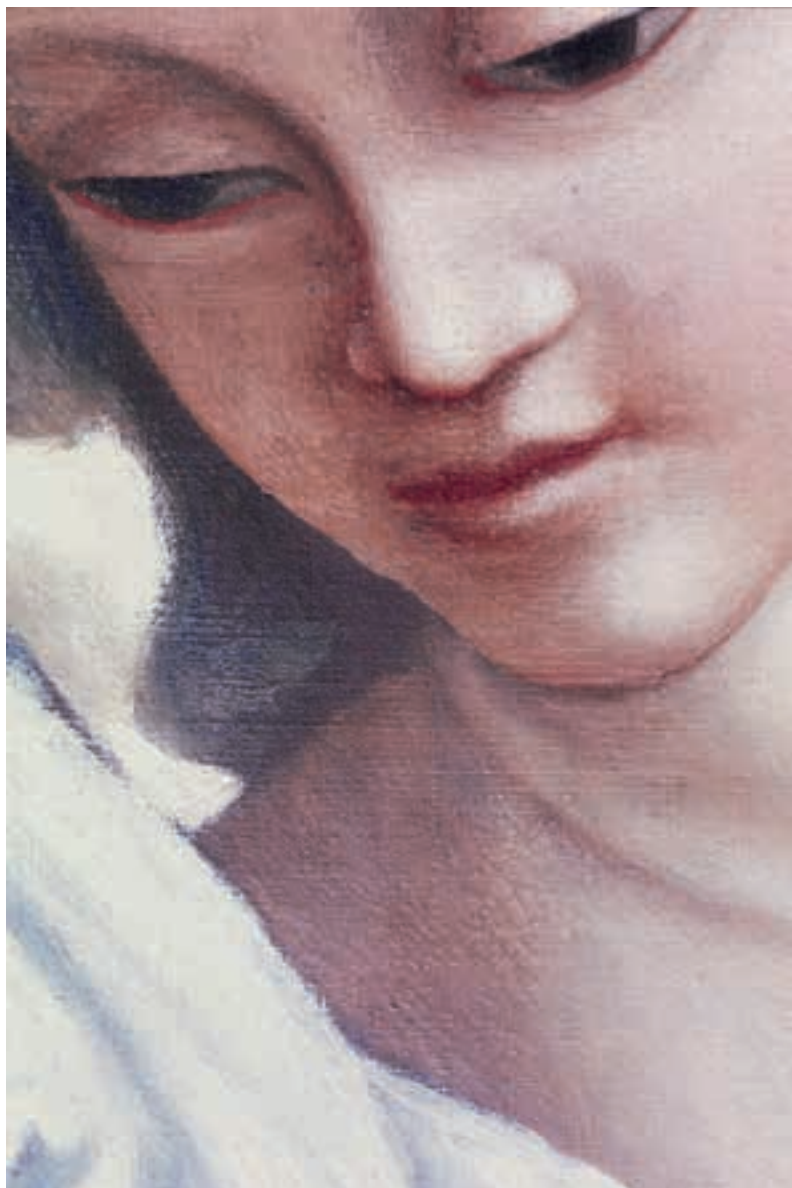
couleur varie du jaune au brun en passant par l'orange et le rouge, qui se trouve dans la nature associé à d'autres minéraux comme des argiles (par exemple le kaolin) et du quartz. La couleur de la terre est souvent assombrie par l'ajout de noir. Par ailleurs, du blanc de plomb est présent dans la préparation de trois tableaux. On trouve aussi souvent dans la préparation du carbonate de calcium (dont l'origine peut être de la craie ou de la pierre calcaire) ou du gypse, des matières de charge traditionnelles et peu coûteuses ajoutées pour donner du corps à la préparation. Dans la moitié des tableaux

Tableau 1 : Couleur et composition de la préparation

DATE	TITRE	COULEUR	COMPOSITION
1774	<i>Vierge à l'Enfant</i>	rouge	oxyde de fer orange-brun, noir de charbon, peut-être noir d'os, blanc de plomb, carbonate de calcium, gypse, trace de quartz, huile siccatrice
1775	<i>Vision de la bienheureuse Angèle Mérici</i>	rouge	oxyde de fer orange-brun, noir de charbon, noir d'os, gypse, silicates, huile siccatrice
1776	<i>L'Annonciation</i>	rouge	oxyde de fer rouge-orange, noir d'os, peut-être trace de noir de charbon, gypse
1777	<i>Vision de saint Roch</i>	rouge	oxyde de fer rouge (très fines particules), carbonate de calcium, kaolin, quartz, huile siccatrice
1777	<i>Saint Louis tenant la couronne d'épines</i>	brune	oxyde de fer orange-brun, noir de charbon, blanc de plomb, carbonate de calcium, huile siccatrice
1779	<i>Saint Joachim présentant la Vierge au temple</i>	jaune	oxyde de fer jaune, noir de charbon, blanc de plomb, carbonate de calcium, quartz, kaolin, huile siccatrice

la proportion relative de blanc de plomb ou de carbonate de calcium est élevée par rapport à celle du pigment coloré utilisé dans la préparation ; cela ne signifie pas nécessairement qu'Aide-Créquy ait voulu utiliser moins de pigment coloré par souci d'économie, auquel cas il aurait utilisé du carbonate de calcium moins coûteux dans tous les cas. Il est probable qu'il ait employé moins de pigment coloré tout simplement à cause du pouvoir colorant élevé des terres employées ou pour obtenir la teinte désirée. L'ajout de blanc de plomb aide également au séchage de l'huile.

Même lorsque la couleur de la préparation semble identique d'un tableau à l'autre, il ne s'agit pas d'une recette apprise et appliquée de façon répétée, puisque la composition et l'épaisseur de cette préparation varient d'un tableau à l'autre. La préparation rouge de *L'Annonciation* et de la *Vision de saint Roch* est épaisse et granuleuse par endroits, alors que celle du tableau représentant Angèle Mérici est plutôt mince, très granuleuse et sans doute poreuse, car



14 | *L'Annonciation*, détail
du visage de l'archange
Gabriel : la préparation
rouge laissée à nue délimite
les contours des motifs.
(Photo : Élisabeth Forest,
CCQ, 2000)

l'huile semble avoir traversé la toile au revers ce qui laisse voir la silhouette de la figure centrale du tableau (Fig. 11a).

La couleur de la préparation varie selon le sujet du tableau, celle-ci étant souvent laissée volontairement visible par endroits, contribuant ainsi au rendu des personnages et de certains motifs. Dans *La Vision de la bienheureuse Angèle Mérici*, *L'Annonciation* et *La Vision de saint Roch*, la préparation contribue à la tonalité générale du tableau ; souvent laissée en réserve, elle est utilisée pour délimiter les contours des formes peintes avec d'autres couleurs (Fig. 14). Aide-Créquy aura sans doute observé cette même façon de peindre



15 | Détail, frère Luc, *L'Ange Gardien*, vers 1671, huile sur toile, 248 × 160 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. (Photo : Michel Élie, CCQ, 2000)

chez le frère Luc (Fig. 15). Dans le tableau *Saint Joachim présentant la Vierge au temple*, Aide-Créquy, peut-être par souci d'économie, a employé une préparation jaune qui a été laissée à nu dans la zone du carrelage du plancher, des lignes de peinture étant ensuite tracées par-dessus la préparation pour rendre les joints entre les carreaux. Deux années plus tôt, Aide-Créquy avait peint un carrelage très similaire dans le tableau *Saint Louis tenant la couronne d'épines*, mais, cette fois, il avait fait l'inverse, utilisant la préparation brune du tableau pour rendre les joints des carreaux et appliquant par-dessus une peinture beige pour rendre les carreaux eux-mêmes. Par ailleurs, dans le

cas de ces deux tableaux, la couleur de la préparation s'accorde à la tonalité générale du tableau, claire dans le cas du *Saint Joachim*, sombre dans le cas du *Saint Louis*.

L'examen de la préparation des tableaux d'Aide-Créquy révèle non seulement un choix de matériaux reposant sur des critères esthétiques bien établis, mais également une technique saine ; la préparation est toujours en bon état, adhérant bien à la toile et montrant une bonne cohésion, malgré des conditions de conservation qui n'ont sans doute pas toujours été idéales (voir note 62).

Dessin préparatoire

L'examen des œuvres et les analyses n'ont pas révélé la présence de dessins préparatoires ou l'utilisation de méthodes de report d'un modèle à la toile préparée telles que l'emploi d'un calque ou d'une mise au carreau. La présence d'une préparation de couleur foncée rend cependant difficile la détection d'un dessin ou de repères tracés sur la préparation comme des carreaux⁶⁷. Néanmoins, pour réussir à reproduire assez fidèlement et à l'échelle une gravure ou un dessin sur une toile de grand format, Aide-Créquy devait connaître et maîtriser une ou plusieurs méthodes de report.

Dans le cas de *L'Annonciation*, le modèle précis est connu et Aide-Créquy a copié la gravure en respectant les proportions dans un rapport de 1:4, c'est-à-dire que le tableau est quatre fois plus grand que la gravure (voir Description de l'œuvre et Fig. 5). En comparant la gravure au tableau, on constate que l'artiste a été fidèle à son modèle. Il n'a apporté au dessin que quelques modifications : entre autres, l'aile droite de l'archange Gabriel est de forme différente, la tête de la Vierge est plus inclinée et le panier et le linge situés à l'avant-plan de la gravure n'ont pas été inclus dans le tableau. Lors du report du dessin à la toile préparée, Aide-Créquy a inversé l'image de la gravure ; ce faisant, il a peut-être voulu se rapprocher davantage du tableau original de François Lemoyne, car l'image de la gravure est elle-même inversée par rapport à celle du tableau de Lemoyne.

Dans le cas de *La Vision de la bienheureuse Angèle Mérici*, la gravure qui a servi de modèle est également connue, et Aide-Créquy l'a copiée assez fidèlement en l'adaptant cependant au contexte des Ursulines de Québec (voir Description de l'œuvre et Fig. 3). Contrairement à *L'Annonciation*, Aide-Créquy n'a pas inversé l'image de la gravure lors du report sur la toile et les proportions n'ont pas été tout à fait respectées en largeur, sans doute par un souci d'esthétisme afin de moins serrer les figures dans leur cadre.

Dans le cas de la *Vision de Saint Roch* et du *Saint Joachim présentant la Vierge au temple*, plus librement inspirés de modèles qui sont des tableaux, Aide-Créquy a pu transcrire ces derniers de diverses façons : par la copie

directe, devant l'original, en reproduisant l'ensemble de la composition ou certains de ses éléments par un dessin ou un croquis à main levée qui aurait ensuite été reporté et agrandi sur la toile préparée à l'aide d'une mise au carreau ; par l'emploi d'un châssis à carreaux posé devant l'œuvre ou d'un quadrillage tracé à la craie blanche directement sur l'original et qui s'efface très aisément avec un linge humide, ceci permettant de reproduire plus fidèlement son modèle tout en évitant de l'endommager ; enfin, dans le cas du report de la Vierge enfant de *l'Ex-voto de Marie-Anne Robineau de Bécancour*, copié assez fidèlement, l'utilisation d'un calque – dessin sur un support transparent placé devant la figure à reproduire – est également possible, vu les petites dimensions de la figure.

Couche picturale

Bien que la composition des tableaux et l'exécution des figures laissent à désirer dans le cas du *Saint Joachim* et du *Saint Louis*, il faut reconnaître que le rendu de certaines figures est particulièrement réussi tant par les proportions, le modelé, l'expression des visages que par le rendu des drapés, témoignant ainsi du réel talent d'Aide-Créquy pour le dessin et la peinture. À cet effet, mentionnons les deux principales figures de *L'Annonciation* et de *La Vision de saint Roch* ainsi que les deux angelots dans le tableau représentant Angèle Mérici.

La peinture est généralement appliquée en une ou deux couches minces et légèrement texturées. Les carnations et les zones claires sont plus empâtées ; le travail du pinceau y est souvent visible et parfois vif et expressif comme dans la figure du saint Roch (Fig. 16).

Les pigments employés pour obtenir les diverses couleurs sont donnés dans le Tableau 2, ce qui permet de comparer la composition des couleurs qu'on retrouve dans plusieurs tableaux. La peinture à l'huile des couches picturales contenant presque toujours du blanc de plomb ainsi que du carbonate de calcium en proportions variées, selon la teinte finale souhaitée et en tenant compte du pouvoir colorant du ou des pigments colorés employés, ces composés ne sont pas inclus dans le Tableau 2.

L'artiste a utilisé une palette restreinte de huit pigments, selon les échantillons qui ont été prélevés et les résultats d'analyses. Du vermillon a été employé pour les carnations. Le même pigment rouge vif a été employé dans les zones peintes en rouge, souvent mélangé à une terre rouge, probablement pour des raisons d'économie. Par contre, la nappe rouge vif de la table dans le tableau *Saint Joachim présentant la Vierge au temple*, dont la couleur est typique du vermillon (Fig. 13c), résulte d'un mélange de terre rouge et de terre jaune. Là encore Aide-Créquy a eu recours à une solution économique pour réaliser un élément assez important du tableau qu'il aurait été coûteux de



16 | *Vision de saint Roch*, détail de la figure du saint. (Photo : Michel Élie, CCQ, 2001)

Tableau 2 : Pigments colorés employés dans les huiles sur toile

COULEUR	<i>Vierge à l'Enfant</i> (1774)	<i>Vision de la bienheureuse</i> <i>Angèle Mérici</i> (1775)	<i>L'Annonciation</i> (1776)
carnation	vermillon	vermillon, trace de noir de charbon	trace de vermillon
rouge	vermillon, terre rouge		vermillon, probablement mêlé à de la terre rouge
jaune	pâle : terre jaune, vermillon		terre jaune
vert			foncé : bleu de Prusse, noir de charbon, terre jaune et rouge moyen : bleu de Prusse, terre jaune
bleu	bleu de Prusse	bleu de Prusse	foncé : bleu de Prusse, trace de terre jaune moyen : bleu de Prusse
noir		noir d'os	
brun	foncé : noir d'os, vermillon	pâle : terre orange, noir de charbon	
beige			

peindre avec du vermillon. Une terre jaune a été utilisée pour les plages de couleur jaune et du bleu de Prusse pour les zones de couleur bleue. Ces deux pigments ont été mélangés pour obtenir le vert ou le bleu turquoise. L'artiste a parfois ajouté un pigment noir (du noir de charbon ou du noir d'os) pour obtenir des teintes plus sombres. Une terre orange a été utilisée pour obtenir du beige (Fig. 13d) ou du brun pâle, et a été observée dans un échantillon de peinture bleue comme constituant secondaire.

HUILES SUR CARTON

Les deux huiles sur carton stylistiquement très similaires constituent une paire, ce que l'analyse des matériaux confirme⁶⁸. Tel que mentionné plus haut,

<i>Vision de saint Roch</i> (1777)	<i>Saint Louis tenant la couronne d'épines</i> (1777)	<i>Saint Joachim présentant la Vierge au temple</i> (1779)
	vermillon	
pâle : vermillon, terre rouge	vermillon	terre rouge, terre jaune
terre jaune, noir de charbon		terre jaune, vermillon, noir de charbon
foncé : bleu de Prusse, terre jaune, noir d'os, noir de charbon		
moyen : bleu de Prusse, terre jaune, noir d'os		
foncé : bleu de Prusse moyen : bleu de Prusse	foncé : bleu de Prusse	turquoise : bleu de Prusse, noir de charbon, terre jaune et orange-brun
	terre orange	

l'attribution des deux huiles sur carton à Aide-Créquy reposait plutôt sur la tradition orale et des preuves circonstanciées. Aucun matériau anachronique, qui permettrait de situer l'exécution des deux œuvres à une époque ultérieure à celle d'Aide-Créquy, n'a été identifié. Le papier chiffon dont est fait le carton et les pigments étaient employés à l'époque d'Aide-Créquy. De fait, on retrouve dans ces œuvres des pigments identifiés dans les huiles sur toile de l'artiste. Toutefois, on remarque l'emploi de laque rouge, un pigment plus coûteux. On note également dans les deux œuvres la présence d'un dessin sous-jacent très apparent, alors qu'aucun n'a été observé dans le cas des huiles sur toile. Évidemment, ces différences pourraient être attribuées au type de support, puisqu'on ne peint pas nécessairement de la même façon sur carton que sur toile. Mais avant tout, c'est la différence de style qui frappe

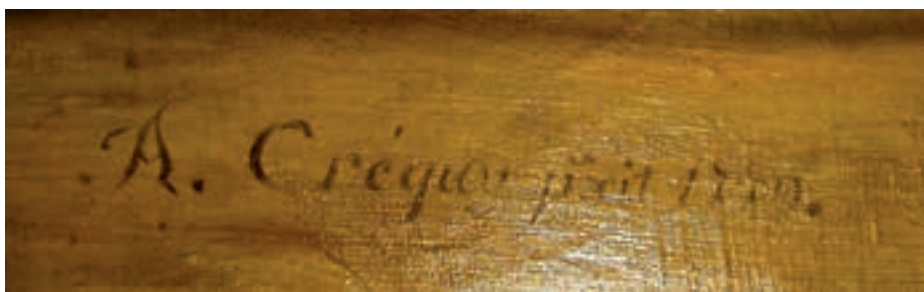
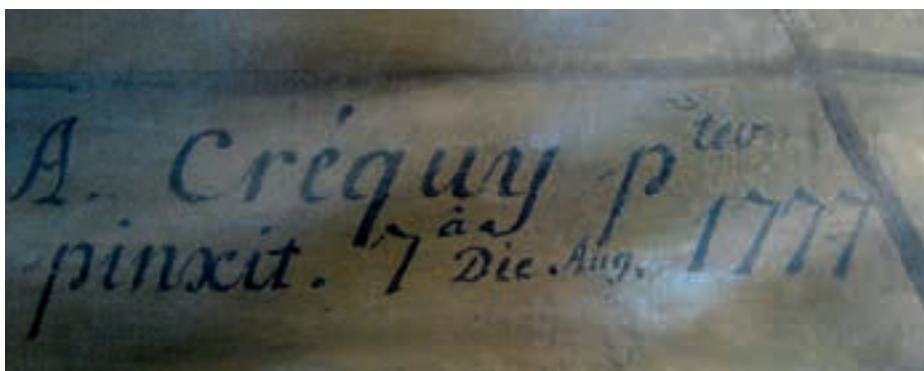
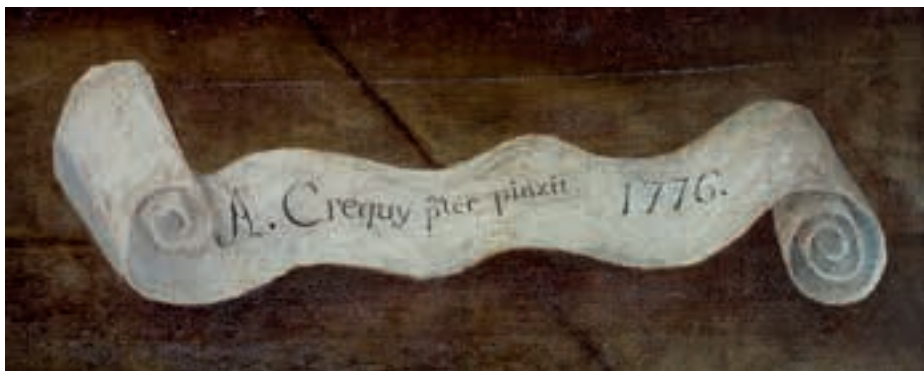
lorsqu'on compare ces huiles sur carton aux huiles sur toile d'Aide-Créquy, en particulier dans la façon de peindre les visages et les mains, avec un souci du détail et une application fine et lisse de la peinture que l'on ne retrouve pas dans les toiles de l'artiste. Le style et la facture semblent davantage du XIX^e siècle, ce qui corrobore l'attribution à Joseph Légaré par Lacroix.

Conclusion

L'examen technique des tableaux d'Aide-Créquy ne laisse aucun doute quant à son savoir-faire et à son désir de réaliser des œuvres de qualité. Le choix des matériaux employés et leur bonne mise en œuvre ne sont pas le fruit du hasard et témoignent d'une bonne connaissance et d'une maîtrise du métier. De plus, l'artiste a su faire preuve d'imagination et de débrouillardise pour parvenir à réaliser de grands tableaux sans en compromettre la qualité, et ce, dans un contexte économique difficile où l'approvisionnement en matériaux pour peindre était déficient. Comme artiste, Aide-Créquy était sans doute passionné et avait certainement de l'ambition ou beaucoup d'assurance pour se lancer dans la réalisation de grands formats avec les moyens dont il disposait. La signature bien affirmée de ses œuvres, acte qui n'était pas si courant au XVIII^e siècle, pourrait témoigner de la fierté du peintre et de la valeur artistique qu'il accordait à son travail (Fig. 17).

Si le mystère demeure quant à la façon dont Aide-Créquy a acquis ses connaissances en peinture, la recherche dans les archives des Ursulines de Québec entreprise dans le cadre de la présente étude permet de formuler l'hypothèse qu'Aide-Créquy aurait pu se fournir en matériaux chez elles et que le grand tableau représentant la fondatrice de leur ordre aurait pu servir de paiement.

Finalement, la présente étude vient en quelque sorte confirmer les résultats des recherches de Lacroix concernant les huiles sur carton autrefois attribuées à Aide-Créquy. Si la nature des matériaux des deux huiles sur carton ne permet pas de préciser leur date d'exécution, leur style et leur facture divergent fortement de celles des huiles sur toile d'Aide-Créquy.



17 | Signatures de l'artiste : (a) *L'Annonciation* ; (b) *Vision de saint Roch* ; (c) *Saint Louis tenant la couronne d'épines* ; (d) *Saint Joachim présentant la Vierge au temple*.
(Photos : (a) et (b) M. Élie, CCQ, 2001; (c) et (d) M.-C. Corbeil / ICC / 2007.

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- 1 David KAREL, *Dictionnaire des artistes de langue française en Amérique du Nord*, Musée du Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, Québec, 1992, p. 2.
- 2 Laurier LACROIX, *Les arts en Nouvelle-France*, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec – Les publications du Québec, Québec, 2012, p. 238–40.
- 3 Gérard MORISSET, *Peintres et tableaux*, Les Éditions du chevalet, Québec, 1936, p. 67–79.
- 4 John R. PORTER, « L'abbé Jean-Antoine Aide-Créquy (1749–1780) et l'essor de la peinture religieuse après la Conquête », *Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien*, vol. 7, n° 1 (1983), p. 55–73.
- 5 Le présent article se réfère à l'un ou l'autre de ces articles lorsqu'il est question de la vie d'Aide-Créquy, des tableaux qui lui sont attribués, des influences qu'il a subies ou des modèles qui l'ont inspiré.
- 6 Élisabeth FOREST, « La restauration d'un tableau d'église : L'Annonciation de Jean-Antoine Aide-Créquy (1749–1780) », *Résumés des exposés du 28^e congrès annuel de l'Association canadienne pour la conservation et la restauration des biens culturels* (ACCR), Kingston (Canada), 2002, p. 12.
- 7 D'autres tableaux connus peints par Aide-Créquy ont été détruits dans des incendies : une *Sainte Famille* (1775) à la basilique-cathédrale Notre-Dame de Québec pour remplacer celle du frère Luc détruite en 1759 (détruit en 1866) ; un *Saint Pierre et saint Paul* (entre 1775 et 1780) à l'église de Baie-Saint-Paul (détruit en 1962). Il est possible que l'église de Saint-Joachim ait possédé deux autres tableaux de l'artiste qui auraient été remplacés par des peintures d'Antoine Plamondon en 1869 (MORISSET, *op. cit.*, p. 74–76).
- 8 Le fleuve Saint-Laurent était alors la seule voie de communication et de transport entre ces paroisses situées entre 3,5 et 30 miles nautiques de Baie-Saint-Paul, Saint-Louis de l'Île-aux-Coudres étant la plus proche et Saint-Joachim la plus éloignée ; celles de l'Islet et de Saint-Roch-des-Aulnaies sont situées sur la rive sud du fleuve, respectivement en face de la desserte de Petite-Rivière-Saint-François (autrefois Saint-François-Xavier-de-la-Petite-Rivière) et de Baie-Saint-Paul.
- 9 PORTER, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 62.
- 11 Dans les *Annales des Ursulines de Québec*, le 24 décembre 1780 (Tome I, 1639–1822, p. 331–32), jour du décès de l'abbé des Bergères de Rigauville (1724–1780), chanoine de la cathédrale et grand-vicaire de l'évêque de Québec (Mgr Briand), on déplore également le décès d'Aide-Créquy survenu quelques jours avant et la pénurie de prêtres qui menace la survie de la religion catholique : « Monsieur Debercheres de

Rigauville, [. . .] il était mort peu de temps devant deux jeunes prêtres rempli de mérite Monsieur Criqui, et Mr. Bedard. que de grace a rendre au Seigneur que Le Roy d'engleterre, est accordé un Evêque, la religion qui sétin beaucoup serait bien autrement tombé faute de Prêtres, Monseigneur en a ordonné un grand nombre mais les morts ont toujours surpassés ». Aide-Créquy est inhumé à la basilique-cathédrale Notre-Dame de Québec dans la chapelle de la Sainte Famille pour laquelle il avait peint une *Sainte Famille* en 1775.

- 12 MORISSET, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
- 13 PORTER, *op. cit.*, p. 63–64.
- 14 MORISSET, *op. cit.*, p. 71 ; PORTER, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
- 15 MORISSET, *ibid.*
- 16 Quelques ouvrages se trouvent dans le Fonds ancien de la bibliothèque du Séminaire de Québec (Musée de l'Amérique francophone) dont : *Traité de mignature, pour apprendre aisément à peindre sans maistre : avec le secret de faire les plus belles couleurs, l'or bruny, & l'or en coquille*, 3^e édition révisée, Paris, 1696 (qui porte l'inscription Séminaire de Québec 1768) ; et de Jacques Lacombe (1724–1811), *Dictionnaire portatif des beaux-arts : ou abrégé de ce qui concerne l'architecture, la sculpture, la peinture, la gravure, la poésie & la musique : avec la définition de ces arts, l'explication des termes & des choses qui leur appartiennent : ensemble les noms, la date de la naissance & de la mort, les circonstances les plus remarquables de la vie, & le genre particulier de talent des personnes qui se sont distinguées dans ces différens arts parmi les anciens & les modernes, en France & dans les pays étrangers*, 1752 (qui porte la signature du prêtre Henri-François Gravé (1730–1802), professeur au Séminaire de Québec à partir de 1754 et plusieurs fois supérieur, notamment de 1768 à 1774 et de 1778 à 1781, années de formation et de prêtrise d'Aide-Créquy). Les Ursulines de Québec possèdent aussi un exemplaire du *Traité de mignature* de même que le livre *L'École de la miniature ou l'art d'apprendre à peindre sans maître, et les secrets pour faire les belles couleurs* imprimé à Paris en 1769 (Rustin Steele Levenson, « Materials and Techniques of Painters in Québec City, 1760–1850 », *Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien*, vol. 7, n° 1 [1983], p. 27). Ces traités, bien que consacrés à la miniature – une peinture principalement à l'eau dont le liant est la gomme arabique – expliquent de façon détaillée diverses techniques dont les principes s'appliquent aussi à la peinture à l'huile : par exemple, les méthodes de copie ou de report d'un dessin, d'une gravure ou d'un tableau en format plus petit ou plus grand, dont la mise au carreau et l'emploi du poncif ; la préparation des pigments comme les terres (ocre jaune et brun-rouge) dont les couleurs peuvent être modifiées en les brûlant ; la préparation de colle de peau (colle de « gan ») à partir de chutes de peaux non tannées pour l'encollage des toiles, etc.
- 17 Archives du Monastère des Ursulines de Québec (AMUQ), *Recette et Dépense de 1747 à 1781* : « Le Reçu du mois de Juin de l'année 1775 : Reçu de Mr Criqui pour façon de Dorure d'un Gradin, six chandelier, un Christ, et d'un tour d'autel, avec Son Cartouche 250# ; Le Reçu d mois D'avril de l'année 1778 : Reçu de Mr Criqui pour façon d'un tabernacle ; et de Six Chandeliers pour une des Eglises de Labaye St Paul 200# ».
- 18 *Ibid.* : « Décembre 1776 : Païé a Mr Criquy pour 2 quards d'Enguilles Salé 108# ; octobre 1777 : Paie a Mr Criquy prêtre a compte de 5 quard d'Enguilles 300# ; octobre 1778 : Païé a Mr Criquy prêtre pour 5 quards d'Anguille salés 312# ; novembre 1779 : Païé pour 4 quard D'anguilles chez Mr Cryqui 396# ».
- 19 *Ibid.*, État de comptes, journal 2, 1751–1830.

- 20 Ce commerçant, officier de milice et homme politique, joua un rôle important à l'époque tant sur le plan économique que social et politique. Issu d'une famille qui faisait la traite des fourrures, il s'associa en 1757 avec ses frères, à Montréal (Baby Frères), dans le commerce de fourrures et de marchandises de traite avec la France (Paris, Bordeaux et La Rochelle). Lors de la Conquête, il sut assurer ses arrières avec la France tout en établissant des relations d'affaires avec la Grande-Bretagne, ce qui lui permit de poursuivre ses activités commerciales avec succès. Installé à Québec en 1763, où il avait son commerce de gros, il poursuivit ses activités commerciales activement jusqu'en 1779 ; John CLARKE, « Baby, François (1733–1820) », *Dictionnaire biographique du Canada en ligne*. Consulté le 4 mars 2015, http://www.biographi.ca/00900419.01-f.php?id_nbr=2244, © 2000 University of Toronto/Université Laval.
- 21 Rutherford J. GETTENS et George L. STOUT, *Painting Materials, A Short Encyclopaedia*, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1966, p. 239.
- 22 Ces toiles auraient aussi pu servir pour le linge de table ou de lit, mais leur prix élevé (voir note 26) laisse présumer un usage plus particulier comme celui de la peinture. Dans le *Mis général de l'année* (AMUQ, *op. cit.*), les Ursulines regroupent sous différentes catégories les dépenses annuelles, et il est intéressant de constater que « toile », « étoffe » et « étamine à voile », tous des tissus, constituent trois catégories distinctes au même titre que « ingrédients pour la dorure », « fil, soie, aiguilles » ou « peintures et brosses ». L'étoffe et l'étamine à voile servaient à la confection des robes et des voiles des religieuses.
- 23 LEVENSON, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
- 24 Citation originale complète : « ... Powder and Prussian Blue ... Gold leaf and Dutch Metal, Camels Hair Brushes, Vermillion, Pearl Ashes, Pot-ash, Gum-lack Sandrich, yellow Orpiment, Whiting, Fuller's Earth, Litharge, Lampblack, Ivory Blacking, Lacker, red and yellow Okre, black and yellow Rosin, Crucibles of all Sorts ... best nut and boiled Linseed oils, with paints and Colours of all sorts. To be sold at the very lowest prices. » (*Ibid.*, p. 11).
- 25 Archives nationales du Québec, Journal de François Baillairgé 1784–1780, AP-P.2378. Pour des extraits, voir *ibid.*, p. 51–53.
- 26 AMUQ, *op. cit.* : « Mis de février 1775 : Paie a Mr. Baby pour une pièce de toile Dirlande de 25 verge a 3# 5-/ 82# 5s ; Mis de mai 1775 : Paié pour des Peintures, brosses et huile de Lin 56 # ; Mis de juin 1775 : Paie a Mr Baby Neg' pour huit pièces de toile de russy 504 # ; Mis de juillet 1775 : Paié pour 2 bouteilles de terebentine 12 #10 s ; Mis d'août 1775 : Paie pour 20# de blanc de Sereuse pour la dorure a 12 s la livre . . 12# ; Paié pour des peintures 24# ».
- 27 Centre d'archives régional de Charlevoix. *Régistre des redditions de comptes de la fabrique de la Baie st-paul depuis le 1^{er} Janvier 1774 jusqu'au 18 Décembre 1825*, Baie-Saint-Paul, Diocèse de Québec. Années 1774 à 1780.
- 28 Le tableau *L'Annonciation* a été payé 400 Livres par la fabrique de L'Islet en 1777 (Fonds Gérard Morisset (FGM), Artistes et artisans, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, dossier biographique d'Aide-Créquy ; renseignement tiré des Archives de la fabrique de L'Islet, Livre de comptes I, 1700–1779). Par contre, d'après les notes de Morisset (FGM, *op. cit.*), il semble que les livres de comptes des autres fabriques ne font aucune mention du paiement pour leur tableau, seulement pour le cadre dans le cas de la *Vision de saint Roch* et du *Saint Joachim* : « 1795 : donné pour le cadre de St roch 313" 8 » (FGM, Artistes et artisans, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, dossier biographique d'Aide-Créquy ; renseignement tiré des Archives de la

- fabrique de Saint-Roch-des-Aulnaies, Livre de comptes II, 1781–1866) ; « 1781 : Pour façon et dorure du cadre 252" o » (FGM, *Artistes et artisans*, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, dossier biographique d'Aide-Créquy ; renseignement tiré des Archives de la fabrique de Saint-Joachim, Livre de comptes I, 1765–1783).
- 29 Le tableau aujourd'hui disparu *Saint Pierre et saint Paul*, peint par l'artiste pour l'église de Baie-Saint-Paul, avait aussi un format ovale tout en étant un peu plus petit (52,1 × 69,9 cm) ; il était signé au revers de la toile 'Pinxit Créquy' (FGM, *op. cit.*).
- 30 Il est inscrit dans le bas du châssis, sur la tranche intérieure : « Restauré par les Sœurs du Bon Pasteur 1926 ». Morisset note que l'œuvre « a été toute repeinte en 1927 [sic] par la sœur Saint-Amédée » et que le nom d'Aide-Créquy se trouvait au revers de la toile avant la restauration (FGM, *op. cit.*) ; sur la toile de rentoilage on trouve aussi l'inscription « L'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec Noviciat ».
- 31 Le titre du tableau est celui utilisé par Morisset plutôt que celui employé par Porter, *Vision de sainte Angèle Mérici*, cette dernière n'ayant été canonisée qu'en 1807.
- 32 FGM, *op. cit.*
- 33 Une demande pour retrouver cette gravure avait été déposée dans le cadre de la présente étude. Mme Catherine Levesque, technicienne au Musée des Ursulines de Québec, l'a retrouvée en mai 2013 lors d'un inventaire dans un grenier du monastère.
- 34 PORTER, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 59.
- 36 LACROIX, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 99.
- 38 Marie-Claude CORBEIL et Elizabeth MOFFATT, « L'analyse de tableaux canadiens attribués au frère Luc » dans : *Art et chimie, la couleur, Actes du congrès*, Paris, 16 au 18 sept. 1998, sous la direction de Jacques Goupy et de Jean-Pierre Mohen, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2000, p. 191–96.
- 39 Restauration de la peinture par Michael O'Malley et du cadre par Patrick Albert et Florence D'Allaire.
- 40 Le nom de ce peintre (mort en 1742) est orthographié Tremblin ou Tramblin (E. BÉNÉZIT, *Dictionnaire des peintres sculpteurs dessinateurs et graveurs*, Gründ, Paris, 1999, p. 772). Le catalogue de l'Hôpital-Général de Québec mentionne que le tableau est accompagné d'un écriteau portant la mention : « L'original est au Musée / du Louvres. / Cette copie est de Tremblin / qui fut le copiste offi- / ciel du Roi. » Cependant, Bénézit ne fait nulle mention de ce titre prestigieux.
- 41 FGM, *op. cit.*
- 42 Informations transmises par Daniel Drouin, historien de l'art et conservateur de l'art ancien au Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (courriel du 11 fév. 2013).
- 43 Dans le coin inférieur gauche du tableau, une inscription mentionne que le tableau aurait été donné par le colonel de Salaberry, et une étiquette manuscrite collée au revers de la toile précise que le tableau aurait été « présenté à Mlle de Saint Ours par le Colonel de Salaberry et donné par elle aux Dames de l'Hôpital général de Québec ». On ignore en quelle année ce don a été fait.
- 44 PORTER, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
- 45 Le portrait du jeune roi assis, *Louis XV, Roi de France et de Navarre (1710–1774)*, peint en 1715 et conservé au musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon (MV 3695) ; et le *Portrait de Louis XV (1721)* en pied, conservé au Palacio Real de Madrid (Patrimonio Nacional).

- 46 Voir par exemple la gravure en buste par Drevet (1663–1738). Consulté le 4 mars 2015, http://theses.univ-lyon2.fr/documents/getpart.php?id=lyon2.2005.clavel_g&part=94348
- 47 MORISSET, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
- 48 PORTER, *op. cit.*, p. 59. Nous ne connaissons pas l'année du retour du tableau à l'église.
- 49 MORISSET, *op. cit.*, p. 75 ; *ibid.*, p. 59.
- 50 LACROIX, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
- 51 FGM, *op. cit.*
- 52 Ce dernier a disparu dans l'incendie de l'ancienne église en 1962 ; Claude THIBAUT, *Trésors des communautés religieuses de la ville de Québec*, Musée du Québec, Ministère des Affaires culturelles, Québec, 1973, p. 37 ; PORTER, *op. cit.*, p. 61. Les huiles sur carton et le tableau disparu auraient eu pour modèles communs des gravures de Jean Morin (entre 1605 et 1609–1650), d'après Philippe de Champaigne (1602–1674), qui sont également conservées à l'Hôtel-Dieu. Les deux huiles sur carton ont été acquises de la succession de l'abbé Louis-Joseph Desjardins (1766–1848) en 1848, dont l'inventaire a été dressé par le peintre et marchand d'art Joseph Légaré (1795–1855) ; Marie-Nicole BOISCLAIR, *Catalogue des œuvres peintes conservées au Monastère des Augustines de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec*, Ministère des Affaires culturelles, Direction du Patrimoine, Québec, 1977, p. 60–61 (cat. Nos 90 et 91).
- 53 Laurier LACROIX, *Le Fonds de tableaux Desjardins: nature et influence*. Thèse de doctorat, Faculté des lettres, Université Laval, Québec, 1998, 1169 p. ; il s'agit d'une facture de Louis-Joseph Desjardins chez Joseph Légaré datant de mai 1845 qui dresse la liste de plusieurs tableaux acquis du peintre, dont un saint Pierre et un saint Paul.
- 54 The Textile Institute, *Identification of Textile Materials*, 7^e édition, The Textile Institute, Manchester, 1975, p. 225.
- 55 Le lin a été confirmé par les analyses tant pour la trame que pour la chaîne.
- 56 La toile de *La Vision de la bienheureuse Angèle Mérici* a 16 fils de trame au centimètre, celle de *L'Annonciation* 15 à 16, celle de la *Vision de saint Roch* 17. Un échantillon prélevé sur le bord de tension du *Saint Louis* donne un compte de 15 × 16 fils/cm².
- 57 Katrina VANDERLIP DE CARBONNEL, « A Study of French Painting Canvases », *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation*, n° 20 (1980), p. 3–20.
- 58 Les lés de gauche et de droite (vus du revers) ont respectivement 70 et 68,5 cm de largeur (sans les bords de tension) et celui du bas a 23,5 cm de largeur et possède une lisière le long du bord de tension inférieur : il est très probable que ce soit la chute de toile du côté droit, dont le bord de tension est particulièrement étroit.
- 59 La couture n'est pas centrale pour éviter le visage ; le côté gauche de la toile, vu du revers, fait 94 cm et le côté droit 79,6 cm en excluant les bords de tension qui ont environ 6 cm de largeur.
- 60 L'accès au revers du tableau et aux bords de tension étant difficile, la mesure des lés a été prise côté face du tableau, ce qui donne une largeur approximative de 99,5 cm pour celui du haut (en ajoutant une largeur minimale estimée pour le bord de tension du haut, cela fait un lé d'au moins 106 cm de largeur) et de 61,0 cm pour celui du bas (excluant la largeur du bord de tension).
- 61 En présumant que la couture soit de lisière à lisière, cela donne une largeur très approximative de 85 cm de part et d'autre de la couture en excluant les bords de tension.

- 62 L'environnement dans lequel sont placés les tableaux joue également un rôle sur leur état de conservation et leur longévité. *La Vision de saint Roch* étant placée sur un mur extérieur de l'église, les fluctuations de température et d'humidité ont contribué à affaiblir la toile. Les deux autres tableaux sont accrochés sur des murs intérieurs et *L'Annonciation* est, de plus, protégée par un dos de planches.
- 63 La partie cintrée de *La Vision de saint Roch* a été jadis retendue en diminuant un peu le format de l'œuvre à cet endroit. La couche picturale a en effet été un peu repliée sur les bords de tension de la partie cintrée du format à oreille, peut-être pour ajuster le format au cadre.
- 64 Ségolène BERGEON et Élisabeth MARTIN, « La technique de la peinture française des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles », *Technè*, n° 1 (1994), p. 65–78.
- 65 Alain R. DUVAL, « Les préparations colorées des tableaux de l'école française des dix-septième et dix-huitième siècles », *Studies in Conservation*, n° 37 (1992), p. 239–58.
- 66 Ségolène BERGEON, « Painting Technique: Priming, Coloured Paint Film and Varnish », dans : *Art History and Laboratory : Scientific Examination of Easel Paintings*, sous la direction de Roger Van Schoute et Hélène Verougstraete-Marcq, Strasbourg, Conseil de l'Europe, 1986, p. 35–62.
- 67 Les tableaux *L'Annonciation* et *la Vision de saint Roch* ont été examinés à l'aide d'une caméra infrarouge (Vidicon Hamamatsu C2741) qui permet normalement de déceler la présence d'un dessin au graphite ou au charbon. Toutefois, cette méthode est moins efficace lorsque le dessin est fait sur une préparation de couleur foncée. Par ailleurs, les traités français des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles recommandaient souvent de faire le dessin à la craie blanche sur les préparations colorées ce qui permettait de le corriger aisément avec un linge humide (Ann MASSING, « French Painting Technique in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries and De La Fontaine's *Académie de la peinture* (Paris 1679) » dans : *Looking Through Paintings : The Study of Painting Techniques and Materials in Support of Art Historical Research*, sous la direction d'Erma Hermens, Amsterdam, Uitgeverij de Prom, et Londres, Archetype Publications, 1998, p. 354) ; la craie étant transparente lorsque recouverte de peinture, elle avait l'avantage de ne plus se voir une fois le tableau achevé.
- 68 Le carton est fait du même papier chiffon obtenu à partir d'un mélange complexe de fibres textile (lin, coton, trace de laine, peut-être jute) ; la peinture est appliquée à même le carton encollé ; la même couleur bleu-vert a été employée pour peindre le fond sur lequel se détache le saint ; les mêmes pigments ont été employés, sauf évidemment dans le cas de couleurs ne se retrouvant que dans l'un des tableaux : vermillon, laque rouge, terre jaune, bleu de Prusse, noir d'os, blanc de plomb.

Jean-Antoine Aide-Créquy (1749–1780): Materials and pictorial technique

ÉLISABETH FOREST, MARIE-CLAUDE CORBEIL,
AND ELIZABETH MOFFATT

Jean-Antoine Aide-Créquy (1749–1780) was an important Canadian artist of the second half of the eighteenth century and has been called as the first painter born in Canada. Both a priest and a painter, he was active during the years that followed the English Conquest, a pivotal period when local art became more prominent due to the difficulty of importing paintings from France, which had been the custom until then. The conservation treatment of two large religious paintings at the Centre de conservation du Québec provided the opportunity to undertake a study of Aide-Créquy's materials and techniques. The results of the study add to our knowledge of this particular period in Canadian art history and provide more information about painting materials available during this time.

Of the dozen paintings attributed to Aide-Créquy, eight have survived and were included in the study. Six of the works – five large-scale oil paintings and a small oval oil painting – were executed between 1774 and 1780. Two were painted for religious communities in Quebec City – the Ursulines and the Augustines de l'Hôtel-Dieu. The other four were painted for altarpieces in the churches of Saint-Louis de L'Isle-aux-Coudres, Saint-Joachim, L'Islet and Saint-Roch-des-Aulnaies, parishes located near Baie-Saint-Paul where Aide-Créquy was parish priest. The six works are all signed and dated by the artist and are still located in the place of worship for which they were created. The two other works included in the study are smaller-scale oil paintings on cardboard. They are neither signed nor dated and their attribution to Aide-Créquy is far from certain.

According to art historians, Aide-Créquy learned to paint by studying works by Frère Luc (1614–1685) as well as paintings in the Seminary of Quebec and religious communities in Quebec City. He is believed to have used European paintings or engravings as models. Research undertaken as part of the present study confirmed certain of the European models used as a basis for his paintings.

Technical aspects examined as part of the study include the construction of the stretcher, the nature and weave of the canvas support, and the composition of the ground and paint layers. Aide-Créquy's choice and use of

materials demonstrates that he was a skillful painter with a good knowledge of technique. Although it is still not known where he learned his technique, research in the archives of the Ursulines of Quebec City suggests that he may have obtained painting materials from them, possibly in exchange for his large-scale work representing the founder of their order. Finally, although the materials used for the two works on cardboard did not provide information about their execution dates, it was observed that they strongly differ in style and technique from the large-scale works on canvas.



1 | David B. Milne, *Goodbye to a Teacher IV*, 1939, watercolour over graphite on paper, 38 × 56 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, ON. Gift, Estate of Miss Elizabeth Cowan. (Photo: James A. Chambers)

A Postscript to the David B. Milne Biography and *Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings*

DAVID P. SILCOX, C.M.

After my biography of David Milne (1881–1953), *Painting Place: The Life and Work of David B. Milne*, was published in 1996, and just after *David B. Milne: Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings* was launched in 1998, a crucial fact about Milne came to light. I've been sitting on it for the past decade and a half, partly having been distracted by other interests and activities, partly believing that it wouldn't change fundamental things, partly being uneasy about not having revealed immediately a truth that is pertinent, and partly being uncertain how to present it. Many large projects – and the Milne Project was one – are expected to produce supplements or updates, since continuing studies by original researchers or others often turf up new facts or material, but a Milne supplement was never considered, even though several works by him have surfaced in the interim.

The shock came in a letter I received from James T. Angus, who, as a young boy, knew David Milne when Milne lived alone in a tiny cabin at Six Mile Lake in southern Muskoka from 1933 to 1939. The Angus family lived at Big Chute, a few miles away. Big Chute was the site of one of the proposed locks on the Trent-Severn river system that connected the Severn River to Georgian Bay. The lock was never built, however, but to make the waterway functional, a short rail device, managed by James's father Scotty Angus during the summers, moved boats around the otherwise impassable rapid.

Milne trekked out to Big Chute to get his mail, bread, and other weekly supplies, and was naturally friendly with the folks in this tiny community. In addition to the Angus family was the teacher at the tiny school, Miss Elizabeth Cowan, who became the subject for a painting Milne did several versions of. Having been a teacher himself, he was particularly sympathetic to Miss Cowan, and commemorated her departure after several distinguished years with a series of watercolours called *Goodbye to a Teacher IV* (Fig. 1), in which all the children were also depicted and recognizable, including little Jimmy Angus. Miss Cowan could identify each pupil and kept the version Milne gave her until she died. Her Estate donated it to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in 1985.

However, all this is incidental to the revelation contained in Mr. Angus's letter. In the course of researching the history of the Trent-Severn water system for a Parks Canada exhibit, James wanted to include information about David Milne, much of which he was able to find in my biography. What wasn't in the biography was what he enclosed with his letter: a copy of the handwritten 1881 census notes, which had just entered the public domain, with information for Saugeen township and the village of Paisley (Fig. 2).

As the census clearly reveals, David Milne was born in 1881, not 1882, as has always been recorded. His birth day has not been in doubt, but is now confirmed by the 1891 census as 8 January, a Saturday, not Sunday.

The question of which year marked his age had some vague questions floating around it, almost from the time I began to do research on his life and work. To begin with, no birth certificate or record of his birth could be found. Moreover, no school record exists until he attended high school, where his age is never given. Another example was that the year Milne went from Paisley to New York was always given as 1904 by Douglas Duncan, his agent and dealer from 1938 until his death in 1968, and by Milne himself. This date was confidently repeated by everyone writing about Milne, myself included, until I found out the truth in the early 1970s. A search of the *Paisley Advocate* had nothing about this admired son of the region leaving home in 1904. I found this story instead in the same paper for 9 July 1903. His enrolment in the Art Students' League that fall confirmed the year. This information doesn't of itself change his age, but it could if, as Milne at some point believed, he was twenty-one when he left for New York, not twenty-two – which, it turns out, he actually was. The *Paisley Advocate* also revealed on 9 August 1897 that

Davy Milne, of Paisley, made a record of which any boy should be proud at the late departmental examinations. He succeeded in capturing honours, notwithstanding the fact that he has attended high school only six months. He received his primary training at Paisley public school, and while there established a reputation as a very clever student.

While this is useful to know, it makes no mention of his age, and no mention is made of his indeterminate attendance at the Gowanlock school before the family moved to Paisley.

Where the idea of 1904 came from is uncertain. If Milne at some point believed he was twenty-two when he left Paisley that might account for it, but he didn't. Much later, in about 1945, as he approached what he believed to be his sixty-fifth birthday, he tried to find some proof of his birth in order to

qualify for the old age pension. Although nothing was recorded locally, there was a thought that the records of the Gowanlock school might give his age. Alas, the school records were lost, and that avenue leaves us not knowing how long Milne attended there. Since the family moved to Paisley soon after, it can't have been long – perhaps a year or two only. Milne didn't go to school until he was about ten, having learned his ABCs at home with the help of his mother and of Will Hogg, the Milnes' landlord.

The census of 1881 was done, as was customary in rural areas, in the late spring or early summer when roads were passable and crops had been planted. This would account for the notation that David was already six months old when the census taker came to make the tally. His brothers and sisters were all duly recorded as well, in descending order of their age.

The slip of a year in determining Milne's age doesn't change his art or his life in any substantial way. Yet perhaps by having the facts of his life correctly recorded, at least some of the murky events of history can be clarified. Can the fact that he was remarkably intelligent and accomplished for his age be attributed in part to his being a year older than was thought or he thought he was? No matter, since his outstanding achievement as a student in Paisley and then at high school in Walkerton is still exceptional. And his talent and focus before he was twenty (and unschooled in drawing or painting) is also something to admire, whether he was fifteen or sixteen; or that he was a beloved teacher of a one-room school (the United School Section No. 7, Elderslie and South Saugeen) at age eighteen or nineteen.

The American art critic Clement Greenberg and the eminent American art historian William Gerdts rated Milne as one of the finest artists of his generation in North America, putting him in the company of John Marin (1870–1953), Marsden Hartley (1877–1943), Georgia O'Keeffe (1887–1986), and George Bellows (1882–1925). Perhaps being born in a log cabin on a farm and rising to be one of the most respected artists of his time and place can forgive such minor errors as getting a date wrong. I wonder what importance such things have, other than to astrologers, and whether Milne's own horoscope might have been read quite differently if the error of the record of his birth had been known sooner. Maybe. However, I can't imagine that his life and his great achievement could possibly have been any less distinguished than it was.

Addenda à la biographie et au *Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings* de David B. Milne

DAVID P. SILCOX, C.M.

Après la publication de ma biographie de David Milne (1881–1953), *Painting Place : The Life and Work of David B. Milne*, en 1996, et juste après le lancement de *David B. Milne : Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings* en 1998, un fait nouveau d'importance cruciale a été révélé. Je l'ai gardé sous le coude pendant une décennie et demie, en partie parce que j'avais d'autres intérêts et activités, en partie parce que je croyais que cela ne changerait rien de fondamental, en partie parce que j'étais embarrassé de ne pas avoir révélé immédiatement un fait pertinent, et en partie parce que je ne savais pas au juste comment le présenter. On s'attend à ce qu'il y ait des suppléments ou des mises à jour à plusieurs grands projets – et le Projet Milne était de ceux-là –, puisque les chercheurs de la première heure ou d'autres poursuivent les études et déterrent souvent de nouveaux faits ou matériaux, mais on n'a jamais songé à faire un supplément au projet Milne, bien qu'on ait découvert plusieurs de ses œuvres dans l'intervalle.

Cela m'a fait un choc de recevoir une lettre de James T. Angus qui, dans sa jeunesse, avait connu David Milne quand ce dernier vivait seul dans une petite cabane à Six Mile Lake, au sud de Muskoka, de 1933 à 1939. La famille Angus vivait à Big Chute, à quelques miles de là. Big Chute était le site d'une des écluses projetées sur la voie navigable Trent-Severn qui reliait la rivière Severn à la baie Georgienne. L'écluse n'a jamais été construite, mais, pour que la voie navigable soit fonctionnelle, un court dispositif sur rail, manœuvré l'été par Scotty Angus, le père de James, transportait les bateaux au-delà d'un rapide qui, autrement, aurait été infranchissable.

Milne allait à pied à Big Chute prendre son courrier, du pain et autres provisions hebdomadaires. Il entretenait, naturellement, des relations amicales avec la population de cette petite communauté. En plus de la famille Angus, il y avait la maîtresse d'école, Mlle Elizabeth Cowan, qui a été le sujet d'un tableau dont Milne a fait plusieurs versions. Ayant été lui-même enseignant, il avait une sympathie particulière pour Mlle Cowan et a commémoré son départ, après une carrière remarquable, par une série d'aquarelles, *Goodbye to a Teacher IV*, sur lesquelles tous les enfants étaient aussi représentés et reconnaissables, y compris le petit Jimmy Angus. Mlle Cowan pouvait identifier chaque écolier et a gardé jusqu'à sa mort la version que Milne

lui avait donnée. Sa succession l'a donnée à la Collection McMichael d'art canadien en 1985.

Cependant, tout cela est accessoire à la révélation contenue dans la lettre de M. Angus. Au cours de ses recherches sur l'histoire de la voie navigable Trent-Severn pour une exposition sur Parcs Canada, James voulait inclure des renseignements sur David Milne et en avait trouvé une grande partie dans ma biographie. Il avait inclus dans sa lettre un document qui ne se trouvait pas dans la biographie : une copie de notes manuscrites du recensement de 1881, qui venait juste d'entrer dans le domaine public et qui contenaient des informations sur le canton de Saugeen et le village de Paisley.

Comme le recensement le révèle clairement, David Milne est né en 1881 et non en 1882 comme on l'avait cru jusque là. Le jour de sa naissance n'a pas été mis en doute, mais on peut maintenant confirmer, d'après le recensement de 1891, que le 8 janvier tombait un samedi et non un dimanche.

Presqu'au début de mes recherches sur sa vie et son œuvre, de vagues questions concernant son âge et l'année de sa naissance se sont posées. Pour commencer, aucun acte de naissance ni mention de sa naissance n'ont pu être trouvés. De plus, il n'existe aucun dossier scolaire avant qu'il n'entre à l'école secondaire, où l'âge n'est jamais inscrit. Un autre exemple est que Douglas Duncan, son agent et marchand d'art de 1938 jusqu'à sa mort en 1968, et Milne lui-même ont toujours donné 1908 comme l'année où Milne a quitté Paisley pour New York. Cette date a été répétée en toute confiance par tous ceux qui ont écrit sur Milne, moi y compris, jusqu'à ce que je découvre la vérité au début des années 1970. Une recherche dans le *Paisley Advocate* n'a rien donné concernant le départ de ce fils admiré de la région en 1904. Mais j'ai trouvé le récit dans le même journal en date du 9 juillet 1903. Cela est confirmé par le fait qu'il s'est inscrit à la Art Students' League à l'automne de cette même année. Cette information ne change rien en soi à son âge, mais pourrait le faire si, comme Milne le pensait à un moment donné, il avait vingt-et-un ans lors de son départ pour New York et non vingt-deux – ce qui était son âge véritable comme cela s'est avéré. Le *Paisley Advocate* a aussi révélé, le 9 août 1897 que

Davy Milne, de Paisley, a réalisé, lors des derniers examens du ministère, un record dont tout jeune devrait être fier. Il a obtenu son diplôme avec mention en dépit du fait qu'il n'ait fréquenté l'école secondaire que pendant six mois. Il a reçu sa formation primaire à l'école publique de Paisley où il était reconnu comme un élève très intelligent.

Bien que cette information soit utile, elle ne mentionne ni son âge, ni sa fréquentation indéterminée de l'école de Gowanlock avant que sa famille ne s'établisse à Paisley.

On ne sait pas au juste d'où vient la mention de 1904. Cela pourrait s'expliquer si Milne, à un moment donné, avait cru avoir vingt-deux ans quand il a quitté Paisley, mais ce n'est pas le cas. Beaucoup plus tard, vers 1945, alors qu'il croyait approcher de son soixante-cinquième anniversaire, il a essayé de trouver une preuve de naissance afin d'avoir droit à la pension de vieillesse. On a pensé que les dossiers de l'école de Gowanlock auraient pu donner son âge. Malheureusement, les dossiers de l'école ont été perdus et, à cause de cela, nous ne pouvons pas savoir pendant combien de temps Milne a fréquenté cette école. Cela n'a pas dû être pendant bien longtemps – peut-être une année ou deux – puisque la famille a déménagé à Paisley peu de temps après. Milne n'est pas allé à l'école avant l'âge d'environ dix ans, car il avait été scolarisé à la maison auprès de sa mère et de Will Hogg, le propriétaire du logement des Milne.

Comme c'était l'habitude en milieu rural, le recensement de 1881 a été fait à la fin du printemps ou au début de l'été, quand les chemins étaient praticables et après les semailles. Cela expliquerait la note disant que David avait six mois lorsque le recenseur est venu recueillir les renseignements. Ses frères et sœurs ont tous été inscrits, eux aussi, par ordre chronologique descendant.

La différence d'une année dans l'âge de Milne ne change rien, substantiellement, à son art ou à sa vie. Pourtant, en rectifiant les faits sur sa vie, certains événements troubles de l'histoire peuvent être élucidés. Peut-on attribuer le fait qu'il ait été remarquablement intelligent et accompli pour son âge à ce qu'il avait un an de plus que ce qu'on croyait ou qu'il croyait lui-même ? C'est sans importance, puisque ses succès remarquables à Paisley et, plus tard, à l'école secondaire de Walkerton demeurent exceptionnels. Et nous pouvons admirer son talent et sa concentration avant l'âge de vingt ans (sans formation en dessin ou en peinture), qu'il ait eu quinze ou seize ans, et qu'il ait été un enseignant très aimé dans une école rurale (la United School Section No. 7, Elderslie et South Saugeen), qu'il ait eu dix-huit ou dix-neuf ans.

Le critique d'art américain Clement Greenberg et l'éminent historien de l'art américain William Gerdts considéraient Milne comme l'un des plus grands artistes de sa génération en Amérique du Nord, à l'égal de John Marin (1870–1953), Marsden Hartley (1877–1943), Georgia O'Keeffe (1887–1986), et George Bellows (1882–1925). Peut-être qu'être né dans une cabane en rondins sur une ferme pour devenir l'un des artistes les plus respectés de son temps et de son pays peut faire pardonner une faute légère comme une erreur de date. Je me demande quelle importance cela pourrait avoir, sauf pour les astrologues, et si l'horoscope de Milne aurait été bien différent si l'erreur de date sur son acte de naissance avait été connue plus tôt. Peut-être. Pourtant, je ne peux croire que sa vie et ses grandes réalisations auraient pu être moins remarquables qu'elles ne l'ont été.

Traduction : Élise Bonnette



“These Diminished Waters”: Conservation, Camera Hunting, and Settler/Indigenous Conflict in Lorene Squire’s Wildfowl Photography of Northern Canada

KARLA MCMANUS

The American nature photographer Lorene Squire (1908–1942) longed to visit Canada’s North, where the wildfowl of her birthplace, Kansas, spent their summers. In 1937, Squire got her wish. During the summer of that year and into the fall, Squire travelled to various wetlands in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta to photograph the waterfowl that were her passion. The first of three trips that Squire would take into the North, this voyage would propel her photographs onto the pages of leading publications including, *Country Life*, *The New York Times*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *LIFE*, and the Hudson’s Bay Company’s magazine *The Beaver*.¹ Squire’s 1937 trip would also inform her only published book, a written account of her photographic journey from a local pond in Harper, Kansas, where she began her career, to the vast marshlands of the Northern Prairies. The story of her travels is punctuated with descriptions of the wildfowl she encountered and the many photographic challenges she faced trying to picture “the life story of wild ducks” (Fig. 1).²

In *Wildfowling with a Camera* (1938), Squire writes at length about her wish to witness for herself the vast and wild breeding grounds of North American waterfowl. Squire grandly imagines the northern marshes of Canada as an aqueous promised land where she “would find wide green stretches of marshland and a great many number of ducks, all to be photographed with no effort or trouble.”³ Squire’s pleasure in tromping through wetlands and stalking her feathered prey from land and water is strongly articulated in both her written prose and in the photographs reproduced. Left unmentioned in her book are the roles that groups like the American Wildlife Institute and the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC), particularly its public relations department and its visual arm *The Beaver*, played in sponsoring the photographic adventurer into the Northland.

Detail, Lorene Squire, “Mallard Jumping, Athabasca Delta,” 1937. Hudson’s Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba, Lorene Squire photographs taken for *The Beaver* magazine, HBCA 1981-28-5. (Photo: courtesy of Hudson’s Bay Company Archives)



1 | Lorene Squire, “Canada Goose Rising from her Nest on a Muskrat House,” [Moose Creek, Northern Manitoba], 1937. Hudson’s Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba, Lorene Squire photographs taken for *The Beaver* magazine, HBCA 1981-28-6. (Photo: courtesy of Hudson’s Bay Company Archives)

In this article, I argue that Squire’s photographs are more than mere records of her journeys into the breeding territories of North America’s migratory wildfowl. Nor should they be regarded solely as beautiful but frivolous animal pictures. In the late 1930s, Squire was photographing a crucial moment in Canada’s history, one that – hindsight reveals – saw a shift in environmental consciousness as wildlife conservation management and governmental game laws would transform the way of life for many animals and humans in the North. The influence of sport hunting across North America was growing, along with the private wildlife conservation movement, as powerful settler groups like Ducks Unlimited sought to develop and occupy land for their privileged use.⁴ The days of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s control of the North were also waning, as government interests in hunting, mining, and resource extraction were beginning to



2 | Lorene Squire, *The Beaver* 269:3 (December 1938), cover. (Photo: Image courtesy of McGill University Library Digitization Services)

replace trapping as the main economic engine across the vast region. Squire's photographs of wildfowl taken in Hudson's Bay Company and Indigenous territories, including Fort Chipewyan/Treaty 8 Territory in Northern Alberta, represent a time, not unlike today, when conservation and Indigenous rights were treated as contested and uneven terrain. More broadly, her work situates the North, both as a place and an idea, in direct relation to its larger environmental, social, and economic context, tracing as it does the migratory path of wildfowl and photographic worker from the drought-stricken Great Plains into the northern "promised land," with unintended consequences.

Photographing for *The Beaver*

In the 1930s, venturing into Canada's North was still a challenge for southerners. With few trains or planes travelling to the region beyond the agricultural belt, scientists, government officials, and sport hunters sought out the assistance of the HBC.⁵ Squire's 1937 trip was assisted by the fur trading company and would mark the beginning of a short but fruitful collaboration with the HBC's flagship magazine, *The Beaver*, one that produced a series

of remarkable images of Northern Canadian life during the inter-war period (Fig. 2).⁶

The Beaver magazine, known today as *Canada's History Magazine*,⁷ started in 1920 as the brainchild of a Chicago ad-man named Clifton Moore Thomas. Thomas had been hired to run the publicity department of the HBC leading up to the celebration of their two-hundred-and-fifty-year anniversary in 1920.⁸ Subtitled *A Journal of Progress*, the in-house magazine became successful in the early years by focusing on the retail and commercial side of the fur company's business.⁹ This was the beginning of the department store era and the HBC aimed to serve the growing urban Canadian population. Thomas's involvement with the HBC ended in 1923 and by the early 1930s the magazine had taken on a stronger literary and historical direction, largely driven by the photographic and written contributions of HBC staffers, under the editorial direction of company accountant Robert Watson.¹⁰ By 1931, the Canadian Committee, who ran the British company's interests in the Dominion, was so unhappy with Watson's lack of marketing or design savvy that they proposed cancelling the publication altogether.¹¹ Instead, the magazine was reinvented. In 1933 the new Governor of the HBC, Patrick Ashley Cooper, hired journalist and ad-man Douglas McKay to direct the Company's publicity department and edit the magazine.¹² Under his direction of McKay, *The Beaver* was quickly transformed from a self-conscious in-house magazine into the self-styled *Magazine of the North*, a quarterly with wider distribution, better writing, a bigger format, and most importantly, improved visual material and graphic design. McKay and his successor Clifford Wilson hired professional photographers, including wildfowl specialist Lorene Squire.¹³

Unfortunately, few written records from Squire's years of travel into Canada's North exist. While some correspondence between Squire and the editors of *The Beaver* magazine is preserved in the HBC Archives at the Archives of Manitoba in Winnipeg, they include little more than a few sketchy budgets and some friendly letters. The treasure is in the photographs: hundreds of prints made by Squire in her home darkroom in Harper ended up in the HBC Archives, along with thousands of negatives, both 35 mm and medium format, which her family gave to the Company in the 1950s. The black and white, primarily 8 × 10 prints include many of the same images found in her book and in the newspaper and magazine articles she published.¹⁴ Squire's images demonstrate the productivity of her three photographic trips to the North and how important her work was to *The Beaver*. Two years after her death, one staff member claimed that "some of her shots were near priceless and would never be equalled."¹⁵ The Lorene Squire Archive includes not only hundreds of pictures of ducks, geese, and other waterfowl, but also many photographs of the people that she met



3 | Lorene Squire, “‘Shooting Boss’, Hunting Companions and Retriever Watching Geese come in to Old Factory River,” 1939. Hudson’s Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba, Lorene Squire photographs taken for *The Beaver* magazine, HBCA 1981-28-78. (Photo: courtesy of Hudson’s Bay Company Archives)

while travelling on assignment (Fig. 3). At the behest of the magazine, Squire photographed everyone she met including the Indigenous people who worked for, travelled with, and lived among the white settler powers of Company, Church, and Crown. Among the variety of images can be found several of the photographer herself.

The Photographer as Commodity

Born 1 October 1908, in the small town of Harper, Kansas, to Harry and Lillie M. (nee Galloway),¹⁶ Squire grew up in an educated and solidly middle-class home that supported her literary and artistic pursuits. Her parents were university-educated teachers who joined the Galloway family's furniture and funerary business shortly after her birth.¹⁷ Squire was a self-taught photographer who began writing and publishing stories and photographs as a teenager.¹⁸ Her hobby became a serious practice when the Great Depression hit and the economic climate meant there were no jobs to be found.¹⁹ Luckily for Squire, the family's business remained viable in the difficult economic climate, and she continued to live in her childhood home while pursuing her photography. In an interview in the *Kansas City Star* in 1939, Squire describes this tragedy as a great piece of fortune: "I graduated from K.U. [University of Kansas] in 1932, in the midst of the depression for which I'm grateful. If the times had been good then, someone might have given me a job. I didn't want a job. I wanted to photograph wild fowl and nothing else."²⁰ Squire was still living with her parents in Harper, Kansas, when she died in a car crash in 1942, on assignment for *LIFE* magazine in Oklahoma.²¹

Not only were the 1930s difficult economic years, as the global economy sputtered to recover after the great crash, but the ecological crisis that soon followed devastated the great plains region. In his seminal book on the dust bowl, Donald Worster links the expansionist values of capitalism to both the Great Depression and the great drought of the 'dirty thirties'. Worster writes that for those who understood ecology only through the lens of capital, "trees, wildlife, minerals, water, and the soil are all commodities that can either be developed or carried as they are to marketplace."²² This mentality led to the aggressive agricultural practices of the early twentieth century. Stripping the soil of moisture-holding vegetation in a drive to get the highest yield from the land – the period leading up to the drought has been aptly named "the great plough-up"²³ – brought about chronic dust storms and reduced the once-lush landscape to wasteland. For Squire, whose beloved wildfowl found themselves displaced and desiccated by the policies of mechanized agriculture, this context led her towards what would be her greatest subject – Canada's North.

Squire's desire to photograph North American wildfowl during one of the worst environmental disasters of the twentieth century resulted in a significant body of images that reflect the period's changing rhetoric of environmental awareness. Writing of her journey to photography in those dry years, Squire describes how that ecological disaster shaped her life:

It was about the time that I had begun to learn something concerning the photography of wildfowl that the dry years set in. But by then I had already encountered enough difficulties to be able to accept the Kansas drought with some philosophy. The region in which I live lies upon the edge of the dustbowl – along that vague boundary line that marks the beginning of the short grass country. Here, even during the most severe years of drought, there still remain a few pools and water holes upon the prairie's face. And here I can photograph the few water birds that return to these diminished waters.²⁴

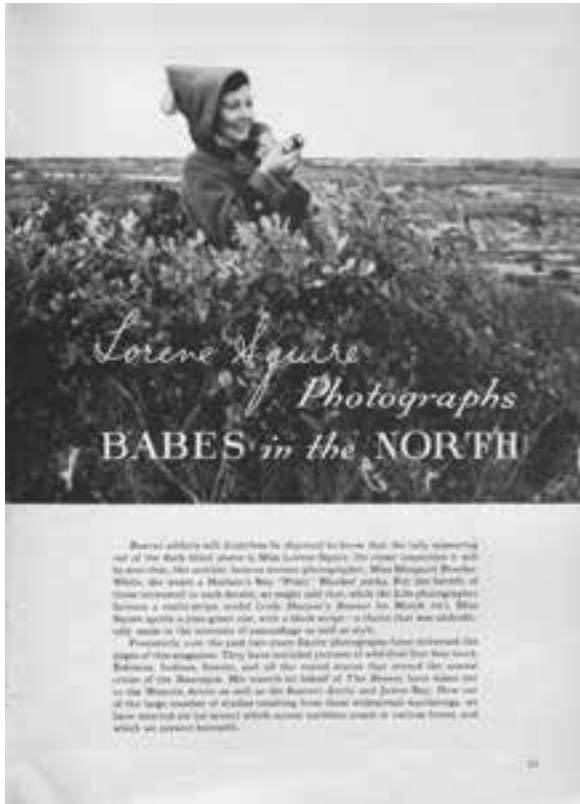
The tone of Squire's prose might remind some readers of another singular memoir by an intrepid female (published the same year as Squire's own story) describing the author's relationship to place, which famously begins, "I had a farm in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong Hills."²⁵ These words, by the renowned Danish author Karen Blixen, a.k.a. Isak Dinesen, remind us that the interwar period was a time of great freedom for women artists, a time when "The Modern Girl" – a fresh iteration of New Womanhood – was becoming a global phenomenon. In her book on feminine modernity in Canada, Jane Nicholas describes the Modern Girl as a sophisticated self-creator of identity, part of the growing middle class who "consumed goods from clothing to cigarettes and eschewed established visual cues of gender, class and ethnicity."²⁶ From pilot Amelia Earhart, to actress and filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl and photographer Margaret Bourke-White, the New Woman and her kid sister, the Modern Girl, presented to the world a contested, performed, and unstable icon of sexuality, femininity, consumerism, and freedom.²⁷ The Modern Girl was both a reality and a construction, propelled by advertising, film, mass media, and the increasing number of working women who helped to redefine the lives and abilities of women in the interwar period.

At the time of her first visit to Canada, in the summer of 1937, Squire had begun to establish a reputation as a wildfowl photographer: an unlikely speciality for any photographer of the period, let alone a young woman from the hinterlands of American creative production. This uniqueness was promoted and highlighted by the local and regional presses, which were keen to share stories about the "modern Diana" who shot wildlife with her camera.²⁸ These articles were consistently accompanied by a portrait of the photographer, posing with her camera in a marsh or muskeg somewhere, her hair cut short in the modern fashion, often in her HBC cloth coat, but always well put together, showing a carefully constructed version of the Modern Girl professional – as both an artist and an outdoorswoman (Fig. 4).



4 | Lorene Squire, “Duck blind in a Charlton Island Salt Marsh – Mud Decoys in the background,” 1939. Hudson’s Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba, Lorene Squire photographs taken for *The Beaver* magazine, HBCA 1981-28-71. (Photo: courtesy of Hudson’s Bay Company Archives)

As a small-town girl with a serious passion for feathered fowl, Squire hardly fits the part of a cosmopolitan woman photographer.²⁹ Yet the many photographs of Squire used to illustrate the stories written about her reflect the Modern Girl ethos, albeit a more rural and less glamorous version of the trope. The plethora of puff pieces about “the girl photographer”³⁰ who “shoots birds with her camera,”³¹ supports the position that by the 1930s, “visual representations of women with bobbed hair, cloche hats, elongated bodies, and open, easy smiles could be found on all five continents in a range of visual media.”³² While Squire did not embody the vamp or sophisticated variation of the Modern Girl, she did have something in common with these other iterations: they used their image, and bodies, in a distinctly modern – and commercial – way. Like other Modern Girls, “young women with the wherewithal and desire to define themselves in excess of conventional female roles and as transgressive of national, imperial, and racial boundaries,”³³ Squire was using her image to her advantage.



5 | Lorene Squire, “Lorene Squire Photographs: Babes in the North.” *The Beaver*, 271:1 (June 1940): 11. (Photo: Image courtesy of McGill University Library Digitization Services)

It is easy to understand Squire’s participation in this form of self-promotion, as well as the audience’s curiosity about her outdoorsy creative pursuit, when one considers the impact that the Great Depression would have had on her career as a photographer, as well as on readers who may have found her unconventional persona a distraction from worry. As Squire made clear in her 1939 interview with the *Kansas City Star*, “when it comes to out-in-out impracticability, nothing could exceed photographing birds for downright foolishness.”³⁴ Photo editors likely saw these constructed images of a Modern Girl Photographer as a useful tool for selling pictures. For Squire, the growing celebrity attached to her image would have helped to legitimize and publicize her career through the consumer language of the popular press.

The photographs of a young and modern professional woman posing with her hand-held cameras, leaning on the rail of the HBC supply boat *Nascopie*, crouching amongst the marsh reeds of the North, or posed alongside a prop-engine bush plane, present carefully constructed self-portraits of an independent artist who created images at the frontier of women’s production. At a time when few women photographers were professionally successful, let alone considered “one of the nation’s leading photographers of migratory wildfowl,”³⁵ Squire’s commitment to promoting her image seems particularly

savvy (Fig. 5). A humorous, albeit frivolous example of this Modern Girl Photographer trope was published by *The Beaver* in the December 1940 issue. “Lorene Squire Photographs: Babes in the North,” is a composite article of images that Squire had made while travelling and photographing for the magazine. Clifford Wilson contrived an article made up of pictures of baby animals, one baby, and a definite *babe*, wearing her Hudson’s Bay Coat. In remarkably light and playful prose for the normally serious magazine, the text announces that:

Beaver addicts will doubtless be charmed to know that the lady appearing out of the duck-blind above is Miss Lorene Squire. On closer inspection it will be seen that, like another famous woman photographer, Miss Margaret Bourke-White, she wears a Hudson’s Bay “Point” Blanket parka. For the benefit of those interested in such details, we might add that, while the *Life* photographer favours a multi-stripe model (vide *Harper’s Bazaar* for March 1st), Miss Squire sports a pine-green one, with a black stripe – a choice that was undoubtedly made in the interests of camouflage as well as style.

This clear use of Squire as a model for the Hudson’s Bay’s coat line shows that while *The Beaver* valued her as a photographer and contributor to their magazine – on par with the most famous photographer of the time of *any gender*, whose photographs had previously graced the magazine – they nevertheless saw her image as a significant and novel commodity.³⁶

Yet in other articles, we get a much more professional presentation of the wildfowler, emphasizing the hardships Squire experienced and her accomplishments as a photographer.³⁷ Squire’s travels to the North would be considered intrepid and adventurous, even today. She not only spent several months in 1937 crossing the Northern Prairie Provinces by canoe, ship, plane, and train, but the next year saw her travelling to Richard’s Island in the eastern Arctic, to North Battleford, Saskatchewan, then to Churchill where she boarded the HBC supply ship *Nascopie* and headed north to Fort Ross, Baffin Island, and Greenland. As *The Beaver* put it in the 1938 December issue: “Only a few mounted police and Hudson’s Bay men have ever covered both western and eastern Arctic in one year. No camera artist and no woman has ever done it before.”³⁸ While this claim should be viewed sceptically as a chauvinistic example of colonialist paternalism – what they really mean is first *white woman* – nevertheless, the support that Squire received at *The Beaver* and throughout the North demonstrates that the appreciation of her work was in part due to the novelty of her Modern Girl image. That support became part of the Squire story.



6 | Lorene Squire, “Six Pictures – By Lorene Squire.” *The Beaver*, 269:1 (June 1938): 34–39. (Photo: Image courtesy of McGill University Library Digitization Services)

Introducing her very first photo essay for *The Beaver* (Fig. 6) the editor puts Squire’s contribution in its place by writing: “Lorene Squire, of Harper Kansas, came to Hudson’s Bay House last summer to ask advice about the best areas for getting wildlife pictures.”³⁹ According to this authority, Squire fought off mosquitoes, flies, and other physical challenges to “conquer difficulties that would have staggered older and less dauntless heads.” This prose, while patronizing, is surprisingly gender-neutral. Rather than her novelty as a woman, it is Squire’s position as a supplicant to the Company that is emphasised. The images, as the caption goes on to explain, have been selected from a larger collection of prints from her 1937 trip, which had been exhibited at the HBC’s downtown Winnipeg store.⁴⁰ Included is a close-up of a blue goose in flight, cropped tightly so that its wings appear to barely be contained by the frame. What goes unmentioned in this description of corporate largesse is that Squire was also travelling as the official photographer to the American Wildlife Institute, “a power for conservation throughout the continent,” according to Canadian government ornithologist Hoyes Lloyd.⁴¹

The American Wildlife Institute was a successor to an earlier group, the American Game Association – a sport hunting organization with strong ties to government and private conservation. In his biography of pioneering American conservationist and duck hunter Aldo Leopold, Curt D. Meine refers to the 1935 shift in nomenclature from “game” to “wildlife” as introducing a “revolution in wildlife conservation.”⁴² While this dramatic description may slightly overstate the power of such a small word change, it did reflect a larger shift in attitude amongst conservationists and hunting enthusiasts, who saw the management of wildlife and *their habitats* as the only way to preserve the “traditional” practice of sport hunting, while maintaining private control of hunting grounds, which was threatened by growing government and public interest.⁴³

Private Wildlife Management in Canada

The period between the early 1880s and the Second World War saw the growth and establishment of the conservation movement in Canada and the United States, driven by the twinned utilitarian concerns of sustainable settlement and resource management. The extinction of the passenger pigeon and the decimation of the great bison herds of the plains, once thought impossible by settlers who saw the New World as a land of unlimited bounty, contributed to a sense of environmental catastrophe and disappearing wilderness in the two nations.⁴⁴ In the U.S., the reform mentality of the Progressive Era led to the establishment of the modern administrative state, which sought to regulate and control the social, economic, and environmental impact of human expansion through the establishment of parks and hunting limits.⁴⁵ In the Dominion of Canada, the reformist urge was slower to take hold as the nineteenth-century concept of “superabundance” – the idea that wildlife was plentiful and un-diminishable – and the idea of wildlife as “natural wealth” were key factors in attracting settlers to western Canada.⁴⁶ Yet it is no coincidence that the conservation management of wildlife and resources became a concern during the Dominion era, when the Northwest was opened up to settler occupation and the Canadian government began to survey the natural resources of the territory. This interest coincided with the signing of the Numbered Treaties between the Canadian government and the First Peoples who lived on the lands from Northern Ontario to Northern British Columbia and up into the Northwest Territories, in a further effort to gain access to those resource rich lands.

The 1930s saw conservation and ecology develop as “a mode of thought” across Canada.⁴⁷ Celebrity conservationists such as Jack “Father Goose” Miner and Archibald Stansfeld Belaney, aka “Grey Owl,” entered the popular

imagination, promoting the conservation of the Canada goose and beaver respectively.⁴⁸ Yet it was the concept of private wildlife management that would have a profound influence on conservation practice in the interwar period. While provincial laws on hunting and trapping were influential, enforcement and management were fragmented.⁴⁹ It wasn't until after the Second World War that the federal Canadian Wildlife Service began to develop an infrastructure for wildlife management in Canada.⁵⁰ As the settler population boomed across the West, local game associations took a keen interest in the new science of conservation and acted as guardians and enforcers of the provincial game laws. Local organizations tended to blame the disappearance of wildlife on new immigrants (ie. the “non-British”), Indigenous peoples, and even “citizens of rival towns and cities carrying away the wealth of nearby lakes, streams, and fields.”⁵¹ Conservation was not just about protecting the natural resources of a region: it was driven by the local interests of settler groups who saw the wealth of the natural world as their own.

The most powerful group of private wildlife management conservationists in North America, Ducks Unlimited (DU), was founded in the United States of America in 1937. Concern about decreasing numbers of wildfowl had been building for decades, only partly mitigated by the 1916 Migratory Bird Treaty, signed between the U.S. and Canada (Great Britain), and ratified as the Migratory Bird Convention Act (MBCA) in Canada in 1917, which sought to establish hunting limits and protect breeding stock across North America.⁵² The Migratory Bird Treaty was the first and most successful transnational agreement to regulate hunting seasons and it demonstrated how conservation science could be applied to convince people of the value of protecting North American birds.⁵³ Unfortunately migratory bird numbers continued to decline in the following decades, in part because of disappearing habitat. In the early 1930s, a group of sport hunters in the United States founded The More Game Birds Foundation, which later transitioned into DU, to study the problem of diminishing wildfowl and to lobby for the conservation of wetlands.⁵⁴ They organized “The 1935 International Wild Duck Census,” a survey of wildfowl breeding grounds. The census revealed the need to extend habitat protection into Canada when the results showed a wildfowl population reduced by a staggering 80 percent compared to the turn of the century.⁵⁵

Employing new scientific approaches to wildlife management, including the study and targeting of predators, banding, census taking, and habitat improvement, the group founded Ducks Unlimited of Canada in 1938. Based in Winnipeg, DU Canada aimed to reduce what they called “duck crop losses” by any means possible.⁵⁶ Increasingly worried about the continuation of sport hunting, DU's first project aimed to restore the unsuccessfully drained and

ecologically damaged Big Grass Marsh, located in southwestern Manitoba. Named “Duck Factory No. 1,” the project was successful in part because of support from locals, government, and the elite members of DU who drew on their political contacts and business acumen for financial and political support.⁵⁷ Another important element of their success, according to Shannon Stunden Bower, was that “Ducks Unlimited worked as hard in the marsh as on the airwaves,”⁵⁸ promoting their projects and knowledge about wetlands and wildfowl. Characters like “Jake the Drake” and “Mary the Mallard” helped Canadians understand that conserving breeding grounds was good for the animals but also good for the economy.

In the first official history of the organization, *The Ducks Came Back*, published in 1946, the DU approach is outlined in detail. With much celebration of DU’s directors and staff, author Kip Farrington Jr. demonstrates how American sportsmen, with gumption and hard work, fought to improve the lot of hunters, by increasing the numbers of their prey through the modern methods and techniques of environmental engineering, ecology, and political lobbying. What is most striking in Farrington’s discussion of DU’s success is the lack of acknowledgement that humans had caused the problem in the first place. Much blame is placed on the poor crow, second only to drought as a cause of destruction of “potential ducks.”⁵⁹ Neither is the complex issue of Indigenous hunting rights acknowledged. The only mention of Indigenous hunting comes in the book’s “Appendix C” which lists “Indian and Half-breed predation” as responsible for an estimated 3 percent of “losses in waterfowl.”⁶⁰

Photographs heavily illustrate this celebratory history, showing all aspects of the organization, from maps of their territories, to examples of duck predation and marsh reconstruction, to the famous men of the organization out hunting with their wives, as if to say, “look, all are welcome!” Many photographs echo the form and subjects of Squire’s own images: ducks in flight, ducklings, and flocks of geese against the skyline are all pictured along with the conservation group’s workers and organizers. Yet unlike Squire’s photographs, which offer a sense of freedom and space for wildfowl, the DU history’s illustrations read as instrumentalized and institutional interventions in the lives and habitats of the animals protected for human use. Juxtaposing ducks in flight with workers, hunters with guns, infrastructure projects, and portraits of “founding fathers,” *The Ducks Came Back* suggests that the protection of nature and wildfowl is intimately tied to the culture of hunting. In one particularly sinister illustration (Fig. 7), Canada is depicted as a shadowy land dominated by a drawing of an enormous black “duck factory,” replete with smoke stacks and windows to illuminate its happy workers. From the factory, which dominates the prairies, reach long white tentacle-



7 | S. Kip Farrington Jr., *The Ducks Came Back, the Story of Ducks Unlimited*. New York: Coward-McCann, 1945, n.p. (Photo: Image courtesy of Concordia University Digital Image and Slide Collection)

like arrows pointing to the United States like military escape routes planned from a prison camp. These arrows are meant to show the successful flyways of ducks and geese towards the marshes of American hunters. Today, Ducks Unlimited, one of the most successful private conservation projects in North America, continues to produce and use photography, artworks, and stamps in their fundraising, public education, and communication strategies.

“Wildfowling with a Camera”

By the 1930s, the phrase “hunting with a camera” was an accepted term amongst photographers and conservationists alike. As James R. Ryan has pointed out in his work on big-game hunting in Africa, “Such photographs of white men with dead animals or antlers, tusks and skins [became] a common, even clichéd, feature of the repertoire of Victorian and Edwardian colonial photography, and they testify further to the significance of hunting as a ritualistic display of power by white colonial elites over land, subject, people, and nature.”⁶¹ According to Ryan, these images were used not only to record a moment in time, as mementos of a trip or successful hunt,

but also to preserve trophies, to illustrate public lectures, and as a way to promote the work of naturalists bent on conservation and developing game reserves.⁶² By the late nineteenth and into the twentieth century, “camera hunting” had developed as a tool of conservation and a practice that was promoted as more challenging, sportsman-like, and manly than hunting with a gun.⁶³ As Matthew Brower has made clear, the connection between trophy hunting and the camera began to evolve along with photographic technology: the introduction of the flash and the high-speed camera, along with improvements in photographic printing, meant that the “operating logic” of the photograph as trophy had changed.⁶⁴ As speed and accuracy improved, photographers could suddenly capture movement, spontaneity, and life. The snapshot forges the strongest link between hunting and the camera, the very name suggesting a quickly captured “lucky shot.”⁶⁵ Yet, as images came to circulate more widely, in magazines including *National Geographic* and in photographic exhibitions, popular appreciation of such images evolved to evoke ideas of idealized nature, spectacle, scientific observation, and aesthetic beauty, to name a few readings.⁶⁶ While the idea of camera hunting continues to influence the history of photography, both literally and metaphorically evoking an aggressive and predatory intent on the part of the photographer, it is necessary to consider the many other meanings these images can call to mind.

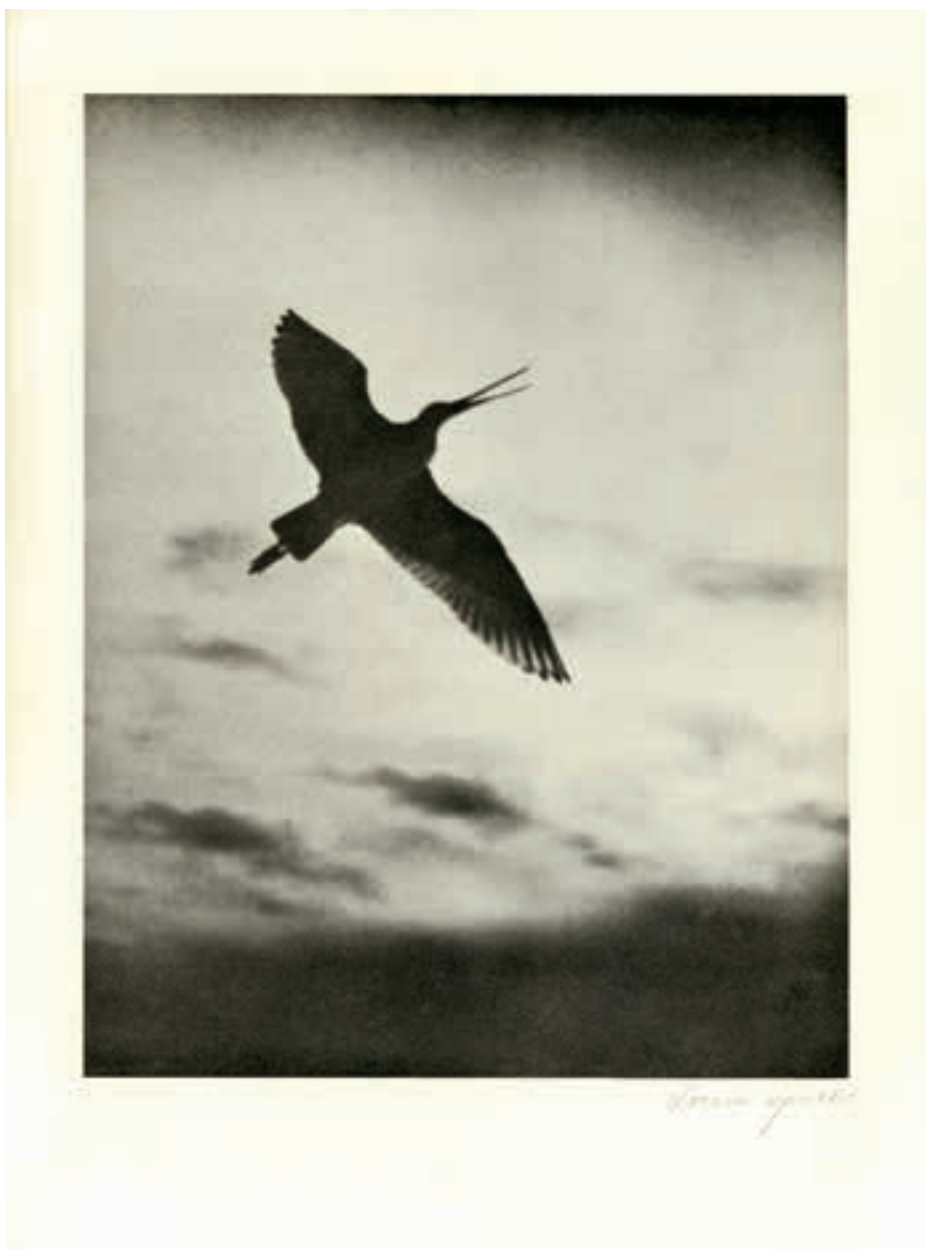
Squire’s photographs in *Wildfowling with a Camera* emphasize the role that speed, reflex, and luck play in photographing a wild duck or goose. While Squire doesn’t write much about the technical difficulties, she states unequivocally that “if, out of forty negatives, there is one that can be made into a print that expresses something of the beauty and motion and fascinating pattern of wild duck flight I am entirely satisfied.”⁶⁷ Even with the increasing improvements of cameras in the 1930s, spearheaded by “rapid fire”⁶⁸ German cameras like Leica and Exakta, and more sensitive films, Squire needed all the light she could get from a bright day to capture her camera-shy subjects. Nevertheless, the black and white prints in her book are often grainy and blurry. While this does create a charming sense of action in some images, in others it is clear that the reproduction quality and choice of matte paper do a serious disservice to the photographs.⁶⁹ Yet the book is redeemed by the quality of her prose and the fascinating story she tells of the life-cycle of wildfowl.

Images of flight dominate her book, expressing a sense of vitality and dynamism more reflective of the moving image than the static photographic medium. It is clear that Squire’s passion for her subject and photography is driven by a desire to accurately capture what is most significant about the animals: their frenetic and boundless movements. Her images depict bird



8 | Lorene Squire, "Mallard, Prince Albert [Saskatchewan]," 1937. Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba, Lorene Squire photographs taken for *The Beaver* magazine, HBCA 1981-28-9. This image also appears in *Wildfowling With a Camera* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1938), 23. (Photo: courtesy of Hudson's Bay Company Archives)

after bird frozen with wings spread against the sky, or against the surface of a lake or grassy marsh, about to take off. In one image, entitled simply "Mallard" (Fig. 8), a duck is pictured mid-flight. Caught in profile, the lone duck seems to pause and peer at the camera from a single eye even while its wings displace air and its body reaches to arc into flight. The black and white



9 | Lorene Squire, “Marbled Godwit,” in *Wildfowling With a Camera* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1938), 167. (Photo: Image courtesy of Concordia University Digital Image and Slide Collection)

image is atmospheric and dark, the background uncertain, and the burn marks that Squire added to the print to force as much detail from the negative as possible create hazy streaks around the bird, as if actualizing the great force that the little creature would have made upon the wind. Often, as with

an image of a marbled godwit 'on the wing', the figure is dark, silhouetted against a bright background of clouds (Fig. 9). This effect reflects how difficult it would have been to properly expose a moving creature and capture sufficient detail against a bright sunny sky. In this extraordinary shot, the godwit seems to have posed against the skyline, wings spread, with its long bill spread, caught crying.

The narrative sequence of her book is personal, tightly focused on the author's interactions with ducks and geese in the places she photographed, yet there is little autobiographical description. Instead, we are entertained with stories of the photographer's experiences of wildfowling with a camera, her successes and failures, and educated about the mannerisms and habits of the migrating water birds through the seasons. In the manner of a nature writer, Squire's voice comes across strongly and her character emerges as a devoted observer, who in today's nomenclature might be considered a "citizen scientist." Had Squire been born later she might herself have been a biologist, with little time for the privileged pursuits of an artist or amateur naturalist. This uneasy position, caught between art and science, cannot be separated from her gender as it filters into the perception and presentation of her work. This fact is echoed in a review of her book, published in the *Winnipeg Free Press* in 1939. The author, one A.B.G., compares Squire's "massive work" to that of the diminutive book by Scotsman and Ross goose specialist Dr Fraser Darling whose *Wild Country* is described, "as rugged in photo and opinion as the West Highland crags of Eilean a'Cheirich he loves so well."⁷⁰ While giving each author their due as "bird students," much is made of Squire's *feminine* plates which, "whether by accident or design," render the images soft-toned and blurry.⁷¹ While the reader will remember Squire herself was displeased by this result, A.B.G. tries to explain this quality as the act of an artist who "sublimated detail to gain a truer representation of the elusive spirit of the wild places."⁷² This critique may be meant as a kindness, but it nevertheless offers up gender identity as a reason to patronize the photographer. No mention is made of her storytelling or biological/behavioural observations in the prose.

Squire came to the subject of wildfowl from a family of hunters. Her photography was much admired by wildfowlers, who must have appreciated the skill and difficulty of camera hunting.⁷³ According to one account, Squire gave up shooting after two years to instead capture her prey on film. Claiming to be a terrible shot, she exclaimed to a reporter from the *Topeka Capital* "I think if I had ever been able to hit anything with a gun that I would never have started trying to photograph wild ducks and geese and snipe."⁷⁴ Again, we find – in Squire's own words – a downplaying of her status, this time as a sport hunter. Yet she uses the language of sport hunting as a touchstone

for speaking about and explaining her unusual passion for photography. As Squire would clearly put it in her book, “shooting ducks with a camera becomes, with practice, as automatic a motion as raising and firing a gun.”⁷⁵ While rejecting the practice of hunting, Squire managed to make space for herself in a male-dominated world, forging a complex identity as an artist/naturalist/adventurer and Modern Girl camera hunter.

Squire’s hunting instinct was tempered by a fascination with the behaviours, habits, and beauty of her subjects. She believed that, “hunted birds . . . would lose their suspicious caution in the secluded northern waters where they built their nests.”⁷⁶ As a result, these birds would be less afraid, affording her an opportunity to photograph the creatures in better detail. Many of her images from the northern leg of her 1937 travels focused on mother ducks and ducklings, a subject she had little opportunity to photograph during their spring and fall migration flights through Kansas. In one image, entitled “Young Godwit” (Fig. 10), the full profile of the little creature, not much taller than the short grasses that surround it, is framed perfectly as a flightless and fuzzy form. While photographing in a muskeg in Northwest Saskatchewan, she describes the challenge of getting close enough to capture an image of mother and babies. One image was thwarted by the mother’s skills of distraction: pretending to be injured, the “good actress” led Squire’s attention away from her brood so that they could make a getaway.⁷⁷ In another moment of frankness, Squire describes how her multiple attempts to flush a brooding spoonbill duck from her nest of eggs, and capture that perfect moment of flight in focus, led to the nest being robbed by crows.⁷⁸ While Squire managed the shot (Fig. 11), she laments that “had I realized that disturbing the wild ducks from their nest could have indirectly brought such harm to them I would never have attempted to make these pictures.”⁷⁹ The resulting image of a duck perfectly framed, each feather articulated as its wings branch out, expresses none of this ecological pathos. Instead, the image manages to capture a sense of the duck’s freedom in flight as well as the photographer’s pleasure in a shot well taken.

While she expressed in her images and words an ethological fascination with wildfowl, Squire’s naturalist inclinations were not at odds with the practice of hunting for food. Photographing around Fort Chipewyan, the HBC settlement in the traditional Cree and Dene territories of Treaty 8 in 1937, Squire writes about the importance of duck hunting to the people of the region. In the chapter entitled “Fall Flight,” she describes being ferried by motorized skiff from Fort Chipewyan up the Rocher and Coupe Rivers toward Egg Lake by a local man named John James. According to her account, Egg Lake was named by “the Indians who have come here for countless years to gather eggs from the nests of waterfowl.”⁸⁰ One print found in the HBC



W. H. Squire

10 | Lorene Squire, "Young Godwit," in *Wildfowling With a Camera* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1938), 165. (Photo: Image courtesy of Concordia University Digital Image and Slide Collection)



Lorene Squire

11 | Lorene Squire, "Spoonbill Flying From Nest," in *Wildfowling With a Camera* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1938), 205. (Photo: Image courtesy of Concordia University Digital Image and Slide Collection)



12 | Lorene Squire, “Portage to Egg Lake [near Fort Chipewyan, Alberta],” 1937. Hudson’s Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba, Lorene Squire photographs taken for *The Beaver* magazine, HBCA 1981-28-8. (Photo: courtesy of Hudson’s Bay Company Archives)

archives, unpublished in Squire’s book, depicts the portage trail exit into Egg Lake (Fig. 12). Sun-dappled birch trees frame a narrow opening into a marshy put-in at a small and shallow body of water. The sky is mostly hidden by the full foliage of the trees but what can be perceived through the canopy, and is reflected in the strip of water visible through tall grasses, seems to suggest a solid cloud cover. At first enthusiastic about the plethora of subjects for her camera, Squire retreated to Fort Chipewyan when the weather turned stormy to sit out a solid week of rain. Of this week she writes that “every morning

John James came to discuss the prospects of the weather. Then, having decided it was going to rain again that day, the Indian went off to shoot ducks along the muddy shores a few miles out of Chipewyan.”⁸¹ Finally, when the weather had cleared, she and John James headed out, only to find that few ducks remained on the lake. She writes:

I thought that by pushing further and further north we would come into a region of the marsh that the Indians had not disturbed but we found only a thin scattering of birds that fled far out of range. It was strange to see how quickly the wild ducks, which had rested undisturbed and unmolested in this secluded place, had learned their lesson of fear. But I could have no resentment for the change that had been worked. Ducks are a necessity of life to the northern Indian, who has always depended upon a supply of wildfowl in Autumn. A duck to an Indian is his rightful heritage of something to eat.⁸²

Squire’s words suggest an awareness of the ecological interconnection of two classes of animalia – Mammalia and Aves – while nevertheless acknowledging the impact that Indigenous hunting had on her own preoccupation with picture-making. Her attitude of acceptance was not the norm for this time. Not two years after Squire’s visit to one of the greatest nesting grounds of wildfowl she had ever seen, the Dene and Cree of Fort Chipewyan, west of Lake Athabasca, would be told by the Canadian government that they could no longer hunt ducks.⁸³

“A Rightful Heritage of Something to Eat”: Settler and Indigenous Hunting

Numerous studies have demonstrated that Canada’s Indigenous peoples have been, at different times in Canada’s history, unfairly blamed for diminishing wildlife numbers.⁸⁴ During the interwar period, relations became even more strained. Influenced by transnational progressive-era values, particularly nativism and what Ivan Grabovac has called “race-based ecological citizenship,”⁸⁵ dominant settler-colonial groups, including sport hunters, trapping corporations like the Hudson’s Bay Company, and, increasingly, Canadian Government officials, came to believe that Indigenous hunters were incapable of conserving wildlife and indiscriminate in their harvesting.⁸⁶ As Dan Gottesman has argued, the treaty rights of Canada’s First Peoples, particularly those who fell under ruling of the Number Treaties, which stipulated legal rights of hunting, fishing, and trapping, were deliberately and consistently disregarded in favour of widespread conservation laws such as the Migratory Bird Convention Act (MBCA).⁸⁷



13 | Department of Indian Affairs, “Map showing the Territory ceded under Treaty no. 8 and Indian tribes therein,” 1900. University of Saskatchewan, University Archives and Special Collections, Canadiana Pamphlets Collection, Map 617fhg.

Treaty 8 (Fig. 13) had been signed in 1899 between Canadian officials and the Dene and Cree of Northern Alberta and Saskatchewan and the southern Northwest Territories. Facilitated by Church officials and Métis translators, the Treaty was supposed to guarantee that

they [Indians] shall have the right to pursue their usual vocations of hunting, trapping, and fishing throughout the tract surrendered as heretofore described, *subject to such regulations as may from time to time be made by the Government of the country*, acting under the authority of Her Majesty, and saving and excepting such tracts as may be required or taken up from time to time for settlement, mining, lumbering, trading or other purposes.⁸⁸ [emphasis added]

In a 1976 report, published for the Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research organization of the Indian Association of Alberta, Rick Daniels describes how the Dene and Cree people of the Treaty 8 region had agreed to its terms

because of the assurance that their rights to continue their commercial activities of trapping and hunting on the land would be protected.⁸⁹ Yet the differences between what was discussed during the treaty negotiations and the actual document recorded were significant.⁹⁰ According to oral accounts passed down by the witnesses to the signing, most elders believed there would be no restrictions on the right to hunt, fish, and trap.⁹¹ As Daniels argues, in the eyes of the government, “they already owned the land; so the treaty was merely a means of extinguishing the vague aboriginal rights and placating the native people by offering the advantages of a treaty.”⁹² This was plainly true in 1939 when duck hunting became another banned practice for the people of Fort Chipewyan.

In an article published in the *Edmonton Journal* on 19 July 1939, “Anger in Indians’ Hearts over Ban on Duck Shooting,” journalist Robinson Maclean reports that not only were the people of Fort Chipewyan upset by what they perceived as another broken treaty promise but he flatly states that, by this action, “they have been told by the dominion of Canada to starve.”⁹³ In response to Maclean’s question, “why did they stop you killing ducks?” the Chipewyan councilor Isadore Simpson replies: “there has been a treaty between our country and the Americans. The Americans sent men here and they said this was a breeding ground for ducks. Now we are forbidden to kill ducks, so that there shall be plenty of ducks for their sport.”⁹⁴ Even while agreeing that it was unfair, local RCMP officer Sergeant Robert Rathbone found himself in the position of convincing the Dene and Cree of Fort Chipewyan to agree to the new regulation so that they could receive their annual treaty payments of five dollars. In the article he tells Maclean, “I honestly believe that each Indian family kills fewer ducks in a year than any sportsman in the hunting season.”⁹⁵ That very same summer, a story in the 5 August issue of the *Edmonton Journal* announced that “Ducks Unlimited Seeks [to] Keep Canada Game for Sportsmen.” Included in this report by DU Canada’s vice-president, O. Leigh-Spencer, was a description of a new project in the Athabasca Delta region of Alberta, where “work is now going forward.”⁹⁶

In his foundational history of Treaty 8 (1899) and Treaty 11 (1921), Father René Fumoleau tells a heartbreaking history of how starvation and government indifference impacted the Indigenous peoples of those regions. He focuses on the years from 1922 to 1939 as “a period replete with discontent, broken promises, evasions, and deceptions.”⁹⁷ Fumoleau situates the MBCA as only one of many game laws which crippled Indigenous hunters’ rights and threatened them with either arrest for disobeying or starvation for complying. Fumoleau cites Charles Parker, Inspector of Indian Agencies for the Mackenzie District, who wrote in an annual report of 1928 that not only had



14 | Lorene Squire,
“Mallard Jumping,
Athabasca Delta,” 1937.
Hudson’s Bay Company
Archives, Archives of
Manitoba, Lorene Squire
photographs taken for *The
Beaver* magazine, HBCA
1981-28-5. (Photo: courtesy
of Hudson’s Bay Company
Archives)

their treaty rights to hunt and trap and fish been completely ignored by the MBCA but even the ecology of their northerly latitude had been disregarded: by the time the season was open to hunters of the district, ducks and geese were already on their way south.⁹⁸ Parker’s concluding comments on the MBCA strike a chilling note: “At present it is little less than revolting to think that this God given food is denied to a primitive people in order to provide sport for whites.”⁹⁹

Squire’s images from Treaty 8 territory show very little of this serious cultural conflict (Fig. 14). Droughts, economic depressions, famines, gender, and Indigenous inequalities are hidden from view in these photographs. Yet the ecological, social, and cultural context that produced Squire’s images of wildfowl remains present, if one knows where to look. As anthropologist Elizabeth Edwards has written, “a [photographic] object cannot be fully understood at any single point in its existence but rather should be

understood as belonging in a continuing process of meaning, production, exchange and usage.”¹⁰⁰ This context is steeped in a mixture of risk and loss. A realistic fear of disappearing wildfowl – and its impact on the settler cultural practice of sport hunting – led to intervention in the landscape that reverberated across the political spectrum to impact those living in the most precarious of positions. A detailed reading of Squire’s life work, hidden in archives, in old magazines, and obscure books about water birds, reminds us that the power of photography lies not in its ability to document reality, but in its ability to draw out and complicate the stories we tell.

Her photographs invoke an imaginary state of utopic wilderness free of human presence, if one can forget that Squire was herself behind the lens. Like the work of her peer, the bird and nature photographer Eliot Porter, whose recognition as an artist would arrive along with the 1960s environmental movement,¹⁰¹ Squire’s photographs visualize the ecological sublime, which Finis Dunaway has described as “a way to rejoin beauty and sublimity, to turn the ordinary into the astonishing, to find awe in the diminutive, to seek wonder in the everyday.”¹⁰² Today, as we are faced with a perpetual and continued loss of bird species,¹⁰³ and the ongoing struggles of Indigenous people around the world to protect their rights to land, territory, and resources, these images, and the history they contain, are needed. As ecological images, these pictures of ducks, geese, and shore birds remind us that the cascade effect that can decimate an ecosystem is as much a part of culture as nature.

Conclusion

Squire’s images of wildfowl and the landscape they occupied evoke a period of great change in North America as advocates for wildlife conservation and sport hunting sought to protect the habitats and species she pictured. They also reveal, at a deeper level, how settler-colonial attitudes towards natural resources were founded on the very same capitalistic practices that had caused both economic collapse and environmental crisis and contributed to the exploitation of Canada’s Indigenous people. The conflict between settlers and Indigenous people in North America went far beyond the issue of hunting rights. At root was a fundamental disagreement over nature’s purpose and meaning. Are natural *resources*, the animals and their ecosystems, the air above us and minerals below, merely the building blocks that make up the wealth of individuals and hence the nation? Can a settler society appreciate the natural world and benefit from the land without depleting it? These are the ongoing questions that trouble the foundations of our current post-contact society, a society based on the continued exploitation of Indigenous people and the environment alike.

Squire's interest in photographing rather than shooting her prey suggests a kind of middle ground between the settler commodification of nature and the Indigenous practice of subsistence land use during this period. Squire was a product of settler culture in North America and she benefited greatly from that position, in a world that privileged whiteness and middle-class gentility above all else. Her status as a woman photographer made her a unique commodity, even as she cast aside the traditional performance of femininity in favour of a larger-than-life persona of naturalist and adventurer. Yet her sympathy for the North, for its natural world, for its people, shows how deftly she navigated the complex waters of her position of authority.

Her images were successful not only because of her skill as a camera hunter or because of her charm and appeal as a Modern Girl Photographer but because they filled a need in viewers, who longed for the abundant wilderness and natural wealth they represented. Her images, reproduced in her book, in *The Beaver*, and in other popular publications, stand out for their evocation of the environmental imaginary of Canada's interwar period. Placed alongside her riveting prose, which evokes a wondrous and symbiotic journey of photographer and subject, Squire's photographs speak strongly about the longing for wilderness in a changing landscape, shaped by ecological destruction and development.

NOTES

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- 1 Lorene SQUIRE, "Six Pictures – By Lorene Squire," *The Beaver*, June 1938; Lorene SQUIRE, "4 out of 5 Ducks Come From Canada: Kansas Girl Goes 8,000 Miles to Photograph Them," *LIFE*, 21 Mar. 1938; Hoyes LLOYD, "Lorene Squire Studies Prairie Birds," *Canadian Geographical Journal* 18:1 (January 1939): 18–25; Lorene SQUIRE, "Wild Fowl," *Country Life*, October 1939; Scott HART, "More Sporting Books," *The Washington Post*, 11 Dec. 1938; Lorene SQUIRE, "Birds in Arctic: A Girl Photographer Follows Them to Their Far-North Breeding Grounds," *LIFE*, 3 Apr. 1939.
- 2 Lorene SQUIRE, *Wildfowling With a Camera* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1938), 141.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 For more on the history of settler game hunting and protection organizations in Canada see: George COLPITTS, *Game in the Garden: A Human History of Wildlife in Western Canada to 1940* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002); Darcy INGRAM, *Wildlife, Conservation, and Conflict in Quebec, 1840–1914* (Nature, History, Society series)

- (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013); Tina Merrill LOO, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Nature, History, Society series) (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006).
- 5 Barbara Eileen KELCEY, *Alone in Silence: European Women in the Canadian North Before 1940* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001).
 - 6 This unpublished image from the archive shows three young men duck hunting with their dog near Weminji (Old Factory River), north of Waskaganish (Rupert's House), on James Bay, in Eeyou Istchee Cree First Nations territory.
 - 7 "The Beaver Gets a New Name," *CBC News*. Accessed 12 Jan. 2010, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/the-beaver-gets-a-new-name-1.865851>.
 - 8 Peter G. GELLER, "Constructing Corporate Images of the Fur Trade: The Hudson's Bay Company, Public Relations and the Beaver Magazine, 1920–1945" (MA thesis, University of Manitoba, 1990), 31–32.
 - 9 *Ibid.*, 36–37.
 - 10 *Ibid.*, 45.
 - 11 Peter GELLER, *Northern Exposures: Photographing and Filming the Canadian North, 1920–1945* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 118–19.
 - 12 *Ibid.*, 119.
 - 13 McKay died in a plane crash in 1938 while on business for the Company and it was Alice McKay, Douglas's widow, who ran the magazine in the year before Wilson was hired.
 - 14 Squire often used images in multiple publications. From her first trip into the Northern Prairies, she produced an article for *Country Life* magazine (UK). An image of Canada geese reproduced in that article on page 196 is found on the last page of her book. Lorene SQUIRE, "Waterfowl of a Prairie Slough," *Country Life*, 20 Feb. 1937, 196–97; SQUIRE, *Wildfowling With a Camera*.
 - 15 Inter-departmental Letter, Murray Turner to R.H.G. Bonnycastle, 6 Jan. 1944, folder 1, HBCA RG2/8/1100, Lorene Squire Correspondence "The Beaver," 1938–1966, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba.
 - 16 "Lorene Squire Birth Announcement," *Harper Advocate*, 2 Oct. 1908, sec. Harper Locals.
 - 17 "Galloway-Squire," *Harper Advocate*, 3 Jan. 1908; "Squire Furn. Co Purchased by Brownell-Wiley," *Harper Advocate*, 27 Jan. 1955, sec. Front Page.
 - 18 Lorene SQUIRE, "Cutie, a Prairie Pet," *Nature Magazine* 6 (September 1925): 135–39; "Winning Her Way with Her Camera," *The Logansport Morning Press*, 28 Feb. 1926, sec. The Days' News in Pictures; Lorene SQUIRE, "Dad Goes A'birding," *Nature Magazine* 8 (October 1926): 205–208; Lorene SQUIRE, "The Meadowlark," *Birdlore*, June 1927.
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« Ces eaux moins abondantes » : conservation, chasse photographique et conflits entre colons et autochtones dans les photographies de la sauvagine du nord canadien par Lorene Squire

KARLA MCMANUS

Chasseuse d'images passionnée et engagée, la photographe de sauvagine américaine Lorene Squire (1908–1942) a produit un important corpus d'images qui reflètent l'intérêt transnational pour les oiseaux migrateurs dans les années 1930. Ses images ont été publiées par la presse populaire, dont le magazine *LIFE* et la revue de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, *The Beaver*, qui a joué un rôle important en aidant la photographe dans ses voyages. Les photographies prises pendant ses trois voyages au Canada, y compris à Fort Chipewyan, dans le territoire du Traité no 8, ont contribué à la perception du Nord canadien comme le paradis des observateurs d'oiseaux et des chasseurs.

En tant que photographe et naturaliste, Squire était le produit de la culture coloniale nord-américaine. Elle a aussi bénéficié des privilèges d'une femme instruite de la classe moyenne. À une époque qui a vu l'émergence de femmes indépendantes, incarnées par la « fille moderne », la nouvelle carrière de Squire était aussi un produit de consommation. Squire a joué son rôle de fille moderne dans des médias et articles de revue, délaissant l'image traditionnelle de la féminité en faveur d'un personnage plus grand que nature de naturaliste, chasseuse d'images et aventurière. Le livre où elle raconte ses aventures, *Wildfowling With a Camera* (1937), exprime sa fascination pour son sujet ainsi que sa détermination à obtenir l'image parfaite. La majorité des photographies portent sur le vol et montrent la beauté et la liberté essentielles de ses sujets, alors qu'elle met des appareils haute vitesse et la pellicule au service de son talent. Son amour pour la chasse à la sauvagine, non avec un fusil mais avec un appareil photo, apparaît clairement dans ses images qui saisissent sur le vif les comportements et habitudes des oiseaux.

Inspirées par les difficultés économiques de la Grande Dépression, les tempêtes de poussière et le déclin de la sauvagine en Amérique du nord, les photographies de Squire sont des témoins du changement dans la conscience environnementale dans les années 1930. Dans le sillage de la destruction écologique produite par l'agriculture mécanisée, plusieurs personnes ont commencé à se rendre compte que les ressources abondantes de l'Amérique du nord n'étaient pas infinies. Alors que la gestion de la conservation de la faune se transformait pour inclure l'idée d'*habitat* comme essentielle pour

la conservation des espèces animales, des groupes de chasseurs privés, tel Canards Illimités, sont devenus de plus en plus actifs dans les milieux humides du Canada. La réponse a été d'établir une forme de gestion de conservation qui placerait les Premières Nations et les peuples indigènes dans une position perdante, tout en privilégiant les besoins des chasseurs sportifs non autochtones. Cela a conduit à des conflits croissants entre chasseurs autochtones et non autochtones qui allaient au-delà des droits de chasse. À la racine du problème, on trouve un désaccord fondamental entre le but et le sens de la nature, un conflit qui demeure au centre de la guerre des ressources.

Vues aujourd'hui, les photographies de Squire expriment fortement la nostalgie des étendues sauvages face à un paysage changeant, façonné par la destruction écologique et le développement. Pourtant, en elles-mêmes, ses images reflètent peu des tensions culturelles, politiques et économiques de l'époque. C'est en redécouvrant son travail, dans des articles de revues, dans son livre et dans les archives de la Compagnie de la baie d'Hudson, qu'on trouve le récit de l'imaginaire environnemental changeant au Canada.

Traduction : Élise Bonnette



Subconscious Selling: Bertram Brooker and the Visual Culture of Couéism

ADAM LAUDER

Introduction

This article situates the recently rediscovered first monograph by Canada's inaugural Governor General's Award-winning author, Bertram Brooker (1888–1955), within contested histories of Canadian modernism as well as Brooker's still largely misunderstood multi-disciplinary achievements.¹ The latter included the first solo exhibition of abstract paintings in Canada, at Toronto's Arts and Letters Club in 1927, as well as an extensive body of writings that anticipated, and may have indirectly informed, the media analyses of Marshall McLuhan.² Brooker's *Subconscious Selling*³ applies the psychological theories of the French pharmacist Émile Coué (1857–1926) to practical problems in salesmanship. The techniques of self-affirmation developed by Coué – repackaged for Canadian readers with a heavy dose of the French philosopher Henri Bergson added by Brooker – offer the key to a seminal group of semi-abstract canvases painted by the artist-advertiser in the mid-1920s.

This reassessment joins the current reevaluation of one of Canada's leading modernists in strengthening the case that Brooker's visual art and innovative advertising insights were inspired by the philosophy of Bergson, as well as related currents in early twentieth-century thought which, in the words of Bergson scholar Adi Efal, participated in “a revision of the ‘rationalist’ tradition.”⁴ In challenging the received portrait of Brooker as a mystic and Theosophist, this article simultaneously contributes to a growing literature on the Bergsonian sources of Canadian modernism, culminating in the globally-influential media speculations of McLuhan.⁵ This Bergsonian turn in Canadian studies participates in an ongoing reconsideration of the French thinker, taking a fresh look at his impact on modernist art and ideas for the first time since the influential Deleuzian “return to Bergson.”⁶

In foregrounding the Couéist and Bergsonian sources of Brooker's art and personal philosophy, *Subconscious Selling* also troubles literary scholar

Detail, Bertram Brooker, *Creation*, ca. 1927, oil on board, 61 × 43 cm, private collection. (Photo: Consignor Canadian Fine Art)

Gregory Betts's revisionist portrait of Brooker as a "Canadian Vorticist."⁷ "Canadian Vorticism" is Betts's term for a body of Canadian cultural theory, literature, and visual art that responded to the anti-humanist agenda of the Canadian-born British author and visual artist Wyndham Lewis (1882–1957). In contrast to the Bergsonian dynamism embraced by his Cubist and Futurist contemporaries, Lewis and peers aspired to occupy a fantasized still point at the centre of the modernist maelstrom. The Vorticists translated this detached perspective into the icy aesthetic of their experimental prose and works of geometric abstraction. McLuhan, who became Lewis's protégé during his early teaching appointment at Saint Louis University, is likewise central to this formation. As Elena Lamberti, Donald Theall, Glenn Willmott, and others have argued, Lewis was an enduring inspiration for McLuhan.⁸ However, Richard Cavell and Janine Marchessault have convincingly argued that McLuhan's mature writings increasingly distanced themselves from the stasis of the British artist-author's "spatial" philosophy, as the Canadian media analyst embraced a more dynamic conception of "spacetime," informed by the time-based thought of Bergson, among others.⁹

Lewis was certainly known to Brooker as well, making his first appearance in a 1927 talk on William Blake delivered by the artist-advertiser at the University of Toronto's Hart House that appropriated elements of Lewis's monumental work of cultural critique *Time and Western Man*, published the same year.¹⁰ Betts's likening of Brooker's multidisciplinary production to Lewis's "vortex of art, media, and advertising" is not unfounded.¹¹ But where Lewis presented advertising and Couéism in *Time and Western Man* as symptoms of a Bergson-mad modernity,¹² Brooker's contemporaneous advertising writings yoked Bergson and Coué to a participatory renovation of print media, then newly in competition with radio, that anticipates McLuhan's discourse on the "organic" and "involving" qualities of electronic media almost four decades later.¹³

At stake in the contested status of Vorticist influence on Brooker, then, is a longer trajectory of Canadian art and theory that includes the globally influential analyses of McLuhan. I have argued elsewhere that "Vorticism remains a largely unexplored influence on the development of abstraction in Canada and, in particular, on the evolution of Brooker's practice."¹⁴ But I followed Richard Lofthouse and other historians of Vorticism in identifying residual Bergsonian and vitalist currents in the later production of Lewis and colleagues, despite their official disavowals of the French thinker.¹⁵ Carole Luff had earlier suggested a possible Vorticist influence on Brooker, but cautioned that a fully-fledged Vorticist aesthetic only appeared following Brooker's 1910–11 trip to England.¹⁶ In suggesting a proto-Vorticist source for Brooker's abstractions in the Bergson-inspired experiments of British artists and writers grouped around the little magazine edited by John Middleton

Murry, *Rhythm* (some of whom later joined the Vorticists' ranks), I proposed a more plausible foundation for Brooker's oeuvre. Rather than the follower of Lewis and his anti-Bergsonian diatribes represented by Betts, it is imperative to recognize in Brooker an original thinker reading Lewis against the grain as a source of information about the very Bergsonian and Couéist theories condemned by the British artist-author. Betts's presentation of Brooker fundamentally obscures the primacy of Bergson and Coué to Brooker's foundational contributions to Canadian modernist art and theory (not to mention Lewis's own highly conflicted production, discussed below). Rather than Canadian Vorticists, Brooker and McLuhan are properly identified as participants in what I have termed a Canadian "vitalist modernism."¹⁷

Competing values of abstraction and empathy, mechanism and vitalism, which dominated cultural debates in the early decades of the twentieth century, were never cut-and-dry. Brooker and Lewis can be situated within a shared discourse network that Frederick Burwick and Paul Douglass term the "vitalist controversy," and Antliff "the politics of time": a widespread debate about changing concepts of being and time that coloured the art and thought of numerous creative figures during the period of Bergson's popularity, in and around the First World War.¹⁸ Although Brooker and Lewis occupied opposite poles in this debate, their writings and art negotiate common coordinates in a highly fraught discourse on life and its instrumentalization. From the triangulation of Brooker, Coué, and Lewis traced by the present article emerges a transatlantic discourse on advertising and the pre-Freudian unconscious with important art-theoretical implications for the study of both British and Canadian modernisms. This discussion is grounded in a comparative analysis of paintings by Brooker and Lewis dating from the heyday of these forgotten but, in retrospect, influential debates, that reveal powerful traces of Coué's articulation of the imagination as a faculty of creative self-fashioning on modernist art theory and visual culture.

Brooker and Couéism

Born in England in 1888, Brooker emigrated to western Canada with his family in 1905. A return trip to London during the 1910–11 holiday season fed his interest in the geometric stage designs of British theatre innovator Edward Gordon Craig.¹⁹ In 1912, Brooker began an unlikely stint as an author of photoplay scenarios for the Brooklyn-based Vitagraph Company of America while co-managing a movie house in Neepawa, Manitoba. But it was Brooker's subsequent experience as a journalist and graphic designer for a variety of prairie newspapers that nurtured the remarkable series of works on paper preserved today in the archives of the Robert McLaughlin Gallery in Oshawa, Ontario, discussed below.

Subconscious Selling was published in 1923 as a stand-alone volume by *Marketing and Business Management*, for which Brooker was then working as a contributing author following his move to Toronto from Winnipeg in 1921. The book's subject, Émile Coué, has secured a lasting, if dubious place in popular culture through the longevity of his mantra, "Day by day, in every way, I'm getting better and better."²⁰ The placebo effect associated with repetition of this phrase neatly digests Coué's method of induced autosuggestion, which purports to modify the unconscious mind through techniques of directed self-affirmation. Brooker's engagement with Coué identifies the French clinician's program for self-improvement with the fantasies of self-fashioning embraced by the historical avant-garde – notably Bergson's philosophy of creative evolution.²¹

Subconscious Selling adapts the presentation of Coué's ideas advanced by the psychologist's chief English-language proselytizer, C. Harry Brooks.²² For Brooks, the key feature of Couéism is its opposition of the subconscious mind, or "imagination," to the rational powers of the will:²³

Until recently the emphasis has been placed upon the controlling power of the will, upon the ability to make decisions of the 'right' kind. In other words, the emphasis has been placed upon the wrong end of the process of character-building.²⁴

Following Coué and Brooks, Brooker argued that memories accumulated in the unconscious function as just such a generative faculty of imagination: "our imagination," he wrote; "is nothing less than our whole life, fluid and enduring in the Subconscious Mind."²⁵ But where Coué developed his psychological theories for therapeutic application, Brooker seized upon the French clinician's techniques as a potential "method of changing, controlling or 'making up' the mind of prospects with regard to a given sales proposition."²⁶ Brooker's text thereby shifted the focus of Coué's system from therapeutic self-fashioning to social control. "The Subconscious is controllable," wrote Brooker; "and in what follows we hope to show how salesmen can develop and practise a method of control that will be of tremendous benefit to them."²⁷ Brooker's appropriation of Coué's theories to develop industrial techniques of persuasion thereby stands at the head of a history of applied psychology that, in the Canadian context, underwent a self-critical turn in the cultural commentary of McLuhan. For McLuhan, as earlier for the Couéist Brooker, the media operate through "hypnosis" and "subliminal awareness."²⁸

Recognizing that "the salesman's own attitude of mind, has an immense influence upon his selling effectiveness,"²⁹ Brooker's text opens by considering the implications of Coué's theories for the salesperson as well

as the potential for exploiting self-improvement for profit. My necessarily abbreviated presentation of *Subconscious Selling* is focused on (though not restricted to) the contents of these early chapters, which sketch the core tenets of Couéism. The contextual and comparative reading of Brooker's first monograph put forward here does not aim to summarize the specific techniques for reaching consumers that dominate the remaining chapters, which would be more pertinent to a history of marketing thought.

Central to Brooker's reworking of Coué is the notion that the salesman can bypass the consumer's rational powers of resistance by appealing directly to the prospect's subconscious.³⁰ Brooker adopts the terminology of Brooks, dubbing this "policy of non-resistance" the *Law of the Reversed Effort*.³¹ "In a conflict between your will and your prospect's imagination," he explains; "it will be his imagination that will win."³² Brooker's maxim is to "avoid conflict" at all costs, since reason has no bearing on the functioning of the imagination according to Coué.³³ Rather than formulating arguments addressed to the consumer's will, Brooker advocates a policy of "[v]isualiz[ing] for him the effects of the change [made by the product]."³⁴ The visual bias of this strategy echoes Coué's influential description of the visual mechanics of the imagination, in which "[e]very thought entirely filling our mind becomes true for us and tends to transform itself into action."³⁵

Brooker would return to arguments formulated in *Subconscious Selling* in columns for the leading American trade paper of the day, *Printers' Ink*, as well as for *Marketing*, which he owned and edited from 1924 to 1927.³⁶ Following the lead of other disciples of Coué such as Brooks, Brooker was soon adapting the tenets of Bergsonism to elaborate the mechanics of Coué's subconscious as "the whole fluid life of [the] prospect" preserved in memory.³⁷

In fact, a Bergsonian inflection is already legible in Brooker's rendering of the Couéist subconscious in *Subconscious Selling*. Recalling Bergson's neo-vitalist conception of memory as an embodied awareness of that which *endures*, Brooker writes in *Subconscious Selling* that, "A thought, a sensation, is a living thing. It has a life of its own. It *endures*. It becomes a part of us."³⁸ Similarly, Brooker's representation of the parallel operations of the conscious and subconscious mind as "two strata of mental activity" echoes Bergson's celebrated metaphor of the "cone" of memory in *Matter and Memory*, whose coexisting "sections" define different episodes in the psychic life of the subject.³⁹ Brooker's dualist division of mental labour – between a conscious mind directed toward the utilitarian imperatives of "action" and a subconscious characterized by a fluid accumulation of memories – mirrors the dualist structure of the Bergsonian psyche.⁴⁰

Brooker's fusion of Coué and Bergson in *Subconscious Selling* is reprised by a 1924 article, "Making Orders Flow Downhill," which explicitly appropriates Bergson's discourse on the "fluidity" of thought" in his



1 | Bertram Brooker, *The Dawn of Man*, ca. 1927, oil on canvas, 112 × 81 cm, © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada)

influential essay “Laughter,” to explain the “down-hill flowing tendency” of the subconscious.⁴¹ This text sets the stage for Brooker’s deepening engagement with Bergson of the later 1920s. He would appropriate Bergson’s reworking of Darwinian theory in *Creative Evolution* in the 1926 *Marketing* article “Are Statistics More Convincing Than Words or Pictures?” to argue that advertising is itself in a perpetual state of creative flux: “Advertising is alive! And being alive its development is in accord with those principles of ‘creative evolution’ which Bergson has postulated of all living things. It is in flux, it is in a constant state of becoming.”⁴²

Brooker’s interest in Coué offers a key to understanding some of his most important semi-abstract canvases of the 1920s. Among the earliest modernist works exhibited in Canada, these paintings have been consistently

misread as evidence of a Theosophical outlook for which Brooker's voluminous published and unpublished writings provide little basis for support.⁴³ Paintings such as *The Dawn of Man* (ca. 1927) (Fig. 1) are populated by simplified human figures situated against amorphous multicolour environments reminiscent of the fluid contours of Coué's subconscious mind. Engaged in ecstatic contemplation of their idealized surroundings, Brooker's figures personify the affirmative mentality promoted by Coué as a vehicle for creative self-fashioning. Brooker gives a complementary prose description of this visual faculty in *Subconscious Selling*: "An image, a picture, is more forceful than a thousand words. By concentrating upon the picture of energy the patient subconsciously enters into that state; the image is turned into reality in his mind."⁴⁴ The states of self-transformation represented by Brooker in *The Dawn of Man* and *Endless Dawn* bring into representation this visionary capacity of Coué's subconscious mind.

Brooker and Canadian Vorticism

What then to make of Gregory Betts's characterization of Brooker as the prototype for a "Canadian Vorticism"? Canadian Vorticism is Betts's term for the belated North American progeny of the short-lived, pre-First World War British avant-garde movement, for which Marshall McLuhan's friendship with its self-styled leader, Wyndham Lewis, acted as an improbable bridge. While the geometric abstraction of certain canvases by Brooker such as *Hope* (1929) (Fig. 2) does indeed suggest formal affinities with the angular idiom of Vorticism, it is more likely that Craig's minimal stage designs served as their primary inspiration.⁴⁵ We know Brooker to have been familiar with Lewis from at least 1927. However, he explicitly rejected the British artist-author as "cloistered and unadventurous."⁴⁶ Brooker identified, rather, with the neo-vitalist theories of Coué and Bergson, which he characterized as a "coming gospel of creative newness."⁴⁷ Brooker forcefully visualized this organicist ideology of autogenesis in works such as *The Dawn of Man* that – in contrast to the all-over abstraction typical of Vorticist canvases – subordinate geometry to the figure.

For Lewis, the 1920s fad for Couéism was symptomatic of a cultural threat that he associated with the rise of a metaphysics of flux, for which the "time-philosophy" of Bergson was synonymous.⁴⁸ Andrew Gaedtké cannily diagnoses Lewis's anxieties about changing concepts of being and time as the byproducts of a widespread "ontological crisis" triggered by the socio-technical upheavals of modernity.⁴⁹ This episode of cultural paranoia spawned forms of literary modernism resembling the features of psychosis and "psychotics' attempts to reinstall . . . failing ontological distinctions."⁵⁰ In Lewis's case, the trauma of serving as a bombardier, and later as a war artist,



2 | Bertram Brooker,
Hope, 1929, oil on canvas,
92 × 62 cm, The Robert
McLaughlin Gallery,
1994BB102. (Photo: courtesy
of The Robert McLaughlin
Gallery)

during the First World War, has conventionally been seen as precipitating a revaluation of the techno-utopianism he had embraced under the banner of Vorticism. Yet, Paul Edwards proposes a significant reconsideration of the years immediately following Lewis's wartime service, a period traditionally lumped together with the project of cultural critique that ensued as a moment of crisis and reassessment. As Edwards argues, during this transitional period, Lewis attempted to recuperate the constructivist perspective on technology of his Vorticist period to address the altered priorities of postwar society in such texts as *The Caliph's Design*. This pamphlet from 1919 envisioned a utopian city built on Vorticist principles of geometric design.⁵¹ Edwards draws

attention to the lingering “optimism and ambition of this postwar moment,”⁵² a mood also reflected in such Lewis-driven projects as the *Group x* exhibition of March 1920.

But following the resounding failure of these gambits, and a resulting loss of audience that led to Lewis’s inability to afford studio space beginning in October 1923, the former Vorticist was to launch a voracious campaign of cultural critique. His obsession with the ontological threat posed by Bergsonian philosophy and the mass media marks such writings as *Time and Western Man* as textbook illustrations of the paranoid formation mapped by Gaedtkke. Lewis’s anxieties about the potential for renewed hostilities with Germany, in particular, fuelled an irredeemable anti-Semitism and disastrous flirtation with nascent Fascist movements glossed over by Betts’s sanitized presentation of Lewis.

Beginning with a sprawling manuscript titled “The Man of the World,” Lewis set out to diagnose what he now viewed as the bankruptcy of mass culture and the corruption of liberal democracy. Broken down and reconstituted into component parts of publishable length and intelligible scope, *The Art of Being Ruled* was the first installment in a series of Lewis texts accusing parliamentary democracy of substituting an illusion of personal freedom for the reality of social transformation demanded by the pre-war avant-gardes. At the same time, Lewis indicted the postwar avant-garde as colluding with capital to market fashion as revolution.

In the sequel volume *Time and Western Man*, Lewis grounded his discussion of this condition of “permanent novelty”⁵³ in a metaphysical critique that approached the relentless cycles of fashion under capitalism as manifestations of an all-pervasive obsession with time. Lewis flatly rejected the “flux” of Bergsonian phenomenology and the stream of consciousness techniques developed by modernist peers, including James Joyce and Gertrude Stein, in an effort to capture and record the fluidity of consciousness as symptoms of this ideology of time. In its place, Lewis proposed what Reed Way Dasenbrock aptly describes as an “antitemporal and antivital view of art” founded on the stasis and clarity of an ideal vision.⁵⁴

For Lewis, the psychology of Coué was powerfully symbolic of the ontological threat posed by Bergsonian modernity. And, to be sure, Coué’s substitution of a malleable and decentered unconscious for the stable, rational ego presupposed by the idealist metaphysics endorsed by Lewis shares several features in common with Bergsonism, as early Coué commentators did not fail to note.⁵⁵ Paralleling Bergson’s central argument in *Creative Evolution*, Coué conceived of the unconscious as the product of humanity’s ongoing adaptation to its environment.⁵⁶ Likewise in common with Bergson (and anticipating later Freud), Coué argued that the disruptive agency of the unconscious leaves traces in behaviour and physiological functioning. Such

covert agency is in sharp contrast to the self-present and transparent “mind” of the classical metaphysical tradition defended by Lewis. Equally consistent with the tenets of Bergsonism, but in tension with the mature Freud, Coué believed that the unconscious was susceptible to self-directed modification.⁵⁷ In Coué’s writings, this capacity for creative evolution figures as a form of suggestion resembling the hypnotism practiced by Ambroise-Auguste Liébeault and Hippolyte Bernheim,⁵⁸ with whom he had trained while working as a pharmacist at Troyes. The residual hypnotic elements of Coué’s method of autosuggestion identify his psychology as an artifact of proto-Freudian theorizations of the unconscious.⁵⁹

In *Time and Western Man*, Lewis blasts Coué for nothing less than furnishing the psychological foundations of modern advertising – a topic that Coué’s published writings, and those of his disciple Brooks, in fact never discuss.

In the world of the Advertisement, Coué-fashion, everything that happens today (or everything that is being advertised *here and now*) is better, bigger, brighter, more astonishing than anything that has ever existed before. (Dr. Coué actually was embarked upon his teaching, so he said, by noticing, and responding to, an advertisement.)⁶⁰

In particular, Lewis attacks the cultural impact of Coué’s tactics of subliminal suggestion, which Lewis summarizes with typical concision as, “What you can make people believe to be true, is true.”⁶¹ However, the causal link between Couéism and the techniques of commerce posited by Lewis remains, characteristically, ungrounded in a discussion of the socio-economic conditions of emergence that would lend his analyses historical specificity.

In light of this gap, Brooker’s application of Coué and Bergson to practical problems in marketing constitutes something of a missing link between the cultural and metaphysical polemic of *Time and Western Man* and concurrent developments in industrial psychology. It is not implausible that *Subconscious Selling* – whose only known copy is now in the collection of the British Library – may have informed Lewis’s speculations on Couéism and advertising in *Time and Western Man*. Whether sparked by Brooker’s text or not, I want to argue that this gap in Lewis’s argumentation registers an internal inconsistency in the British artist-author’s approach to Coué that reveals deeper fault lines in his critique of visual culture and time-philosophy as a whole. Namely, there are disavowed affinities between the artist-author’s professed idealism and Coué’s likening of the unconscious to the traditional faculty of “imagination.”⁶² If, for Lewis, “people are only ‘walking ideas,’” similarly, for Coué, “[e]very thought entirely filling our mind

becomes true for us and tends to transform itself into action.”⁶³ (Likewise, Brooker writes in *Subconscious Selling* that, “Every thought which entirely fills the mind becomes true for us and tends to transform itself into action.”)⁶⁴ These affinities between the crypto-Bergsonian idealism of Lewis and the unconscious faculty of imagination described by Coué offer insights into the ambivalent status of advertising in the British artist-author’s theory of art and vision, and its implications for Canadian modernism.

Consistent with the logic of disavowal undergirding Lewis’s relationship to Coué, Paul Edwards observes submerged continuities between Lewis’s mature art and thought and the strategic dualism of Bergson’s philosophy, notwithstanding his manifest repudiation of the French thinker in *Time and Western Man*. Edwards argues convincingly that, “Lewis becomes in 1913 a more Bergsonian artist, though of a peculiarly perverse and rebellious kind.”⁶⁵ Rather than an outright rejection of Bergson, Edwards’s nuanced re-assessment encourages a view of Lewis’s anti-Bergsonian rhetoric as belying a subterranean Bergsonism that affirms all the negative values in the French thinker’s celebrated series of dualisms (“matter and memory, perception and recollection, objective and subjective”).⁶⁶ This covert Bergsonism turns the vitalist ideology of avant-garde fellow travellers inside out in a calculated maneuver consistent with Bergson’s influential formulation of the comic in his essay “Laughter.”⁶⁷ Lewis seizes on the logic of inversion proposed by that text to develop his satirical aesthetic of “the eye.”⁶⁸ The result is a comic “de-organicization” of Bergson’s phenomenology of intuition that, also influenced by Bishop Berkeley’s theory of vision, substitutes the coarse realism of external appearances for the inner experience of temporality valorized by the French thinker and his followers.⁶⁹

Ironically, it is also possible to draw parallels between Lewis’s optical alternative to Bergsonian flux, outlined in the concluding chapters of *Time and Western Man*, and the subconscious as a faculty of imagination elaborated by Coué (and Brooker). On a surface reading, Lewis’s program amounts to a near restatement of Aristotelian “common sense” anticipating the neo-Thomism of McLuhan.⁷⁰ Lewis views art, and especially the visionary imagination of the artist, as offering a “bridge to the transcendent”:⁷¹

To at once be perfectly concrete, we can assert that a God that swam in such an atmosphere as is produced in the music of a Bach fugue, or the stormy grandeur of the genii in the Sistine Ceiling, or the Judgment of Signorelli at Orvieto, who moved with the grace of Mozart – anyone may for himself accumulate such comparisons from the greatest forms of art – such a God would be the highest we could imagine.⁷²

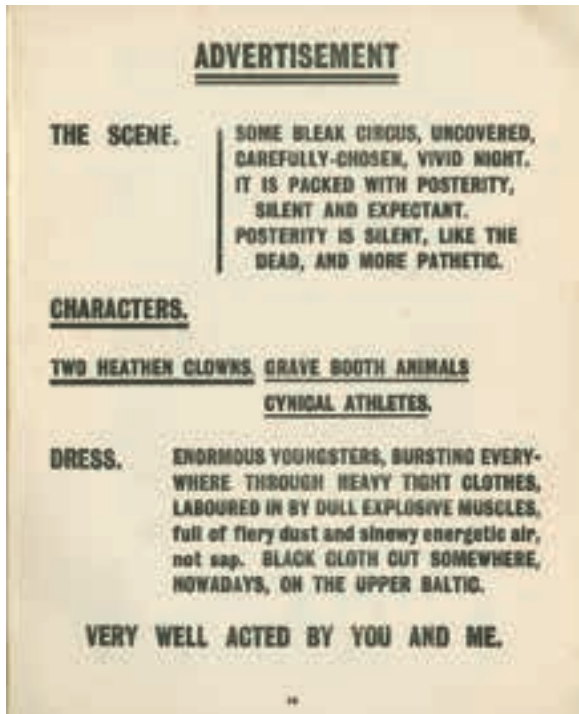
Yet the semi-divine powers which Lewis ascribes to the artist's imagination, as well as his belief that ideology is a product of ideation rather than material conditions or power relations,⁷³ also suggests striking parallels with Coué's representation of the subconscious, in which "[e]very thought entirely filling our mind becomes true for us and tends to transform itself into action."⁷⁴ If Edwards points to the hard-won, and always ephemeral unities of Berkeleyan perception as the basis for the virtuosic phantasmagoria of Lewis's 1928 novel *The Childermass*,⁷⁵ whose otherworldly protagonists are represented as embodied "ideas" struggling to achieve an elusive ideal ego, it is equally possible to read this text as satirizing the visual operations of the Couéist imagination and its placebo effects.

Although Lewis is quick to condemn Coué in *Time and Western Man*, as we have seen vis-à-vis the artist-author's ambivalent relationship to Bergson, the possibility of a disavowed influence should not be discounted out of hand. The encounter with Coué helps to explain the importance of "vision" within Lewis's theory of art and the metaphysics of *Time and Western Man* – for which the philosophy of Bergson, even when read against the grain, does not supply a key, given its emphasis on a dematerialized "intuition" that evades conventional visual paradigms.⁷⁶

Legacies of the Pre-war Avant-garde

The anxieties of influence informing Lewis's conflicted polemic were certainly not confined to his relationship to Bergson. In the words of Reed Way Dasenbrock, "[t]he critiques of Vorticism . . . are often most intense when they seek to conceal an indebtedness."⁷⁷ The commercial swagger of Lewis's Vorticist little magazine *Blast* similarly complicates the derisory tone of his subsequent comments on advertising in *Time and Western Man*, as several commentators have noted.⁷⁸

Recent decades have seen a widespread reassessment of Lewis's conflicted relationship to advertising and other media of mass communication, notably cinema.⁷⁹ With its eye-catching appropriation of the aesthetics and rhetoric of commerce, the short-lived journal *Blast* is central to this growing area of study.⁸⁰ Not only does *Blast* recall the strategies of advertising in its "poster-like" layout, attention-grabbing typeface and tactical deployment of "sensational language," its centerpiece – Lewis's telegraphic play, "Enemy of the Stars" – is brazenly styled an "ADVERTISEMENT" (Fig. 3).⁸¹ How do we situate this artifact of the pre-war avant-garde's embrace of visual culture in relation to the subsequent pessimism of *Time and Western Man* and other Lewis texts from the later 1920s? As Rod Rosenquist cautions, "[t]he two Lewises are difficult to reconcile."⁸² *Blast*'s conflicted attitude toward advertising anticipates the deeply divided argumentation of Lewis's



3 | From Wyndham Lewis, “Enemy of the Stars,” text published in *BLAST* I, 1914, © Wyndham Lewis and the estate of Mrs G.A. Wyndham Lewis by kind permission of the Wyndham Lewis Memorial Trust (a registered charity) and Bridgeman Images. (Photo: courtesy York University Libraries)

subsequent works of cultural criticism. A similarly ambivalent appropriation of advertising conventions is brought into representation by the earliest surviving visual art by Brooker.

In a groundbreaking 1989 paper on the idiosyncratic sources of Brooker’s discrepant abstraction, Joyce Zemans advanced the compelling hypothesis that some of these early works on paper may be imaginative reinterpretations of works exhibited at the 1913 Chicago presentation of the Armory Show, including Brancusi’s *Mlle Pogany* (1912) and Duchamp’s *Nude Descending a Staircase* (1912). The future artist-advertiser could have encountered these artworks in reproduction through his coeval work as a journalist for various prairie newspapers.⁸³ Strengthening this possibility is the fact that several of Brooker’s studies explicitly satirize their modernist prototypes in a fashion reminiscent of contemporary newspaper cartoons lampooning the excesses of modern art. A similar tension between emulation and critique animates a series of drawings, likely executed somewhat later (though probably before Brooker’s move to Winnipeg in 1915) (Fig. 4),⁸⁴ which appropriate a combination of commercial trademarks and artists’ names (the latter of which are presciently treated as corporate brands), reworking these into dense patterns resembling the proto-Pop collage aesthetic of the American cubist Stuart Davis.

These early works on paper communicate an optimism about the potential for advertising to function as a conduit for the dissemination of



4 | Bertram Brooker, *The Romance of Trade Marks*, ca. 1912–1915, ink on paper, 22 × 28 cm, The Robert McLaughlin Gallery. (Photo: courtesy of The Robert McLaughlin Gallery)

modernist aesthetics and ideals consistent with the rhetoric of a remarkable manifesto penned contemporaneously by Brooker, “Cosmic Patriotism.” In that text, the artist-advertiser prophesized a coming society regulated by commercial values. “Commercialism is here,” Brooker declared; “and Commercialism stands for construction.”⁸⁵ Betts proposes that this text “responds to the politics and popular aesthetics he found in England” during his 1910–11 visit.⁸⁶ I have noted that *Blast* bears the imprint of Bell & Cockburn, the Toronto agent of John Lane, suggesting that the little magazine may also have been available for purchase in Canada.⁸⁷ Whether or not they were inspired by *Blast*, Brooker’s early experiments engage in an analogous fusion of commercial and modernist genres that lends credence to Keith Tuma’s hypothesis of a general trend among the pre-war avant-gardes toward embracing popular forms.⁸⁸

These parallels between the Canadian and British artists re-emerges with altered meanings amidst Lewis’s critique of Coué in the 1920s, discussed above. Catherine Mastin was the first to observe a family resemblance between later examples of Lewis’s “creation myth” series, executed during his Canadian sojourn in the Second World War, and Brooker’s earlier



5 | Bertram Brooker, *Creation*, ca. 1927, oil on board, 61 × 43 cm, private collection.
(Photo: Consignor Canadian Fine Art)

canvas *Creation* (ca. 1927),⁸⁹ a work dating from the same period as the early figurative pieces introduced above, and visualizing the same thematic of Couéist ontogenesis (Fig. 5). Brooker's *Creation* depicts a sun-drenched globe immersed in a stylized cosmic wave evocative of the Bergsonian "rhythmic biomorphic energy and flow" that Zemans reads into the abstracted landscape of the contemporaneous *Green Movement* (ca. 1927).⁹⁰ The foregoing discussion suggests several plausible motivations for resituating Brooker's and Lewis's creation-themed paintings within a shared discourse on the Couéist imagination as an agency of self-fashioning. Where Edwards has difficulty placing Lewis's remarkable visual output of the later 1920s – while nonetheless proposing a laudably sophisticated reading of its "visual punning" as a witty play on Bergsonian dualisms⁹¹ – we can now connect the themes of imaginative ontogenesis represented by the creation myths, which culminate in the remarkable panel *Bagdad* (1927–1928) (Fig. 6), with the more "optimistic" outlook of Lewis's *The Caliph's Design* and other products of the misunderstood period of 1919 to 1923. These later works extend *Blast*'s earlier appropriation of the conventions of popular culture to re-imagine an aesthetically-motivated reconstruction of postwar society. Edwards reads *Bagdad* as a late representation of the "'Vorticist' Bagdad that Lewis had envisaged as replacing London" in *The Caliph's Design*.⁹² If we accept a Couéist interpretation of the metamorphic pile of architectural forms depicted by Lewis in this oil-on-board as constituting a virtual repository of "ideas" homologous with the structure of the Couéist subconscious (or the strata of the Bergsonian "cone" of memory with which Brooker conflates it), it becomes possible to locate *The Caliph's Design* and the creation myths within a fraught continuum of advertising-inflected representations – both satiric and strategic – of the Bergsonian and Couéist imaginary, connecting Lewis's projects from *Blast* to *Bagdad* and beyond.

Evidence has recently emerged of direct contact between Brooker and Lewis during the latter's self-exile in Toronto during the Second World War.⁹³ They are also known to have shared several acquaintances in common, including University of Toronto faculty member and amateur artist Barker Fairley (1887–1986).⁹⁴ It is plausible to identify a veiled portrait of Brooker in the figure of Charles Brooks, the "Proust-drunken parlour-treader" who serves as the protagonist's delusional guide to the human "marvels" of the bush city of Momaco in Lewis's thinly-veiled account of his time in Canada, *Self Condemned*.⁹⁵

Conclusion

This preliminary discussion of *Subconscious Selling* has complicated Gregory Betts's characterization of Brooker as a Canadian Vorticist, while historicizing



6 | Wyndham Lewis,
Bagdad, 1927–1928, oil
on wood, 183 × 79 cm,
Tate Gallery, London.
© Wyndham Lewis and
the estate of Mrs G.A.
Wyndham Lewis by
kind permission of the
Wyndham Lewis Memorial
Trust (a registered charity)
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(Photo: © Tate, London
2016)

Lewis's idealist critique of advertising as an instrument of mass hypnosis and a vehicle of Bergsonian time-philosophy. But despite questioning the appropriateness of the Vorticist label for the Bergsonian and Couéist Brooker, this paper has nonetheless situated Lewis and the Canadian abstractionist within a common discourse on the imagination defined by competing, but

in many ways complementary, claims about being, time, and the crises of modernity. Advertising and the affirmative psychology of Coué are key sites in this formation that Brooker's *Subconscious Selling* brings into view for the first time. Highlighting the Bergsonian inflection of Brooker's presentation of Coué has both strengthened the case for a Bergsonian orientation to Brooker's visual art and for situating it within a broader narrative of Canadian vitalist modernism culminating in the thought of Marshall McLuhan.

NOTES

- 1 I located the only known copy of *Subconscious Selling* in early 2010, subsequently obtaining a photocopy from the British Library in August 2012. I first reported the discovery in 2014. See Adam LAUDER, "Bertram Brooker's Practice-based Advertising Theory," 2015. Assessed 7 June 2016, http://www.media.mcgill.ca/sites/media.mcgill.ca/files/Media_at_McGill_2015_Prize.pdf.
- 2 See Gregory BETTS, ed., "Introduction," in *The Wrong World: Selected Stories & Essays of Bertram Brooker* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2009); Glenn WILLMOTT, ed., "Introduction," in *Think of the Earth* (Toronto: Brown Bear, 2000).
- 3 Richard SURREY [Bertram Brooker], *Subconscious Selling: An Application of Autosuggestion to the Problems of Salesmanship* (Toronto: Marketing Publishers, 1923).
- 4 Adi EFAL, "Art History, Less Its Conditions of Possibility: Following Bergson's 'Le Possible et le réel,'" in *Bergson and the Art of Immanence: Painting, Photography, Film*, ed. John Mullarkey and Charlotte de Mille (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 47. Brooker claims that Coué's "Subconscious Mind or Imagination . . . is indeed secret and beyond the probe of analysis." SURREY, *Subconscious Selling*, 2.
- 5 See Kenneth R. ALLAN, "Marshall McLuhan and the Counterenvironment: 'The Medium is the Massage,'" *Art Journal* 73:4 (2014): 22–45; Stephen CROCKER, *Bergson and the Metaphysics of Media* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Michael DARROCH and Janine MARCHESSAULT, "Anonymous History as Methodology: The Collaborations of Siegfried Gideon, Jaqueline Tyrwhitt and the Explorations Group, 1953–1955," in *Place Studies in Art, Media, Science and Technology: Historical Investigations on the Sites and Migration of Knowledge*, ed. A. Broeckmann and G. Nadarajan (Weimar: Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 2009), 9–27; Anna HUDSON, "Time and Image: Picturing Consciousness in Modern Canadian Painting," in *A Vital Force: The Canadian Group of Painters*, ed. Alicia Boutilier (Kingston, ON: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 2013), 55–68.
- 6 Gilles DELEUZE, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 115. See also Paul ARDOIN, S.E. GONTARSKI, and Laci MATTISON, eds., *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism* (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2013); John MULLARKEY and Charlotte DE MILLE, eds., *Bergson and the Art of Immanence: Painting, Photography, Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).
- 7 See Gregory BETTS, *Avant-garde Canadian Literature: The Early Manifestations* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 215–17.

- 8 See Elena LAMBERTI, *Marshall McLuhan's Mosaic: Probing the Literary Origins of Media Studies* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2012); Donald THEALL, *The Medium is the Rear View Mirror: Understanding McLuhan* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1971); Glenn WILLMOTT, *McLuhan, or Modernism in Reverse* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).
- 9 See Richard CAVELL, *McLuhan in Space: A Cultural Geography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Janine MARCHESSAULT, *Marshall McLuhan: Cosmic Media* (London: Sage, 2005).
- 10 Bertram BROOKER, "Blake," 1927, box 10, file 13, Brooker papers, University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections, Winnipeg.
- 11 BETTS, *Avant-garde Canadian Literature*, 217.
- 12 Chapter Two of *Time and Western Man*, "The Principle of Advertisement and Its Relation to Romance," condemns advertising as the prototypical artifact of the "romantic mind" of commodity culture, which Lewis alleges to be generating a new and distorting relationship to time. This emphasis on advertising is surprising, not only given that Lewis was writing four decades prior to the emergence of cultural studies as an academic discipline, but also considering the uncompromisingly elitist profile of the modernist literature, metaphysics, and theoretical science that dominates his analysis. In treating advertising as a serious object of study, Lewis certainly shows himself to be the "proto-media critic" portrayed by Andrew Gaedtke. Wyndham LEWIS, *Time and Western Man*, ed. Paul Edwards (Santa Rosa, CA: Black Sparrow Press, 1993), 11; Andrew GAEDTKE, "The Machinery of Madness: Psychosis, Technology, and Modernist Narrative," PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2009, 69.
- 13 See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York and Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1964). See also BETTS, "'The Destroyer': Modernism and Mystical Revolution in Bertram Brooker," PhD thesis, York University, 2005, 118.
- 14 Adam LAUDER, "Marketing Subjects: Bertram Brooker and the Vitalist Construction of Consumer Subjectivity," MA thesis, University of Toronto, 2006, 89. Betts's 2005 dissertation on Brooker makes only passing references to Lewis and to Vorticism. See Gregory BETTS, "'The Destroyer.'" Betts's dissertation instead advocates a mystical reading of Brooker. In an unpublished 2004 paper included in Betts's bibliography, Lauder had earlier argued that, "Perhaps future study will elucidate the full extent of Brooker's knowledge of *Rhythm*, and the artists later associated with Vorticism in particular, thereby shedding new light on the 'futurist' aesthetic of Brooker's abstractions, first noted by Reid in his *Concise History of Canadian Painting*." Adam LAUDER, "Brooker and Bergsonism," unpublished paper (2004), 32. See also BETTS, "'The Destroyer,'" 343. Paul Douglass discusses Murry's "enthusiasm-followed-by-renunciation of Bergson." See Paul DOUGLASS, "Bergson, Vitalism, and Modernist Literature," in *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism*, ed. Paul Ardoin, S.E. Gontarski, and Laci Mattison (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 113.
- 15 See LAUDER, "Marketing Subjects," 93. Lofthouse writes that, "There was of course much vitalism in Vorticism as well." Richard LOFTHOUSE, *Vitalism in Modern Art* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 2005), 250. Charlotte de Mille has recently revisited this interpretation. See Charlotte DE MILLE, "'Blast . . . Bergson?' Wyndham Lewis's 'Guilty Fire of Friction,'" in *Understanding Bergson*.

- 16 See Carole Frances LUFF, "Progress Passing through the Spirit: The Modernist Vision of Bertram Brooker and Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald as Redemptive Art," MA thesis, Carleton University, 1991, 38.
- 17 Adam LAUDER, "It's Alive! Bertram Brooker and Vitalism," in *The Logic of Nature, The Romance of Space*, ed. Cassandra Getty (Oshawa, ON: Robert McLaughlin Gallery and Windsor, ON: Art Gallery of Windsor, 2010), 95.
- 18 See Mark ANTLIFF, *Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Frederick BURWICK and Paul DOUGLASS, eds., *The Crisis in Modernism: Bergson and the Vitalist Controversy* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- 19 See Joyce ZEMANS, "First Fruits: The World and Spirit Paintings," *Provincial Essays* 7 (1989): 19.
- 20 C. Harry BROOKS, *The Practice of Autosuggestion by the Method of Emile Coué* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1922), 28.
- 21 See Hal FOSTER, *Prosthetic Gods* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004).
- 22 See SURREY, *Subconscious Selling*, 20.
- 23 "[Coué] uses the word 'imagination' to epitomize the force of the Subconscious." Ibid., 7.
- 24 Ibid., 45.
- 25 Ibid., 10.
- 26 Ibid., v.
- 27 Ibid., 3.
- 28 McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 32, 46.
- 29 SURREY, *Subconscious Selling*, v–vi.
- 30 "[T]he salesman's own attitude of mind has an immense influence upon his selling effectiveness." Ibid.
- 31 See BROOKS, *The Practice of Autosuggestion*, 65, and SURREY, *Subconscious Selling*, 23, 36, 83.
- 32 "The best method, as we have seen throughout this book, is to forestall, as far as possible, the existence of an obstacle." SURREY, *Subconscious Selling*, 96.
- 33 Ibid., 87.
- 34 Ibid., 89–90.
- 35 Émile COUÉ, *Self Mastery through Conscious Autosuggestion* (New York: American Library Service, 1922), 15.
- 36 See, for instance, Richard SURREY [Bertram Brooker], "Effortless Selling," *Marketing* 19:4 (1923): 120–22.
- 37 SURREY, *Subconscious Selling*, 113. In an important passage, Brooks appropriates the argot of Bergson's neo-vitalism to describe the unconscious: "From a preoccupation with the conscious [science] has turned to the Unconscious (or subconscious), to the vast area of mental activity outside the circle of awareness. In doing so it has grasped at the very roots of life itself, has groped down to the depths where the 'life-force,' the élan vital, touches our individual being." BROOKS, *The Practice of Autosuggestion*, 45. Similarly, Brooker writes in *Subconscious Selling* that, "All his life is [in the Subconscious], all his memories, his impressions, his loves, his hates, all that he has done and said and thought and seen. These memories of what he has been are not shut up in tiny cells – as we have been taught to think – tiny cells whose doors open

- only when a conscious train of thought demands admission. These memories, this life that has been peculiarly his, exists in a living fluid state below consciousness.” SURREY, *Subconscious Selling*, 4–5.
- 38 SURREY, *Subconscious Selling*, 11, emphasis added.
- 39 Ibid., 6; Henri BERGSON, *Matter and Memory*, trans. N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer (1908; repr., New York: Zone Books, 1988), 162.
- 40 “It is in this Subconscious area that we really *live*! We emerge from it only when we wish to *act*. In comparison with this reservoir of power the function of the Conscious Mind seems extremely insignificant. Its task is to select from the crude, fluid energy of the Subconscious whatever is needed at any given moment to provide the springs of action.” SURREY, *Subconscious Selling*, 5–6. This passage from *Subconscious Selling* is strikingly similar to Bergson’s representation of the brain in *Matter and Memory* as a “centre of action” facilitating the body’s “selection” among possible movements. BERGSON, *Matter and Memory*, 20, 30. Bergson describes his philosophy, suspended as it is between the “utilitarian” orientation of the body and the spiritual activity of memory, as “frankly dualistic.” BERGSON, *Matter and Memory*, 9.
- 41 Richard SURREY [Bertram Brooker], “Making Orders Flow Downhill,” *Printers’ Ink* 126:8 (1924): 3. Compare this language with Brooker’s earlier discussion of Coué in *Subconscious Selling*: “[The consumer’s] fluid subconsciousness has a tendency to flow down hill, to flow in certain channels.” SURREY, *Subconscious Selling*, 123.
- 42 Richard SURREY [Bertram Brooker], “Are Statistics More Convincing Than Words or Pictures?” *Printers’ Ink* 134:1 (January 7, 1926): 115.
- 43 See BETTS, “‘The Destroyer’”; Ann DAVIS, *The Logic of Ecstasy: Canadian Mystical Painting 1920–1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); Dennis REID, *Bertram Brooker* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1973). Zemans was the first to challenge this narrative of Theosophical affinity, arguing that, “Brooker’s approach to modernism, to the interrelatedness of the arts, to nationalism in art, and to Theosophy, differed radically from those of his colleagues. Brooker felt no need for Theosophy or any other formal movement.” See ZEMANS, “First Fruits,” 17, 21. Similarly, Carole Luff writes that, “Brooker did not espouse Theosophy as a belief system.” LUFF, “Progress Passing through the Spirit,” 10.
- 44 SURREY, *Subconscious Selling*, 119.
- 45 ZEMANS, “First Fruits,” 19.
- 46 Bertram BROOKER, “Prophets Wanted,” *The Adelphi* 2:3 (1931): 193.
- 47 Ibid., 192.
- 48 LEWIS, *Time and Western Man*, xiv.
- 49 GAEDTKE, “The Machinery of Madness,” 17.
- 50 Ibid., 5.
- 51 Wyndham LEWIS, *The Caliph’s Design*, ed. Paul Edwards (1919; repr., Santa Barbara, CA: Black Sparrow Press, 1986).
- 52 Paul EDWARDS, *Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 218.
- 53 LEWIS, *Time and Western Man*, 123.
- 54 Reed Way DASENBROCK, *The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound & Wyndham Lewis: Towards the Condition of Painting* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 52.

- 55 See, for instance, Charles BAUDOUIN, *Suggestion and Autosuggestion: A Psychological and Pedagogical Study Based upon the Investigations made by the New Nancy School*, trans. Eden Paul and Cedar Paul (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1920).
- 56 “Derived from the Unconscious during the process of evolution, the conscious is, as it were, the antechamber where the crude energies of the Unconscious are selected and adapted for action on the world outside us.” BROOKS, *The Practice of Autosuggestion*, 51. See also Henri BERGSON, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (1911; repr., Mineola, NY: Dover, 1998).
- 57 “The imagination can be directed.” COUÉ, *Self Mastery*, 14.
- 58 “[A]utosuggestion is nothing but hypnotism as I see it, and I would define it in these simple words: *The influence of the imagination upon the moral and physical being of mankind.*” Ibid., 12; emphasis in the original.
- 59 After experimenting with clinical applications of hypnotherapy early in his career, Freud abandoned hypnosis in favour of psychoanalytic methods. See Lilian R. FURST, *Before Freud: Hysteria and Hypnosis in Later Nineteenth-Century Psychiatric Cases* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2008); Andreas MAYER, *Sites of the Unconscious: Hypnosis and the Emergence of the Psychoanalytic Setting* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013).
- 60 LEWIS, *Time and Western Man*, 12.
- 61 Ibid., 11.
- 62 COUÉ, *Self Mastery*, 7.
- 63 Wyndham LEWIS, *The Art of Being Ruled* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1926), 8; *ibid.*, 15.
- 64 SURREY, *Subconscious Selling*, 30.
- 65 Paul EDWARDS, “Wyndham Lewis’s Vorticism: A Strange Synthesis,” in *The Vorticists: Manifesto for a Modern World*, ed. Mark Antliff and Vivien Greene (London: Tate, 2010), 39.
- 66 DELEUZE, *Bergsonism*, 53.
- 67 See Henri BERGSON, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, trans. Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell (Copenhagen and Los Angeles: Green Integer, 1999).
- 68 LEWIS, *Time and Western Man*, 134.
- 69 DASENBROCK, *The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound & Wyndham Lewis*, 53. See also Branka ARSIĆ, *The Passive Eye: Gaze and Subjectivity in Berkeley (via Beckett)* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).
- 70 EDWARDS, *Wyndham Lewis*, 311.
- 71 Ibid., 312.
- 72 LEWIS, *Time and Western Man*, 370.
- 73 See Fredric JAMESON, *Fables of Aggression* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979), 17, 129.
- 74 COUÉ, *Self Mastery*, 15.
- 75 See Wyndham LEWIS, *The Childermass. Pt. 1* (New York: Covici, Friede, 1928).
- 76 See Craig Lundy’s discussion of Bergson’s metaphor of “melody” as “one of his earliest, and perhaps most compelling, illustrations of duration.” Craig LUNDY, “Bergson, History and Ontology,” in *Bergson and the Art of Immanence: Painting, Photography, Film*, ed. John Mullarkey and Catherine de Mille (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 24. See also John MULLARKEY, “‘For We Will Have Shown it Nothing’: Bergson as Non-Philosopher (of) Art,” in *Bergson and the Art of Immanence*:

- Painting, Photography, Film*, ed. John Mullarkey and Catherine de Mille (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).
- 77 DASENBROCK, *The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound & Wyndham Lewis*, 29.
- 78 See, for instance, Mark S. MORRISON, *Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception, 1905–1920* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001).
- 79 See Roger B. HENKLE, “The ‘Advertised’ Self: Wyndham Lewis’ Satire,” *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 13:1 (1979): 95–108; Scott W. KLEIN, “Modern Times against Western Man: Wyndham Lewis, Charlie Chaplin and Cinema,” in *Wyndham Lewis and the Cultures of Modernity*, ed. Andrzej Gąsiorek, Alice Reeve-Tucker, and Nathan Waddell (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011); Douglas MAO, *Solid Objects: Modernism and the Test of Production* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Alan MUNTUN, “From Charlie Chaplin to Bill Haley: Popular Culture and Ideology in Wyndham Lewis,” in *Wyndham Lewis The Radical: Essays on Literature and Modernity*, ed. Carmelo Cunchillos Jaime (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007); Anthony PARASKEVA, “Wyndham Lewis vs Charlie Chaplin,” *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 43:3 (2007): 223–34; Mark PERRINO, “Marketing Insults: Wyndham Lewis and the Arthur Press,” *Twentieth Century Literature* 41:1 (1995): 54–80; Charles SUMNER, “Wyndham Lewis’s Theory of Mass Culture,” *The Space Between* 3:1 (2007): 29–45.
- 80 See, for instance, Julian MURPHET, *Multimedia Modernism: Literature and the Anglo-American Avant-Garde* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- 81 Hugh KENNER, *Wyndham Lewis* (Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1954), 17; Wyndham LEWIS, “Enemy of the Stars,” *Blast* 1 (1914): 55; Paige REYNOLDS, “‘Chaos Invading Concept’: Blast as Native Theory of Promotional Culture,” *Twentieth Century Literature* 46:2 (2000): 240.
- 82 Rod ROSENQUIST, *Modernism, the Market and the Institution of the New* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 34.
- 83 “Brooker’s daughter notes that he regularly read the Chicago papers.” ZEMANS, “First Fruits,” 33n9.
- 84 Zemans observes that the drawings are executed on Neepawa Bond paper. Ibid., 18.
- 85 Bertram BROOKER, “The Decay of Art,” ca. 1912–15, box 8, folder 2, Brooker papers, University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections.
- 86 BETTS, “Introduction,” xiv.
- 87 LAUDER, “It’s Alive!,” 102n35.
- 88 Keith TUMA, “Wyndham Lewis, *Blast*, and Popular Culture,” *ELH* 54:2 (1987): 403.
- 89 Catherine M. MASTIN, “‘The Talented Intruder,’” in *The Talented Intruder: Wyndham Lewis in Canada, 1939–1945*, ed. Robert Stacey (Windsor, ON: Art Gallery of Windsor, 1992), 59.
- 90 ZEMANS, “First Fruits,” 30.
- 91 EDWARDS, *Wyndham Lewis*, 369.
- 92 Ibid., 379.
- 93 “To Bertram Brooker from Wyndham Lewis Sept 14/1939.” Wyndham LEWIS, *The Enemy: A Review of Art and Literature* 2 (London: Arthur Press, 1927): 1. Brooker’s presentation copy, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Toronto.
- 94 MASTIN, “‘The Talented Intruder,’” 28.
- 95 Wyndham LEWIS, *Self Condemned* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1954), 221. “Charles Brooks” could be a conflation of Brooker and C. Harry Brooks, Coué’s English polemicist.

Le subconscient au service de la vente : Bertram Brooker et la culture visuelle de la méthode Coué

ADAM LAUDER

La psychologie d'Émile Coué (1857–1926) et l'influence de sa description de l'inconscient comme faculté visionnaire de l'imagination susceptible de modification rationnelle suggèrent une nouvelle approche au discours ambivalent sur la publicité et la « philosophie de l'œil » élaboré par la critique culturelle d'entre deux guerres de l'artiste multidisciplinaire canadien Wyndham Lewis (1882–1957). Une lecture attentive d'un manuel de publicité, découvert récemment, du « vorticiste canadien » né en Grande-Bretagne, Bertram Brooker (1888–1955), qui applique la méthode Coué à la résolution de problèmes pratiques de commercialisation, resitue la critique que fait Lewis de la méthode Coué et ses emprunts souterrains à cette méthode à l'intérieur de développements parallèles dans la psychologie industrielle et la culture visuelle. Cette analyse complique davantage les descriptions antérieures de la relation conflictuelle de Lewis avec la métaphysique bergsonienne du flux. Coué semble avoir offert à l'artiste-écrivain britannique un modèle de l'imagination auto-déterminante, alors même que sa compréhension décentrée de la psyché trouve une forte résonance dans l'ontologie de la multiplicité de Bergson.

La présente discussion repose sur une analyse comparative des peintures de Brooker et de Lewis depuis les belles années de ces débats, maintenant largement oubliés mais, en rétrospective, de grande importance, qui révèlent de puissantes traces du discours de Coué sur l'imagination comme moyen d'auto-détermination sur la théorie de l'art moderniste et la culture visuelle des deux côtés de l'Atlantique. Des toiles semi-abstraites de Brooker, du milieu des années 1920 – précurseurs des œuvres entièrement non objectives qu'il a exposées dans son exposition solo mémorable au Arts and Letters Club de Toronto en 1927 – révèlent à la fois des parallèles convaincants, mais aussi signifiants, et des points de tension, antérieurement sous-estimés, avec les sources et enjeux philosophiques des écrits critiques et de l'art visuel concomitants de Lewis. Par conséquent, cette étude contredit l'inclusion de Brooker dans la lignée vorticiste proposée par Gregory Betts. L'artiste se situe alternativement dans une contre-tradition de « modernisme vitaliste » canadien.

De nouvelles preuves confirment l'existence, que l'on soupçonnait depuis longtemps, de contacts personnels entre Brooker et Lewis. Brooker aurait servi de modèle au personnage de Charles Brooks dans le roman de Lewis publié en 1954, *Condamné par lui-même*, satire de son exil à Toronto pendant la guerre. Ironiquement, les premiers écrits de Brooker inspirés par la méthode Coué pourraient avoir influencé Lewis dans sa critique de la publicité et de la psycho-pop dans *Time and Western Man* – ce qui laisse supposer que Brooker et Lewis étaient engagés dans des échanges transnationaux.

À travers les sources des principaux textes originaux et d'œuvres en art visuel moins connues, la présente étude soutient que l'esthétique bergsonienne et les théories françaises du moi sont présentes depuis longtemps dans la culture artistique et visuelle canadienne anglaise. En vérité, et malgré ses vigoureuses protestations, le Lewis vorticiste (et post-vorticiste) faisait aussi partie de cette généalogie bergsonienne – quoique profondément conflictuelle. À son tour, la psychologie de l'autosuggestion de Coué émerge comme une contribution, jusqu'à maintenant sous-théorisée, à la culture positive de la modernité diffusée par la publicité (et objet d'une critique visionnaire par Lewis). En rétrospective, on peut reconnaître que l'appropriation par Brooker des spéculations de Coué sur la communication subliminale comme base de stratégies de commercialisation innovantes, ont ouvert la voie aux thèses influentes de son compatriote, l'intellectuel canadien Marshall McLuhan, sur le pouvoir hypnotique des médias sur l'ingénierie sociale.

Traduction : Élise Bonnette



Detail, Jackson Pollock, *No. 29, 1950, 1950*, black and aluminum enamel paint, expanded steel, string, beads, coloured glass and pebbles on glass, 121.9 × 182.9 cm, National Gallery of Canada, purchased 1968. Photograph used with the permission of the National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives. (Photo: NGC)

The National Gallery Lands a Jackson Pollock: A Case Study in Curatorial Agency

IAN FERGUSON

The 1960s and 1970s represented an era of expansion of the National Gallery of Canada's (NGC) permanent collection in both geographic scope and historical range. Under Director Jean Sutherland Boggs (1966–76), the NGC began collecting postwar and contemporary American art, reversing a longstanding policy formalized in 1956.¹ This turning point in the institution's history signalled Canadian culture's increasing connectedness with wider North American developments. Boggs's vision was carried out by Brydon E. Smith, the NGC's first Curator of Contemporary Art (1967–79). Boggs had brought Smith to Ottawa from the Art Gallery of Ontario, where she had hired him in 1964. While in Toronto, Smith had showed flair as a young curator and organized the first exhibition of what is now known as Pop Art by a Canadian museum titled *Dine, Oldenburg, Segal*.

Under the Boggs-Smith tandem, the NGC would build an impressive core collection of some of the most innovative, radical art being produced in the USA. One of the earliest works acquired by the NGC was Jackson Pollock's *No. 29, 1950*. It was acquired in 1968 on Smith's recommendation. It became the foundational piece on which the Gallery subsequently built its small, but significant holding of Abstract Expressionist painting and sculpture. While an important acquisition in its own right, the work thus also deserves study for the change it heralded in the shape and direction of the permanent collection.

My research on this acquisition has been inspired by the concept of Actor-Network-Theory (ANT), developed by French polymath Bruno Latour. His method examines the associations and connections between "actors," who may be people or things, such as art objects or institutions.² Of course, art historians are accustomed to the study of art objects, exhibitions, and collections viewed in the context of their creation, their innovations, and their impact within a broader visual culture. I have looked at Smith as an active mediator, creating new associations with American works and players.

Smith's interest in Pollock (1912–1956) can be traced to his graduate studies in art history at the University of Toronto in the early 1960s, following undergraduate study in science at McMaster. His most influential professor appears to have been Robert Welsh, then a junior instructor and PhD candidate from the United States, who would go on to a distinguished



1 | Thomas Reid MacDonald (1908–1978), *Portrait of Brydon E. Smith*, 1962, dimensions and location unknown. Photograph used with the permission of the National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives. (Photo: NGC)

academic career. Smith wrote a notable essay on Jackson Pollock for Welsh's course which contains a discussion of *No. 29, 1950*. In this essay, Smith argued that Pollock's painting on glass was more discordant and less rhythmical than others in the artist's oeuvre, always exposing its original undercoat on the reverse side of the glass.³ He concluded that "Pollock was a romantic painter who tended to push outward the frontier of experience toward the mystical, the unique, and the overwhelming; he accomplished this all within the intense privacy of his vision."⁴

The NGC's curatorial file and the Pollock and Krasner papers at the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, provide the background on how *No. 29, 1950* came into the NGC collection. In 1964, eight years after Pollock's death, Lee Krasner (1908–1984), Pollock's widow, consigned 144 of his paintings to the Marlborough-Gerson Gallery in New York. The asking price at that time for *No. 29, 1950* was \$60,000.⁵ The work did not sell. Two

years later, however, Krasner signed a long-term agreement with the Gallery in effect from 1966 to 1975. Under this arrangement, an updated museum price of \$75,000 was agreed upon for *No. 29, 1950*.⁶ This amount, though strikingly modest by the standards of today's art market, nonetheless represented a substantial sum for the NGC.

On what was likely his first curatorial trip to New York after his recruitment, Smith spotted the work at the Marlborough Gallery where he found it “very wonderful, very different, kind of unique.”⁷ After an inspection trip by Jean Boggs, Mervyn Ruggles (Conservation), and Smith in late June 1967, the Marlborough Gallery's Stephen Weil wrote to Smith: “I have now given a complete report to Mrs. Pollock and she seemed most pleased by the way things had gone. What a marvelous thing it would be if this very great painting finally found a permanent home in Ottawa.”⁸ Boggs validated Smith's recommendation and lined up approvals for the purchase. She had the responsibility to estimate how much the trustees and the Minister would be prepared to approve. Former NGC Director Pierre Théberge, then a curator, recalled that the amount presented real challenges.⁹ A mail-in ballot was sent to NGC trustees in July 1967, a rare opportunity in the NGC's institutional history to see a recorded vote. Boggs secured six votes in favour with one opposed and one blank.¹⁰

In her letter to Secretary of State Judy LaMarsh requesting approval for Supplementary Estimates, Boggs cited the absence of any work in the NGC's collection representing Abstract Expressionism, the reasonable price requested in light of the work's status as “one of the best documented paintings of the 20th century,” the rapidly rising art market, and the potential interest for Canadian artists.¹¹ The work's Pollock estate provenance, excellent condition, and prominence in the artist's oeuvre would all have counted with Boggs and Smith. The short film by Hans Namuth capturing the work's creation had gained it a place in the Pollock literature. At the time of purchase, the work had been cited or illustrated in eleven publications.¹² While the unusual glass support intrigued Smith, it may have raised doubts among other potential buyers seeking a more typical work or one less fragile. The use of collage materials would also have aroused Smith's interest. Smith would often prefer works that showed special features while still reflecting an artist's signature style.

The painting's exhibition history ultimately confirmed its importance. It had been shown at the Betty Parsons Gallery in 1950, a sign of Pollock's early approval. It had toured the United States with MoMA's *Modern Relief* (1951–53); been included in Dorothy Miller's celebrated *15 Americans* show (1952) at MoMA; and then shown again at MoMA in 1956.¹³ For *15 Americans*, Dorothy Miller displayed the work in an open frame in the centre of the gallery. Her

installation deliberately evoked Marcel Duchamp's *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)* (1915–23).¹⁴ Situating the work within a broader art historical narrative would also have weighed with Boggs and Smith.

Following Parliamentary approval, the NGC made the final payment in March 1968. Smith's enthusiasm permeated the NGC's press release announcing the acquisition of a "delicate, shimmering and lyrical work" in which Pollock "synthesized the unconscious energies of his mind, the muscular rhythms of his body and inert objects from his environment into harmonious forms in space."¹⁵ *Toronto Star* cultural critic Gail Dexter, conscious of the acquisition's significance, interviewed Smith and analyzed Pollock's legacy.¹⁶ The remainder of the Canadian daily press does not appear to have found the arrival of the first Pollock in Canada newsworthy. Arts publications in Canada, Britain and the United States, however, did take notice.¹⁷

Thanks to the Marlborough records in the Pollock and Krasner papers, we can compare this NGC acquisition with other important Pollock works for sale on the same occasion. This acquisition represents a rare opportunity to evaluate Smith's choice of a major work in comparison with others of broadly similar quality. In addition to *No. 29, 1950*, the Marlborough offering in 1967 included:

Pasiphae (1943) for \$120,000 and now at the Metropolitan Museum in New York;
There were Seven in Eight (1945) for \$90,000 and now at MoMA;
Totem Lesson II (1945) for \$75,000 and now at the National Gallery of Australia;
White Cockatoo No. 24A (1948) for \$100,000 and now in a private collection in California; and
Summertime (1948) for \$175,000 and now at the Tate Modern, London.¹⁸

The unique character of *No. 29, 1950*, its exhibition history, related documentation (film, photographs), and the published references all argued in its favour. Of the paintings noted above, *No. 29, 1950* has drawn the most attention from art historians, albeit in large part because of the related Namuth film. In the 1978 catalogue raisonné, only *One: Number 31, 1950* has an equally extensive bibliography. When scale is considered, however, the NGC's more modestly sized work falls short. In addition, the circumstances surrounding its creation and experimental technique on glass required a rapid execution in unfavourable conditions. No "cooling off" period occurred after

which it could be reworked as per Pollock's usual practice. Notably, however, none of the large Pollock works above ended up in museums until the 1980s. In any event, Smith seems to have wanted *No. 29, 1950* first and foremost.

The enduring interest in *No. 29, 1950* arises in large part from the awkward, but ultimately productive, collaboration between Pollock and Hans Namuth, a young German refugee and photographer. The circumstances of the filming of the work have been described at some length in Naifeh and White Smith's comprehensive biography.¹⁹ In this ten-minute colour film, Namuth and Pollock created a powerfully resonant image of an American genius performing what T.J. Clark has described as "metaphorics of masculinity . . . space, scale, action, trace, energy."²⁰ Barbara Rose argues that this film and related photographs did much to foster the idea of art as an event and the artist as a performer.²¹ The simultaneous completion of *No. 29, 1950* and of Namuth's filming of its creation on 25 November 1950 were to mark the end of two years of Pollock's most productive (and sober) period, and a turn away from his experiments in pure abstraction.

In a letter to Smith following the NGC's purchase, Namuth claimed that the idea of filming the execution of a painting on glass was his own:

I wanted to show the painter at work facing you, the onlooker, which cannot be the case if the painting is on an easel or on the floor . . . Pollock liked my idea, and we both worked it out together. He was a great carpenter and built the construction which held the glass at a sufficient height for me to lie under.²²

Lee Krasner, however, always maintained that Pollock had been inspired to paint on glass by Duchamp.²³ Smith met with Krasner at the Marlborough Gallery in May 1969 to discuss the work. While no notes have been found from that meeting, Smith did write afterwards to thank her and to express the hope that he might pursue the conversation at The Springs, Long Island, during the summer.²⁴

The accessibility of the Namuth film and photographs has given scope for many critics and scholars to write about the NGC work without necessarily travelling to Ottawa to see the original. Although the work travelled in the 1950s, the NGC has never agreed to loan it, even when requested by such prestigious institutions as MoMA (1998) and the Tate Modern (1999).²⁵ Post-1968 scholarship about the work may have diminished as a result.

Without the experience of the original, historians and critics are likely to overlook the differing visual effects on each side of *No. 29, 1950* or to underestimate its impact as a work of art in its own right.²⁶ Smith and Boggs, however, did not overlook these differences. In the NGC press release of



2 | Jackson Pollock, *No. 29, 1950*, 1950, black and aluminum enamel paint, expanded steel, string, beads, coloured glass, and pebbles on glass, 121.9 × 182.9 cm, National Gallery of Canada, purchased 1968. Photograph used with the permission of the National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives. (Photo: NGC)

19 June 1968 announcing the work's acquisition, Smith quoted from Frank O'Hara's 1959 monograph where the poet observed that *No. 29, 1950* "is the same masterpiece from opposite sites of viewing."²⁷ Jean Boggs's 1971 history of the NGC collection provided commentary about each side of the work.²⁸ More recently, German curator Jürgen Harten, who has viewed the work, underlined its multi-layered collage features.²⁹

What Smith learned from his 1969 interview with Krasner was no doubt incorporated into a lecture he gave at Carleton University on 27 January 1970.³⁰ He saw the work as a record of its own creation and an important statement about action painting. He revealed his abiding interest in science



3 | Jackson Pollock, *No. 29, 1950*. On the reverse side, the base of aluminum paint assumes prominence, tending to mask the collage materials and resulting in a more purely abstract perspective. Photograph used with the permission of the National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives. (Photo: NGC)

by reviewing the technical specifications of the materials, including the aluminum-coloured paint. He noted that on the surface of *No. 29, 1950* worked by Pollock, the very real presence of the collage materials (steel, coiled string, beads, coloured plastic, pebbles) had not been completely abstracted by the paint. The embedded objects found in the artist's studio and yard evoked the physical surroundings of the work's creation. Smith claimed that Pollock was fond of this work and would take it outdoors to observe "the landscape around his studio through his abstract creation." In a 1971 lecture to a different audience, Smith characterized the work as "energy suspended in space," effectively eliminating all background.³¹

Following his retirement, Smith returned to Pollock in a 2002 essay for the *National Gallery Review*. He structured the article to flow from Pollock's response to a question from Lee Krasner about why he began many works with figurative elements, which were only retained in varying degrees, or not at all, in the final work. Pollock's answer, "I choose to veil the imagery," became Smith's departure point.³² He reviewed the creative stages entailed in *No. 29, 1950*, noting Pollock's initial, repeated gesture of running his fingers in a circular motion over the glass "to establish its physical relationship to him." Smith noted that the work presents itself quite differently on the reverse side with silvered abstract shapes effectively "veiling" the collage material and other colours. He concluded that Pollock was comfortable using both abstraction *and* figuration, though critics of the period had attempted to establish a rigid, irreconcilable separation between the two practices.

Smith's longstanding interest in this work thus stretched over a forty-year period from his student years to post-retirement, in effect bookending his career. His observations grew more complex and layered over the years and following many hours of direct study. At no point, however, did Smith situate the work theoretically or relate Pollock to the broader art-historical or cultural context. Smith tended to eschew labels for artists, avoiding suggestion of theoretical concepts which might inhibit more open-ended interpretations, or which had not formed part of the artist's original plan. Smith's early scientific training placed primary importance on close personal observation.

The relation of *No. 29, 1950* to architecture was made by Pollock himself in a late 1950 interview with William Wright, who noticed the work in his studio. Pollock's response is worth noting: "Well that's something new for me. That's the first work I've done on glass and I find it very exciting. I think the possibilities of using painting on glass in modern architecture – in modern construction – terrific."³³ Other peers of Pollock shared an interest in architecture, in working on a large scale, and in controlling the environment where their works were displayed.

No. 29, 1950 can be linked to a chapel project which grew out of discussions in the summer of 1950 among potential Catholic patrons, including curator James Johnson Sweeney.³⁴ This group wanted to explore for the United States the concept of a modern chapel such as Matisse was then executing at Vence in the south of France.³⁵ Alfonso Ossorio, Pollock's and Krasner's wealthy friend and fellow artist, acted as a go-between and catalyst. At Ossorio's urging, Pollock became involved, but he insisted that his friend Tony Smith, an architect who also happened to be Catholic, do the design. Tony Smith's plans were still awaited when Pollock created *No. 29, 1950*. The architect recalled being questioned by Pollock about applying painting on



4 | Barnett Newman, Jackson Pollock, and Tony Smith at the Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, 1951 (printed in 1992). Photograph used with the permission of the National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives. (Photo: NGC)

glass to the proposed chapel windows after the screening of the Namuth film, which premiered at MoMA on 14 June 1951.³⁶

In 1952, with Tony Smith's architectural sketches at last completed, Ossorio arranged a meeting with the potential patrons to float the proposal.³⁷ Pollock himself is not recorded as present. In his final plans, Pollock's paintings on glass were envisioned as clerestory windows.³⁸ In the event, Smith's unconventional, suspended honeycomb design met with incomprehension and Pollock's Christian ethos was questioned.³⁹ This interesting, albeit aborted, proposal may be seen as part of the history of *No. 29, 1950*. A later attempt to associate some later Pollock works with religious imagery gave rise to scholarly controversy.⁴⁰ Whatever his own religious views, Pollock was interested in the relationship between art and architecture, and exploring the architectural potential of painting on glass.

Brydon Smith ensured that *No. 29, 1950* enjoyed a fitting architectural setting for its permanent installation. In the 1980s when planning the interior



5 | Brydon Smith, laureate (Outstanding Contribution) of the 2014 Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media. Photograph used with the permission of the Canada Council for the Arts/Martin Lipman. (Photo: CCA)

of the new NGC building on Sussex Drive, Smith conceived a room installed around the Pollock and works subsequently acquired by four other postwar Americans: Barnett Newman (1905–1970), Mark Rothko (1903–1970), Clyfford Still (1904–1980), and Tony Smith (1912–1980). The theme for the high-ceilinged gallery was to be “wholeness.” Smith engaged Canadian artist Ron Martin (b. 1943) to work with him in resolving the final installation. Martin saw the significance of Pollock’s work in “its capacity to convey a self-reflexive knowledge of our being in the world, and is, in fact, our link with what is the earliest and essential principle of late Modernist Abstract Art.”⁴¹ The NGC’s Pollock is appropriately displayed in a free-standing frame allowing for viewing from both sides. The NGC display evokes Dorothy Miller’s framing for *15 Americans*, which met with Pollock’s approval.⁴² The viewer may choose to imagine the work’s potential for architecture and a possible affinity with Duchamp’s masterpiece.

The acquisition of *No. 29, 1950* marked a new direction in NGC collecting. In Latour's terms, *No. 29, 1950* acted as an intermediary and Smith took the role of the active mediator, developing new contacts among influential American art world players and helping establish the NGC's place within a broader North American discourse. In the latter part of his career and still committed to the postwar abstract artists whom he admired, Smith would raise the quality of the NGC's holdings with the acquisitions of two major works: Barnett Newman's *Voice of Fire* (1967) and Mark Rothko's *No. 16* (1957). With his early selection of *No. 29, 1950*, Smith had made an unconventional but prescient choice with his initial foray into this area of collecting. He deserves credit for seizing the moment in 1967, effectively the only time a first-rate Pollock has fallen within the NGC's ambit. With Boggs's support, the NGC secured an influential and unique painting with impeccable credentials. It remains a work which any modern art museum would be only too willing to display today. The painting now counts among the NGC's treasures for the lasting benefit of Canadians.

NOTES

- 1 Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the NGC held 23–24 May 1956, National Gallery of Canada (NGC) Library and Archives.
- 2 Latour cites artworks and museum collections as examples of objects which can become actors in a social network. See Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 81, 97, 100, 102.
- 3 Brydon SMITH, "Jackson Pollock (1912–1956)," box 1, file 7 Fine Arts (1963–65), Brydon Smith fonds, NGC Library and Archives.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 "Price List for Jackson Pollock Paintings Included in the Marlborough-Gerson Gallery January/February 1964 Catalogue," Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner Papers, circa 1914–84, box 1, file 54, Archive of American Art. Accessed 17 Nov. 2013, http://www.aaa.si.edu/assets/images/collectionsonline/pollock/fullsize/AAA_jpoljack_78
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 "Interview with Brydon Smith by Kitty Scott, 3 November 2002," box 22, file 3 Brydon Smith interviewed by Kitty Scott (2001–2002), Brydon Smith fonds, NGC Library and Archives.
- 8 Stephen E. Weil to Brydon Smith, 30 June 1967, Curatorial File for *No. 29, 1950*, National Gallery of Canada. Weil left in the course of these negotiations to pursue a distinguished career at the Whitney, Hirshhorn, and Smithsonian Institution's Center for Museum Studies.
- 9 Interview with the author on 9 Jan. 2014.

- 10 Boggs counted Colonel Sydney Oland's willingness to go along with the majority as a positive vote, although he wrote that he was "not intrigued by abstract expressionist painting." She expressed no surprise at trustee Frank Panabaker's negative vote and comment that he had "never seen anything in Pollock's squiggly doodlings." See Sidney Oland to Jean Boggs, 10 July 1967, and Frank Panabaker to Jean Boggs, 14 July 1967, Curatorial File for No. 29, 1950, National Gallery of Canada. The trustees voting in favour were Jean Raymond (Chair), I.C. Pollock, Dorothy Dyde, Mrs. Hugh MacKay, and John MacAulay. Mrs. Otto Koerner cast the blank ballot, perhaps inadvertently.
- 11 Jean Boggs to the Hon. Judy LaMarsh, 10 Oct. 1967, Curatorial File for No. 29, 1950, National Gallery of Canada.
- 12 Francis O'CONNOR, ed., *Jackson Pollock: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works, Volume 4* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 110.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ellen G. LANDAU, *Jackson Pollock* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989), 197.
- 15 National Gallery of Canada Press Release, 19 June 1968, Curatorial File for No. 29, 1950, National Gallery of Canada.
- 16 Gail DEXTER, "Brydon Got His Jackson Pollock," *Toronto Star*, 6 July 1968, in Brydon Smith clippings file, NGC Library and Archives.
- 17 See: "Accessions of American and Canadian Museums," *Art Quarterly* 32:2 (Summer 1969): 234; *Art Journal* 27:1 (Fall 1968): 102; Brydon SMITH, "Recent Acquisitions: The National Gallery — from the United States," *artscanada* xxv:4 (October-November 1968): 47; François MEYER, "Entretien avec Brydon SMITH," *Vie des Arts* xiv:58 (Spring 1970): 58; "Jackson Pollock's 'No 29,'" *The Burlington Magazine* lxxvii (July 1969): 451, 453. The foregoing may be found in the Curatorial File for No. 29, 1950.
- 18 "Price List for Jackson Pollock Paintings Included in the Marlborough-Gerson Gallery January/February 1964 Catalogue," with annotations dated and signed 3 Mar. 1967, Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner Papers, circa 1914–84, box 1, file 54, Archive of American Art. Accessed 17 Nov. 2013, http://www.aaa.si.edu/assets/images/collectionsonline/pollock/fullsize/AAA_jpoljack_78.
- 19 Steven NAIFEH and Gregory WHITE SMITH, *Jackson Pollock: An American Saga* (Aiken, SC: Woodward/White, 1989), 647–53.
- 20 T.J. CLARK, "Jackson Pollock's Abstraction," in *Reconstructing Modernism: Art in New York, Paris, and Montreal, 1945–1964*, ed. Serge Guilbaut (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 229.
- 21 Barbara ROSE, ed., *Pollock Paintings* (New York: Agrinde Publications, ca. 1980), 78.
- 22 Hans Namuth to Brydon Smith, 28 Apr. 1968, Curatorial File for No. 29, 1950, National Gallery of Canada.
- 23 "Pollock's Studio: Interview with Lee Krasner by Barbara Rose," in ROSE, *Pollock Paintings*, 92.
- 24 Brydon Smith to Lee Krasner, 8 May 1969, General Correspondence, box 2, file 26, Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner Papers, circa 1914–84, box 1, file 54, Archive of American Art. Accessed 17 Nov. 2013, http://www.aaa.si.edu/assets/images/collectionsonline/pollock/fullsize/AAA_jpoljack_78.
- 25 Curatorial File for No. 29, 1950, National Gallery of Canada. The work is on shatterproof, Herculite glass used in car windshields. It may not be as fragile as it appears. According to Namuth, the glass cost \$10. See Pepe KARMEI, "Pollock at

- Work: The Films and Photographs of Hans Namuth,” in *Jackson Pollock: New Approaches*, ed. Kirk Varnedoe and Pepe Karmel (New York: Museum of Modern Art and Harry Abrams, 1999), 112.
- 26 A Pepe Karmel essay does illustrate both sides of the work, though the focus is on Namuth. See KARMEL, “Pollock at Work,” 113, 274.
- 27 “National Gallery of Canada Acquires Canada’s First Pollock,” 19 June 1968, NGC Press Release, Curatorial File for No. 29, 1950, National Gallery of Canada.
- 28 Jean Sutherland BOGGS, *The National Gallery of Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1971), 130.
- 29 Jürgen HARTEN, *Siqueiros/Pollock: Pollock/Siqueiros* (Dusseldorf: Kunsthalle, 1995), 53.
- 30 “Lecture Notes,” undated, box 10, file 9 Jackson Pollock – Lectures, Brydon Smith fonds, NGC Library and Archives. All citations in this paragraph are from this source.
- 31 HARTEN, *Siqueiros/Pollock: Pollock/Siqueiros*, 53. Harten’s citation refers to a lecture by Smith to the University Art Association of Canada in Halifax, 4–6 Mar. 1971. The notes for this specific lecture have not been located in the Brydon Smith fonds.
- 32 B.H. FREIDMAN, “An Interview with Lee Krasner Pollock,” in *Jackson Pollock: Black and White* (New York: Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, 1969), 7. Cited in Brydon SMITH, “Jackson Pollock: Abstracting Over the Figure,” *National Gallery of Canada Review* 111 (2002): 29. Subsequent quotes in this paragraph are from the same Smith article.
- 33 “Interview with William Wright,” reproduced in ROSE, *Pollock Paintings*, Annex 10, 112, and in O’CONNOR, *Catalogue Raisonné*, Vol. IV, 251. The interview was never broadcast and may not have been known to the NGC at the time of the acquisition. Krasner claims that Pollock had considered installing No. 29, 1950 into their porch structure. See: ROSE, *ibid.*, 84.
- 34 Robert STORR, “A Man of Parts,” in *Tony Smith, Architect, Painter, Sculptor* (New York: Museum of Modern Art and Harry Abrams, 1998), 16–17, 45–47.
- 35 Pollock had shown curiosity about Matisse’s project. See Robert STORR, “A Piece of the Action,” in *Jackson Pollock: New Approaches*, 30 and 64.
- 36 E.A. CARMEAN, “The Church Project: Pollock’s Passion Themes,” *Art in America* 70:6 (Summer 1982): 114.
- 37 NAIFEH and WHITE SMITH, *Jackson Pollock: An American Saga*, 681. The Catholic representatives included *inter alia* Father Ford of Columbia University and Rosalind Constable of *Time/Life*.
- 38 STORR, “A Man of Parts,” 17.
- 39 NAIFEH and WHITE SMITH, *Jackson Pollock: An American Saga*, 681.
- 40 See CARMEAN, “The Church Project,” 110–22, and Rosalind KRAUSS’s reply “Contra Carmean: The Abstract Pollock,” *Art in America* 70:6 (Summer 1982): 123–31.
- 41 Ron MARTIN, “Layout of the Red and the American Room,” Curatorial File for No. 29, 1950, National Gallery of Canada.
- 42 ROSE, *Pollock Painting*, 83. The current frame appears to be of the NGC’s own manufacture, although no written record has been found.

Le Musée des beaux-arts du Canada acquiert un Jackson Pollock : étude d'un cas d'agence curatoriale

IAN FERGUSON

L'article documente le rôle décisif, proactif joué par Brydon E. Smith, premier conservateur de l'art contemporain du Musée des beaux arts du Canada (MBAC), dans l'acquisition du tableau de Jackson Pollock *No. 29, 1950*. Cette recherche montre comment l'autorité et l'autonomie curatoriales peuvent définir l'esthétique et la cohérence d'une collection publique.

En 1967, le MBAC, sous l'impulsion de sa nouvelle directrice, Jean Sutherland Boggs, renversait une politique de longue date et ouvrait sa collection à l'art américain. Cette même année, Boggs donnait à Smith le mandat de mettre sur pied cette nouvelle politique. L'acquisition de *No. 29, 1950* en 1968 marquait l'expansion de la collection permanente du MBAC vers un mouvement de l'art américain d'après-guerre connu sous le nom d'expressionnisme abstrait. Ce point tournant dans l'histoire de l'institution signalait les liens croissants de la culture canadienne avec les importants développements de la culture nord-américaine.

Le processus d'acquisition a été retracé à travers les dossiers de la galerie Marlborough-Gerson de New York trouvés dans les documents de la Fondation Pollock-Krasner, les procès-verbaux du conseil d'administration du MBAC et le dossier de l'œuvre. Cette documentation sur le processus global a permis de comparer les recommandations du conservateur avec d'autres œuvres de Pollock (1912–1956) disponibles et les points de vue des administrateurs. Vu le montant en jeu, l'acquisition devait être approuvée par le Parlement. Boggs a entériné les recommandations de Smith et obtenu les autorisations requises pour l'achat. Il lui incombait d'évaluer le montant que les administrateurs et le ministre étaient disposés à approuver.

Les raisons du choix de Smith et de Boggs en faveur de cette singulière œuvre sur verre sont énoncées, y compris sa provenance, la bibliographie et l'intérêt critique. Le documentaire réalisé par Hans Namuth sur la création de l'œuvre et le nombre impressionnant d'expositions auraient pu être des facteurs supplémentaires convaincants aux yeux des décideurs. Les collages et la possibilité de voir l'œuvre des deux côtés sont d'autres caractéristiques qui ont retenu l'attention de Smith. Il n'a pas été rebuté par le support de verre inhabituel qui, à son avis, ajoutait au caractère particulier de l'œuvre.

L'achèvement simultané de *No. 29, 1950* et du film réalisé par Namuth pendant sa création, le 25 novembre 1950, devaient marquer la fin des deux

années de la période la plus productive (et la plus sobre) de Pollock, et l'abandon de ses expériences en abstraction pure. Le rapport subséquent de *No. 29, 1950* avec un projet de chapelle raté, au début des années 1950, auquel avait participé l'ami de Pollock, l'artiste-architecte Tony Smith (1912–1980), est étudié. Selon les plans de Tony Smith, les œuvres sur verre de Pollock devaient servir de fenêtres de claire-voie. Le projet de chapelle illustre l'intérêt de Pollock pour le potentiel architectural de la peinture sur verre et prolonge l'histoire de ce travail expérimental.

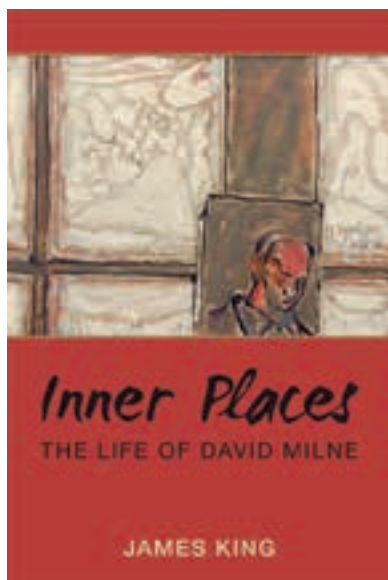
Vu la fragilité présumée de l'œuvre, le MBAC ne l'a jamais prêtée, même lorsque les demandes venaient des plus grands musées du monde. Cela a pu avoir pour effet de restreindre le nombre de critiques à l'extérieur du Canada. S'ils ne voient pas l'œuvre originale, les historiens de l'art risquent de négliger les collages et les importantes différences, apparentes lorsqu'elle est vue de l'un ou l'autre côté.

Smith a écrit au sujet de *No. 29, 1950*, d'abord quand il était à l'université puis après avoir pris sa retraite, ce qui confirme un intérêt soutenu pour l'œuvre. Il a souligné que les objets incrustés, trouvés dans l'atelier et la cour arrière de l'artiste, évoquaient l'environnement physique autour de la création de l'œuvre. Smith affirmait que Pollock aimait bien cette peinture et qu'il l'apportait parfois à l'extérieur pour voir les différents aspects du ciel et des nuages à travers le verre. Il en a déduit que Pollock était aussi à l'aise avec l'abstrait qu'avec le figuratif, bien que les critiques de l'époque aient essayé d'établir une séparation irréconciliable entre ces deux pratiques. À aucun moment, cependant, Smith n'a situé l'œuvre de manière théorique ni relié Pollock à un plus large contexte historique ou culturel. En général, Smith s'abstenait d'étiqueter les artistes, évitant de suggérer des concepts théoriques qui pourraient limiter des interprétations plus ouvertes ou qui ne faisaient pas partie du plan original de l'artiste.

Dans les années qui suivirent, Smith allait s'intéresser aux œuvres d'artistes américains maintenant associés au minimalisme (Donald Judd, Dan Flavin et Carl Andre) avant de revenir, vers la fin de sa carrière, à l'expressionnisme abstrait. Après 1988 et le déménagement du MBAC dans un nouvel immeuble, il s'est assuré que *No. 29, 1950* reçoive un cadre architectural adéquat pour son installation permanente. L'œuvre y fut exposée avec les dernières acquisitions spectaculaires de Smith, *Voice of Fire* de Barnett Newman (1905–1970) et *No. 16 (1957)* de Mark Rothko (1903–1970).

L'acquisition de l'œuvre de Pollock apparaît comme audacieuse, ponctuelle, à un moment rare, peut-être unique, où les œuvres de Pollock de cette qualité et de cette époque étaient à la portée du MBAC. Au fil du temps, *No. 29, 1950* est devenu le fondement de la petite mais remarquable collection d'expressionnistes abstraits du MBAC. Smith a eu le mérite d'avoir su saisir le moment.

Traduction : Élise Bonnette



*Inner Places: The Life of
David Milne*

JAMES KING

Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2015
388 p.

Liz Wylie

To write a straightforward, traditional biography of Canadian artist David Milne (1881–1953) seems an odd task to undertake, as there are already several excellent publications in print on this painter and his work. This was my first thought on reading about this new book, but then, I surmised, perhaps a small, portable book on Milne, one written for the every-person, might be a really good idea. However, a basic challenge for a would-be Milne biographer is that David Milne did not really have much of a “life,” but devoted himself completely to his art. So unless one were able to write well about his work, there would

be little point to a biography. As King points out in his preface, David Milne is an excellent example of an artist’s artist. I would add that Milne’s work is demanding and difficult, and one begins to appreciate it only after some hefty doses of study – both of writings on art and paintings. It is not generally work that has mass appeal. If this makes Milne sound like an elitist artist whose work is accessible only to art experts, well . . . there may be no way around that estimation. King does not state what his goal was in writing this book, nor whom he hoped his audience for it would be. He does not inform the reader whether he unearthed any new information about the artist, nor whether any points he makes are new thoughts of his own. He only rarely refers to previous texts on the artist in his own writing, although in his acknowledgments he credits several previous writers on Milne as having been important to him in his research.

David Milne had a hard life: he was lonely and poor for the majority of his years, and received some recognition for his work only during his last several years. With the exception of his stint as a soldier and war artist in England and France during the First World War, he really had very little life to chronicle, only a sad and often penniless wandering, and a repeated building of tiny cabins in the woods, as he tried to find a way (in the Zen Buddhist sense) for doing his art while staying alive and having a roof over his head. King ends his biography with Milne’s death, not tracking (as the David Silcox biography does [University of Toronto Press, 1996])

the rise of the artist's reputation and high esteem for his work that began posthumously and continues to grow.

Without being an art expert himself (although King has written other biographies of artists), King is at a clear disadvantage in taking on a biography of David Milne. Milne was a sophisticated thinker, both as an artist and in terms of sheer intelligence. His writings explain the goals he was striving toward in his work, many of which are technical and seem removed from the emotional expressiveness we often associate with painting. King has not grasped the aesthetic musings and struggles that form the basis of the trajectories of Milne's art. The author seems intent on portraying the artist as a good fellow who had a hard row to hoe, and as someone who loved nature. The most glaring incidence of this is King's misunderstanding of Milne's use of what he termed "kick" in his work. It came from his reading of Bloomsbury art critic Clive Bell's notion of aesthetic emotion: an emotion (and it is real) that comes from art, and not from what we might call real life (although looking at art is part of real life). It lies at the base of all the artist's colour theories and compositional devices – everything he invented and deployed. It does not relate to his real life nor to his enjoyment of the natural world. King misinterprets this as Milne feeling a kick when he transformed the "careful observation of nature into art" (256).

Somewhat related, and another important aspect to Milne's work that King discounts, is the role and question

of subject, or what Milne called "motive" in his painting. As has been established by previous authors on Milne, and referred to by King, Milne was not interested in subject, that is, the objects portrayed in his paintings. He was preoccupied with formal concerns, and not intent on any expressive content about his subjects. King quotes Milne as saying this, but seems unable to accept it, and notes that Milne "denigrated subject" (164), as though it were some inexplicable quirk of his.

This aspect of King's treatment called to mind an experience I had once when viewing Ian Thom's 1991 Vancouver Art Gallery survey show of Milne's work when it was at the McMichael Gallery. As I visited the exhibition, two women were making their way around the gallery, reading the labels of the works out loud. They came to Milne's masterful and serene 1923 dry-brush painting *Lanterns and Snowshoes*, painted in the tea house at Big Moose Lake in the Adirondacks (a business that his first wife Patsy was running, while Milne worked as a handy man at the resort). "Oh, there are the lanterns," one woman said to the other, pointing to the work, "and there are the snowshoes." Satisfied, they moved on. It is this misguided inventory method of looking that one must leave behind in order to penetrate the meaning of Milne's work. Writing of this same painting, King mistakenly comments that Milne's goal in the painting was to show viewers "this is how . . . a genuine artist lives" (199), but says nothing about his open/shut shapes, dazzle spot, and visual

rhythm, to mention only a few aspects that give the work its aesthetic power.

King is an enthusiastic, earnest, and well-meaning biographer, and his interest in Milne the person seems strong and sincere. His writing is clear and easy to read, and the book is logically organized, in individual, chronologically arranged chapters. The work is not a half-hearted attempt, and King has been thorough in his treatment of the various phases of Milne's art, and living places. However, his lack of knowledge and understanding of Milne's art takes its toll as one reads through the book. King seems to have been unable to sift through material about art and artists to give a sense of what is important and what/who is not. For instance, he democratically lists a handful of unknown painters – who, along with Milne, once depicted Bish Bash Falls near Boston Corners, NY – in the same manner as he addresses artists such as Henri Matisse and Paul Cézanne. This even-handed treatment would make it hard for a lay reader to discern who were the major players and who the extras on the stage of the development of modern art. We know that Milne, on the other hand, was an art expert keenly aware of movements in art and knowledgeable about important contributions of artists, both before him and contemporary with him. He lived in the countryside for most of his life mainly because cities were expensive, but he made sure to keep up to date with artists' work and developments in art. This aspect of Milne's life is not emphasized by King, and there is no

indication by him that he finds any of Milne's paintings good or noteworthy, just that Milne doggedly produced them. King also uses some terms loosely, "modernism" for instance, so that we do not have a clear sense of what King means by them. For example, he writes of "the artist's use of spiky modernist forms in the rendition of trees" (121). King calls etching a "form" (80) and a "format" (81) rather than a medium, and terms oil a "form" also (219). King's account of Milne's inclusion in the hugely momentous so-called Armory Show in the USA in 1913 is described, but not ascribed with any importance (100–101).

Especially when writing on Milne's early years in New York, King seems determined to see the artist as an ambitious careerist, stating that in his early New York years Milne "wanted . . . to make his mark, and he was determined to do everything in his power to ensure his success" (89), when in fact Milne was just eking out a subsistence living by doing commercial art (show cards), and trying to get paintings exhibited. When Milne came to Ottawa in 1923 to explore the viability of returning to Canada to live and work, King mentions that he was not able to "penetrate the marketplace in any significant way" (214), seeming not to realize that there was no "marketplace" for contemporary art in Ottawa at that time.

There is one section of the book in which King differs widely in his interpretation of events from David Silcox's 1996 biography of Milne,

although King neither states this, nor mentions that the opinions given are his own. In his account of the 1934–37 fiasco of David Milne’s patronage by Alice and Vincent Massey, and the financial shenanigans of the art dealers they approached to sell his paintings, King seems to want to see Milne as a calm and fair-dealing sort. He comes down hard on the dealers, while leaving the Masseys in the clear. One quick read of Silcox’s detailed account of this abusive and hair-raising episode in Milne’s life will set a reader to rights as to this complex situation, but King does not state that he is departing from previous scholarship on this area. Overall, King seems to have wanted to be fair and even-handed. In his treatment of Patsy, for example, and the unraveling of her relationship with Milne, we sense King straining to see both sides of the situation.

An assortment of little textual errors plagues the work, the kind of things that give writers nightmares, as we all depend on copy editors to catch these. King’s copy editor was asleep at the switch. There is an unfortunate skipping of a “not” in quoting Thoreau, so that the American writer’s statement reads as its own opposite (170). Vincent van Gogh is spelled wrongly as Van Gogh all the way through the book, except in one instance. King refers to the New York Water Club (missing the word Color), and notes that in one Milne painting “the colours . . . are complimented by a sky” (258). He describes Milne’s trees in one work as having a luxuriant fulsomeness (261), a word in dispute, but

not one to use with confidence in this context. Instead of using the adjective Sisyphean, King writes that Milne’s life “became a Sisyphus-like endurance” (214). The overall tone of King’s book is lowered by these little problems.

Coming to consider the book itself physically, it is unfortunately poorly designed and suffers from very low production values. The opening pages of each chapter feature three typefaces: a sans serif for the number of the chapter; a script font for the chapter title; then a serif font for the body text. The running header of the chapter title is set in all capitals on the facing page and on all subsequent pages. This mix makes for a jarring read. The photographs of Milne and historical places, as well as the reproductions of the paintings are murky and dark to an extreme degree. This sad visual state means the book is a failure if it were trying to be a portable, small-format every-person’s Milne volume. One must go to other publications to see good reproductions of the artist’s work.

In conclusion, the aims behind this book are not stated and do not become clear upon reading. The title of the book, *Inner Places*, does not map onto Milne the artist or Milne the person. King explains his choice in his preface, stating that it was apt “because Milne’s inner world is depicted in his paintings” (27). It most certainly is not. Milne’s art has not been well served by the writer. Milne’s life is described in accurate detail, but he did not lead a life that was particularly worth chronicling apart from his art, which meant everything to him. One

might just as well scour Milne's diaries and letters for details on how he built his various cabins in the woods, and then write and publish a cabin-building manual based on his techniques – it would be equally beside the point. Thankfully, we do have several extant books on Milne available to readers who want to see faithful reproductions of his paintings, and read in depth about his ideas on art. This book does not take a place among those efforts.



The Last Art College: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1968–1978

GARRY NEILL KENNEDY

Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012
480 p.

Robin Simpson

The institutional affiliations surrounding Conceptual art of the 1960s and 1970s share a history fraught with contradictions. Located at the terminal point of the post–Second World War economic boom, the apex of Conceptual art is situated in a period of cultural upheaval and hard-fought struggles against the dominant culture. Questions of autonomy and authorship, alignments with Continental philosophy and critical theory, and an acute awareness of the influence of social and political systems on art production all primed the entry of Conceptual art into the arena of higher-level art education. Key among these instances was the

renewal of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD), where a once traditional curriculum was reengineered into a program guided and informed by Conceptual art practices as developed by a small international coterie of artists. This transition away from traditional art forms and pedagogical models toward experimental and discursive models of learning laid the foundations for art education today. This same shift is understood to have mirrored larger socio-economic trends – the turn from technical to administrative skills, an emphasis on cognitive labour, and a preoccupation with the concept of dematerialization.

The place of Conceptual art within an academic context in the 1970s might then be thought of as deftly occupying and renewing higher-level art education while also aligning these schools with a nascent program of neoliberal social and economic policies. A broad evaluation such as the above seems justified in light of the reality of administrative top-heavy institutions where staff and faculty are pressured to deliver tangible fiscal outcomes, where education is categorized as a financial investment, where rising tuition leaves students with little alternatives to the accumulation of debt, where the behaviour of art markets seduce, distract, and quell critical judgment, and where contract work erodes, exhausts, and devalues the teaching process.

Evaluations of the possible points of origin of today's circumstances encourage inquiry into the contract between Conceptual art and art

education in the 1970s. Too often absent from investigations hinged on broad socio-economic critiques is a consideration of the complex activities of the individuals and groups who inhabited and animated the institutions in question. Necessary to this investigation is material outlining how artists and students took part in the formation of new models of art education during the brief window between the upheavals the late 1960s and the rise of venture and financial capitalism in the 1980s. In the case of NSCAD such a resource has recently arrived.

Bearing a confident title, and bound with a scale and weight that requires monastic commitment on behalf of the reader, *The Last Art College: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1968–1978* (MIT Press, 2012) makes clear on first impression the import of this long overdue account of the “heady days” at the influential Maritime school. Edited by former president Garry Neill Kennedy (b. 1935), who held the position from 1967 to 1990, the tome is structured around a comprehensive timeline that displays a decade's worth of art works, exhibitions, guest speakers, performances, and symposia. Kennedy contributes a preface accounting for the way the book is organized as well as an introduction summarizing his role at the College. He describes the development of the faculty and curriculum, focusing on three of the school's better known initiatives: David Askevold's Projects class in which students were implicated in guest artists' works; the Lithography Workshop that coupled master printers

with established artists to create limited edition prints; and the Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design whose books privileged artists' writing and documents. Punctuating the timeline with further details are texts by other writers, including Peggy Gale's synopses of the principal visiting artists' talks, Charlotte Townsend (now Townsend-Gault)'s descriptions of exhibitions mounted by the Mezzanine Gallery, and annotations that accompanied prints from the Lithography Workshop as part of their acquisition by the National Gallery of Canada. Art historian Benjamin Buchloh contributes an article on the history of the Press and artist Eric Cameron (b. 1935) writes about the Lithography Workshop. Additional testimonies by former students, faculty, and guest artists round out the content. While the book's large format might demand some negotiation, it also affords ample space for reproductions. These are plentiful and, considering the number of text-based works and ephemeral documents included, highly legible. An index of names further assists any lateral approaches to the chronology and attendant material. An appendix organized by year provides a complete list of faculty and administration as well as descriptions of the College's formal and student-run exhibition spaces. Methodical and measured, the book does not simply highlight the College's vital role in the support of and engagement with a then nascent milieu of Conceptual art, rather it firmly substantiates this significant history by delivering it in its fullest detail to date.

Kennedy notes in his preface that he initially considered the possibilities of an anthology of critical texts, yet waived this in favour of the timeline format. The template for the book was first prepared in 1979 by former NSCAD student and faculty member at Emily Carr University of Art and Design David MacWilliam (b. 1951) who assembled information gleaned from the College's internal newsletter, printed ephemera, and press documents. The timeline delivers what Kennedy rightly qualifies as the "supercharged activity of NSCAD." Entries often overlap and any page read at random conveys the impression of a restless school animated by the ceaseless activities of guests, students, staff, and faculty.

The Last Art College is best approached as the capstone of three decades of intermittent study of the College's history. This includes: a centenary book in 1993; a slim publication informed by a conference session and exhibition coordinated in 1994 by artist and professor Bruce Barber (b. 1950), published in 2001; and most recently, co-curator Jayne Wark's account of Conceptual art on the East Coast in the 2012 catalogue for the excellent *Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada, 1965–1980*. To this list we might also include recent retrospective exhibitions on artists affiliated with the College, notable among them *Martha Wilson: Staging the Self*, curated by Peter Dykhuis.¹

According to an endorsement on the dust jacket by artist AA Bronson (b. 1946), one of the strengths of

Kennedy's book is its near exclusive focus on primary material without veering into pedagogical theory. Alluded to here is the "educational turn" in the art world that surfaced around the mid-2000s. These more recent activities were guided by a compulsion to respond to the growing privatization of education under neoliberal policies. They often assumed participatory models introduced to art practice by relational aesthetics, as well as the spirit of new institutionalism that reoriented the means of exhibiting contemporary art since the 1990s.² A key element of this movement was its examination of the history of art pedagogy, focusing on the post-Second World War period. In these recuperations of self-determined or experimental formats, NSCAD has been frequently cited as a touchstone. For example, in the 2009 book *Art School: (propositions for the 21st century)* we find the College as it was in the 1970s associated with concurrent activities at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf, Joseph Beuys and Caroline Tisdall's Free International Universities, and CalArts in Valencia. The NSCAD curriculum is related to curricula at Goldsmiths College in London and the Jan Van Eyck Academie in Maastricht in the 1990s. It is also connected with various educational outposts of modernism and the postwar avant-garde: Black Mountain College in North Carolina; the Institute of Artistic Culture, otherwise known as INKHUK, in Moscow; Kazimir Malevich's UNOVIS in Vitebsk; and the Bauhaus in interwar Weimar as directed by Walter Gropius.³ Bronson suggests that despite the

process-based nature of some of the school's more renowned classes and the historical and theoretical connections they invite, a full comprehension of its historical value must begin with a detailed survey of the work produced within NSCAD's unique institutional and pedagogical frameworks.

Bronson is right to point out that, by preparing a reference book, Kennedy sidesteps the possibility of any easy associations with contemporary trends in art, exhibition, and publishing practices. However, one exception is made. Amongst the historical material and testimony is a summary and documentation of Mario Garcia Torres's (b. 1975) 2005 work *What Happens in Halifax Stays in Halifax (in 36 Slides)*. Investigating the Projects class, Torres coordinated a reunion for students who had participated in a work proposed by Robert Barry (b. 1936) in 1969: via fax Barry instructed the group to agree on one single idea that would be held in secret among them. According to Barry's parameters the artwork would endure as long as the idea was not shared beyond the group. Assuming that such a breach happened in the four decades following the project's execution Torres worked with the group to restage the event as they recalled it, his inquiry focusing on the circumstances of the original meeting. The insertion of this particular work into the chronology demonstrates ongoing interest in the history of NSCAD, which is further validated by the work's distinguished place within an international exhibition circuit. (Twice Kennedy notes that Torres's

project was exhibited at the Venice Biennale in 2007 and the Taipei Biennial in 2010.) This inclusion also signals a shared predicament between the book's timeline structure and Torres's project. As Torres aims to commune with Conceptual art via a quasi-documentary format, so does Kennedy look to a purportedly disinterested model, the chronology, to honour a history hinged on idea-based practices. One might read Torres's project as an example of weak sycophancy, for as much as the work investigates the fallibility in Conceptual art's penchant for rules, it behaves according to them. Placing Torres within the 1968–1969 section of the book effectively demonstrates the privileged place reserved in the College's history for compliant anachronisms.

Well-ordered source materials, misplaced critique

Much of the material selected by Kennedy to accompany MacWilliam's timeline can also be approached as historical documents in their own right. The texts by Benjamin Buchloh and Eric Cameron are both drawn from a 1982 exhibition catalogue. The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia previously published Harold Pearce's account of the Halifax Conference of 5–6 October 1970 in 2003. Peggy Gale's short contributions result from her professional engagements with the College, including her 2004 book *Artists Talk: 1969–1977*. Charlotte Townsend's summaries were first presented at the College in 1972. A further eight artist

interviews are transcribed from the 1988 film *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art*. A 1972 article for *artscanada* (now *Canadian Art*) by Kennedy on video by faculty and students is parcelled out into individual entries.

It could be assumed that Kennedy looked to the output of the Press, and in particular the principles guiding early volumes supervised by Kasper Koenig, as his model for his current book. As editor, Koenig focused production of books on artists' writing and documentation, an intention signalled by the addition of the subtitle "Source Materials of the Contemporary Arts" to the Press's moniker when he introduced his program in 1972. While it is self-evident that the College was focused on, and driven by artists, the question remains whether a model hinged on primary documents combined with a chronology is a suitable means to investigate the history of the institution from today's vantage point.

Buchloh's erudite history of the Press identifies two forerunners to Koenig's model: the Buhausbücher series published by Walter Gropius and László Moholy-Nagy at the Weimar Bauhaus in the 1920s and the Documents of Modern Art series initiated by artist Robert Motherwell, Museum of Modern Art librarian Bernard Karpel, and publisher George Wittenborn in New York in 1948. The Press's intended audience, he notes, were artists and art students. Much like the College curriculum, Koenig's goal was to produce books that responded to and informed artists' activity without conforming to the

standard requirements of academic publishing. Buchloh thus summarizes his objectives: “a main interest was to make accessible documents and writings that had affected the thinking and practice of the visual arts to a considerable degree without necessarily having entered the public discourse of exhibition in galleries or museums or the distribution of artistic objects.”⁴

Commencing in 1978, Buchloh’s own editorial tenure brought critical adjustments to this protocol. Where Koenig’s program, which included volumes by Claes Oldenburg (1973), Simone Forti (1974), Yvonne Rainer (1974), Steve Reich (1974), Hans Haacke (1975), Michael Snow (1975), Donald Judd (1976), Paul-Émile Borduas (1978), and Michael Asher (1983), is rather discourteously summarized by Buchloh as but the “simple activity of neutral historical documentation,” he himself aimed to orientate the Press toward an examination of “the broader changes that have occurred in art practice and the growing understanding of its historical and social-political determinations.”⁵ An example of this new approach was the 1981 volume on Daniel Buren that included texts by philosopher Jean-François Lyotard, curator Jean-Hubert Martin, as well as Buchloh himself. Publications of this nature, in combination with a pamphlet series, featuring new works by artists Gerhard Richter (1980), Martha Rosler (ca. 1981), Allan Sekula (1984), and Dara Birnbaum (1987), signaled the reorientation of the Press toward considerations of the impact

of Conceptual art, critical theory, and activism of the 1960s and 1970s on art as produced in the early 1980s.

Even if *The Last Art College* adheres more closely to the model proposed by Koenig, it is not entirely devoid of critical reflection. Certainly, Buchloh’s article itself breaks out of the decade in focus by examining the Press from the vantage point of the 1980s. And during the decade in question there were also key instances of outside criticism directed at the College as well as conflicts that arose within it, accounts of which can be found in the book.

In his assessment of the 1970 event The Halifax Conference, organized by New York critic and curator Seth Siegelaub who assembled an ambitious cast of well-known guest artists, Harold Pearse lays bare some of its raw moments. One of the more salient involved Robert Morris, Robert Smithson, and Richard Serra in a mutinous exit from the boardroom into the Anna Leonowens Gallery where attendees were watching the proceedings on closed-circuit television. Serra addressed the crowd and accused the College of attempting to secure cultural and symbolic capital through the coordination of an elite retreat of star artists. Sharing this sentiment Pearse adds that the expense of these ambitions amounted to the alienation of the local community.

As The Halifax Conference neared its end, Kennedy received a telegram denouncing its exclusive roster of male artists. The telegram came from New York City, signed by critic Lucy

Lippard – incidentally, the only name Kennedy recognized⁶ – and many others. This “wake-up call” was taken seriously and the involvement of women faculty and guest artists was ensured for the remainder of the decade. Miriam Schapiro, co-founder of the Feminist Art Program at CalArts, taught a course and worked with the Lithography Workshop during the summer of 1974. Two years earlier, Ann Noël had joined the faculty at the same time as her husband, poet and artist Emmett Williams. Influential feminist thinker Shulamith Firestone was in residence at the College for two months during the summer of 1972. Martha Wilson arrived in the early 1970s after previously studying with Gerald Ferguson (1937–2009) in Ohio. She taught a grammar course entitled “Literary Parallels to Modern Art: Cubism and the Novel,” exhibited at the Mezzanine gallery, and made extensive use of the video equipment and other facilities. During her time at the College, Wilson produced a body of work that deftly challenged the purportedly neutral terrain of male-dominated Conceptual art by adamantly working from a gendered standpoint. Joyce Wieland (1930–1998) spent ten weeks at the College in the fall of 1971 during which she produced her important lithograph *O Canada*. The production process of this work, documented and reproduced in the book, involved the artist kissing the lithography stone while mouthing the words to the national anthem. Charlotte Townsend regularly programmed women artists at the Mezzanine gallery, among them: Jackie

Windsor (b. 1941), Lee Lozano (b. 1930), and Eleanor Antin (b. 1935). Finally, in 1974 the Anna Leonowens Gallery presented the group show *Woman Works*.

And yet, despite the administration’s admission of culpability and certain adjustments, the activity of women artists at the College still remains a secondary history. It is provided its place within the chronology and supplemented by a few additions, but at no point does the memory of the “short, stinging” critique from New York cause the already established narrative of the College dominated by males to be seriously reconsidered. It is, if anything, embellished. The closest alternative is a compelling selection of pages from Ann Noël’s visual diaries recording and comingling both official and social life at the College.

Read in this light Virginia Solomon’s “Conceptualism and Canadada at the Halifax/Vancouver Exchange” further reveals how the College struggled to negotiate the realities of identity-based politics and the persistent chauvinism of the art world at large. Coordinated in collaboration with the Vancouver Art Gallery the bi-coastal exchange brought eleven Vancouver-based artists to the College in 1972. The group included Cheryl Sourkes (b. 1945), Don Druick (b. 1945), Gathie Falk (b. 1928), Carole Itter (b. 1939), Gerry Gilbert (1936–2009), Gary Lee-Nova (b. 1943), Glenn Lewis (b. 1935), Michael Morris (b. 1942), Dallas Selman, Dave Rimmer (b. 1942), and Vincent Trasov (b. 1947). Solomon notes that many of the performances, screenings, and poetry readings realized

by the guests fell into accord with the conceptual protocols driving the curriculum at NSCAD. However, the differences between personalities and working methods were palpable. In an e-mail to Solomon, NSCAD student and exchange participant Ian Murray (b. 1951) retrospectively summarizes the dynamic as “a Fluxus versus Minimalist thing, hippie versus hip thing.” Telling is Murray’s characterization of the Vancouver artists as a “more theatrical, poetical, experimental, filmy and cartoony” group who informed their practices via a multi-disciplinary approach compared to those hailing from NSCAD who remained focused on dialogues specific to visual art.⁷ Solomon points to two examples where this rift became apparent: Lewis’s postcard project *Better Body Works* where clever and salacious collages were delivered to the College via mail and Morris and Trasov’s alienating experience on a panel discussion with Lawrence Weiner, James Lee Byars, and David Askevold (1940–2008). What Murray’s memories highlight is a prevalent discord and disconnect at NSCAD during the decade in question. The Vancouver group brought with them queer sensibilities and knowledge that refused and evaded the neat categories of NSCAD’s conceptualism. Echoing the obduracy of the New Left at the time where chauvinism was enforced through demands for hardheaded political commitment, the Halifax-Vancouver Exchange demonstrated a floundering on the College’s behalf in its capacity to recognize the conservative streak

running through conceptualism when confronted with alternatives proposed by their peers as developed in different regional and cultural contexts.

By adopting Koenig’s “source material” approach (compared to Buchloh’s analytic model) and combining it with the belated publishing of MacWilliam’s timeline, Kennedy assures a safe place for the critique of the College in its overall history. In most cases these instances are simply registered as events and afforded little influence on how the history of the College might be examined from a different vantage point. Critical assessments such as Pearce’s are left without response and denied their place in a larger conversation centred on the historical circumstances of Conceptual art and its milieu. It is in encountering these points in the timeline where the absence of any consideration of the critiques of Conceptual art published during and after the decade profiled here become most apparent. Alexander Alberro’s 2006 book *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* and Buchloh’s essay “Conceptual Art 1962–1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions,” first published in 1990, are but two well-known examples.⁸ Work accounting for artists’ investigations of linguistic and informational systems, such as Liz Kotz’s *Words to be Looked at: Language in 1960s Art* and Eve Meltzer’s excellent inquiry into the consequences of conceptualism’s union with structuralism, would seem to be highly relevant for a project hinged on a chronological format.⁹

Artist Silvia Kolbowski's (b. 1953) *An Inadequate History of Conceptual Art*, which confronts the smooth uptake and periodization of Conceptual art during the late 1990s through interviews navigating the failures and hyperbole of memory is a necessary precursor and counterbalance to Torres's project.¹⁰ Admittedly, this is all material that concerns the College only through broad associations but this is the range of literature and artworks one expects Kennedy's book to be situated within and in dialogue with. Active participation in this conversation might have resulted in a resource that better considered the socio-political factors with which Conceptual art was embroiled. Engagement with existing scholarship on Conceptual art might have equally provided Kennedy with the opportunity to challenge some of these critiques by coordinating a resource of primary material that pointed to the nuances of these complex practices and provided a means of examining the specifics of how these confrontations and capitulations unfolded at the College.

Lost and Found Departments

Throughout the book under-examined elements of the College's history are treated in an uneven fashion. One important revelation is the place of experimental writing within the curriculum as new light is brought to bear on Emmett William's role as faculty and frequent guest through his

contribution to the book. The activities associated with William's "Language Happening" class match the better-known proposals of the Projects class in both intensity and intellect, such as a marathon group reading of Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans* by faculty, students, and members of the public. The coffee-fuelled event lasted roughly forty-eight hours and was advertised in the local paper under the title: "Stein and Sleeping Bags."¹¹ Williams's presence at the College, combined with the regular poetry readings chronicled in the timeline, demonstrates that the place of poetry and experimental writing at the College deserves more serious attention.

Absent is any sustained consideration of programs outside of the visual arts faculty. Negligible information is provided on the Art History and Art Education departments. Perhaps more striking is the nearly complete exclusion of the Design department as it was during Kennedy's tenure that the department was added to the College's moniker. However, only design faculty members Bob Parker and Bill Smith, both architects, garner mentions in relation to their advisory roles at the time of the College's milestone move to the downtown core of Halifax, notably their suggestion that the new waterfront campus recover and incorporate a set of soon-to-be-demolished nineteenth-century buildings. These shortfalls demonstrate how the book's overall concern with artists' activities and the organizational structure of an event-

based timeline fixated on proper names ultimately impedes on the elucidation of a thorough history of the College.

This restrictive approach is even more pronounced when it comes to understanding the College within its immediate historical context in Canada. Aside from a cursory acknowledgment of student dissent on the East Coast, the College is exempt from claiming any membership with other art schools in Canada. As Kennedy recalls:

In the past the College had looked to the Ontario College of Art for direction. This, of course, was limiting. Having graduated from OCA myself and having acquired advanced degrees in the United States, I firmly believed that NSCAD should look further afield than central Canada for ideas about how to achieve its goals . . . Rather than looking to educational models, we looked to the art world itself as a guide to what the College could become.¹²

While this might have been the founding sentiment of the College, it becomes problematic when it is sustained in retrospect. Once again an authority assured through cosmopolitan prestige overwrites the realities of the College's history. And while the College's search for "relevance" (the keyword highlighted by Kennedy in reference to the 1960s counterculture's demands toward existing institutions)

via a curriculum attentive to the international realm of Conceptual art certainly distinguished the Maritime school from other institutions in central and western Canada, it was nonetheless the fortuitous conjunction of a keen and clever administration with new funding at a provincial and federal level that undergirded the realization of this overhaul. And such circumstances where by no means exclusive to Halifax. Art education in Canada may have been mired in traditionalism, but by the end of the 1960s reform was a major topic of interest and action. So much so that the magazine *artscanada* published a special issue on the topic in 1968.¹³ Readers found an outline of the College's new program authored by Kennedy as well as feature articles on students and faculty's confrontations with Ontario College of Art's conservative administration, the establishment of The New School of Art by defected OCA staff, and the experimental "sensorium" curriculum underway at the Centre for Communications and the Arts at Vancouver's Simon Fraser University. That same year students in Montréal occupied the École des Beaux-Arts for one month in protest of the exclusion of art education from province-wide reforms to education implemented earlier in the decade.¹⁴ Or, for evidence closer to home, consider the case of master printer Wallace Brannen's (b. 1952) departure from the Lithography Workshop in order to work with the West Baffin Eskimo Co-Op in Cape Dorset, Nunavut.¹⁵

Comparison to, or acknowledgement of, these coeval initiatives and events might further enrich our understanding of the College's unique contribution to art education in Canada and extend this analysis beyond the rote claim that the school successfully trumped the "provincialism problem" via an active visiting artist program and an adherence to a pragmatic aesthetic formula well suited to international distribution. Here we need not trot out Terry Smith's "The Provincialism Problem" first published in *Artforum* in 1974, nor quote Lippard's address to the College in 1969 on Canada's opportune distance from the binds of the established art world. All the more succinct is an untitled sculpture from 1974 by artist and student Robin Peck (b. 1950) reproduced in the book in black and white. A dark cube photographed in his studio, Peck's work was conferred with a perspicacious, if parenthetical, title: *Untitled (Provincial Minimal Art Making as a Form of Therapeutic Theatre)*.

The Last (Occupied) Art College

The publication of Kennedy's book was accompanied by announcements of the College's present dire financial state and the imminent threats of further tuition and fee hikes, faculty layoffs, and a reduction of the number of classes and programs.¹⁶ Kennedy is by no means unaware of where his well-ordered history sits within this trajectory and he concludes his introduction with a brief critique of the pervasive and asphyxiating bureaucracy borne by the

College and similar institutions since the glory days of the 1970s. John Baldessari's famous litany once prescribed to students to write on the wall of the Mezzanine Gallery is here taken up as a fraternal oath of sorts, assuring readers of a "shared commitment" among the College's early constituency to not "make any more boring art . . . and not to make any more boring art colleges!"¹⁷ What currency does that commitment carry today? Speaking with a friend and NSCAD alumnus about the state of the College, I was told that the arrival of Kennedy's tome was opportune: the brick of a book might serve as suitable barricade material should the students decide to occupy their school.

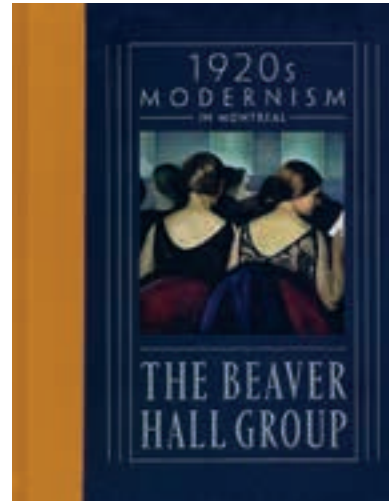
The Last Art College is certainly not the last word on the institution. As a practical estimate of one crucial decade in both Canadian art and the international realm of Conceptual art, the book proves that much work remains to be done. With the present volume Kennedy has secured a comfortable place for the retirement of the College's history. The challenge is to not leave this resource to settle so contentedly, but to pick at its aggregate, drawing out the promise of those entries that have received far less attention up this point, bringing them into dialogue with the one narrative of the institution that we've come to know so well.

NOTES

- 1 Robert STACEY and Liz WYLIE, *Eighty/Twenty: 100 Years of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design* (Halifax: Art

- Gallery of Nova Scotia, 1988); Bruce BARBER, ed., *Conceptual Art: The NSCAD Connection 1967–1973* (Halifax: Anna Leonownens Gallery, NSCAD University, 2001); Grant ARNOLD and Karen HENRY, eds., *Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada 1965–1980* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2012); “Martha Wilson: Staging the Self,” curator Peter Dykhuis, Dalhousie University Art Gallery, Halifax, Nova Scotia (2009); Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec (2011); Arcadia University Art Gallery, Glenside, PA (2012).
- 2 The locus of this moment can be found in the activities of Anton Vidokle founder of the art advertising service *e-flux*. Vidokle was co-programmer of the misconceived Manifesta 6 School in Cyprus in 2006 which was cancelled under the pressure of the immediate political context of the divided island. Vidokle and his collaborators then redistributed their activities throughout particular nodes of the international art world, setting up temporary schools in Berlin and New York and publishing an essay by theorist and curator Irit Rogoff on the topic of the educational turn in the premier issue of the *e-flux journal*. See Irit ROGOFF, “Turning,” *e-flux journal* 0 (2008). Accessed 17 Sept. 2013, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/turning/>. See also Paul O’NEIL and Mick WILSON, eds., *On Curating and the Educational Turn*, (Amsterdam: Open Editions, 2010); Pascal GIELEN and Paul DE BRUYNE, eds., *Teaching Art in the Neoliberal Realm: Realism versus Cynicism* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2012). In retrospect much activity associated with this moment perpetuated the corrosive impact of privatization and deregulation on public art and education institutions. One of the effects of transposing free schools and workshops into the gallery or museum was the obscuring and undermining of the role of education and public programming staff. In this case, artists and their voluntary participants effectively became outsourced labour in place of in-house resources. See Dean KENNING, “Refusing Conformity and Exclusion in Art Education,” *Mute Magazine* 22 (March 2012). Accessed 17 Sept. 2013, <http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/refusing-conformity-and-exclusion-art-education>. On new institutionalism, see Nina MÖNTMANN, “The Rise and Fall of New Institutionalism: Perspectives on a Possible Future,” *Transversal* 08 (2007). Accessed 17 Sept. 2013, <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0407/moentmann/en>.
 - 3 Steven Henry MADOFF, ed., *Art School (propositions for the 21st century)*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).
 - 4 Benjamin H.D. BUCHLOH, “The Press of NSCAD: A Brief Incomplete History and Its Future Books,” *The Last Art College: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1968–1978*, ed. Garry Neill Kennedy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 372.
 - 5 Ibid., 374–75.
 - 6 Garry Neill KENNEDY, ed., “The Halifax Conference,” *The Last Art College*, 59.
 - 7 Virginia SOLOMON, “Conceptualism and Canadada at the Halifax/Vancouver Exchange,” in *ibid.*, 154.
 - 8 Alexander ALBERRO, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003); Benjamin H.D. BUCHLOH, “Conceptual Art 1962–1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions,” *October* 55 (Winter 1990): 105–43.
 - 9 Liz KOTZ, *Words to be Looked at: Language in 1960s Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007); Eve MELTZER, “The Dream of the Information World,” *Oxford Art Journal* 29:1 (2006): 117–35.

- 10 Silvia KOLBOWSKI, "An Inadequate History of Conceptual Art," *October* 92 (Spring 2000): 52–70.
- 11 Emmett WILLIAMS, *My Life in Flux – and Vice Versa*, excerpt in *The Last Art College*, 236.
- 12 KENNEDY, "Introduction," *The Last Art College*, xv.
- 13 "The New Education in the Arts," spec. issue of *artscanada* 122/123 (October/November 1968).
- 14 For a selection of primary documents on these events, see Yves ROBILLARD ed., *Quebec Underground 1962–1972: 10 ans d'art marginal au Québec*, vols. 1–3 (Montreal: Médiarts, 1973).
- 15 KENNEDY, "Introduction," xix.
- 16 Kaley KENNEDY, "Severe funding cuts for Nova Scotia College of Art and Design," *Rabble*, 17 May 2012. Accessed 17 Sept. 2013, <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/behind-numbers/2012/05/severe-funding-cuts-nova-scotia-college-art-and-design>. Recent budgetary manoeuvres at the College have resulted in layoffs: "NSCAD University lays off 16 staffers, says NSGEU," *CBC*. Accessed 18 June 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/nscad-university-lays-off-16-staffers-says-nsgeu-1.3118369>.
- 17 KENNEDY, "Introduction," xvii.



*1920s Modernism in Montreal:
The Beaver Hall Group*

EDITED BY JACQUES DES
ROCHERS AND BRIAN FOSS

Montreal and London: Montreal
Museum of Fine Arts and Black
Dog Publishing, 2015
351 p.

Alicia Boutilier

"Who gets to be remembered? Why do people get to be remembered?" asks Brian Foss on CBC's Sunday Edition.¹ He refers to the Beaver Hall Group and the project that he and Jacques Des Rochers, as co-curators, have worked on for almost ten years. *1920s Modernism in Montreal: The Beaver Hall Group* is a monumental exhibition, accompanied by an equally important publication, which opened at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in October 2015 and toured across Canada. Students of Canadian art history are familiar with Beaver Hall, but perhaps not in the way that this

exhibition presents them. Outside the classroom the Group is not very well known at all. Paintings by its members do not grace calendars and mugs in the same way as those by another Canadian artist group, of a certain number, founded in the same year.

The intention of *1920s Modernism in Montreal: The Beaver Hall Group* is to acquaint us with the group's activities and *all* the artists who either held membership in or were closely associated with the Group. The project also makes strides in unpacking assumptions about Beaver Hall that have blossomed over the years. *1920s Modernism in Montreal* is an investigation of both history and historiography, and along the way it accomplishes two great things: physical assemblage of a remarkable body of works, many not seen publicly for decades, and remarkable depth of research given the paucity of records. As Des Rochers points out, the Group did not have "a manifesto or an official list of its members" and there is little written about its programs and activities.² So why should we care? Because many of the Beaver Hall artists were course-changing contributors to and proponents of modernity, particularly figurative, in Canada. Despite its short run as an organized entity, the Group, as outlined in the exhibition's introductory panel, "provided rich soil for abundant and substantial art-making, now inextricably linked with the history of art in Montreal, Quebec and Canada." The catalogue contains essays by leading scholars in the field – Des Rochers and

Foss, as well as Hélène Sicotte, Esther Trépanier and Kristina Huneault, who build upon specializations they have honed for years – and extends beyond the exhibition itself to become a valued document.

What's in a group? "Everything in the way of such groups does good, I think," wrote National Gallery director Eric Brown upon hearing of the Beaver Hall Group's establishment in Montreal.³ The Group officially lasted three years, from 1920 to 1923, little more than the length of its lease at 305 Beaver Hall Hill in Montreal. So much can happen in three years, or rather in the ensuing decades. Thereafter the Group's name stuck to several members, particularly the women, during their lifetimes and in the annals of Canadian art history. However small, informal or short-lived (some members later downplayed its importance), the Beaver Hall Group was at the time a network of support, an opportunity for exhibiting and financial pooling, an assertion of modernism as an aesthetic option, and for the women members an organization they could actually be a part of, when so many in Montreal were restricted to men.

Retrospectively, we like to hang our art historical and curatorial hats on groups. As Richard William Hill recently pointed out, "Solo exhibitions are extremely important, but it is often group shows that define artistic movements."⁴ In *1920s Modernism in Montreal*, the Beaver Hall Group becomes a lens through which to examine "a form of modernity peculiar to Montreal."⁵ "At the heart

of a changing city” in the post–First World War era,⁶ the Group is also an apt springboard for considering the broader context of cultural presentation in Montreal – theatre, cinema, dance and music, particularly jazz, the latter becoming a metaphor under the pen of contemporary critics for everything bad or good about modernism in art.

Focus on a historical group can sometimes lead to undue emphases, about which the curators and writers were all too aware, as they cautiously unpacked the group-ness of the Group in the publication. Historiography reveals two intertwined elephants in the room: one is the Group of Seven and the other the “feminization” of the Beaver Hall Group. From its inception in May 1920, just days after the Group of Seven’s inaugural exhibition and with A.Y. Jackson (1882–1974) elected *in absentia* as president, the Beaver Hall Group has been compared with its more famous Toronto counterpart in various ideological ways – from “derivative offshoot” and “supporting role” to the “Group of Seven’s aesthetic and ideological antithesis.”⁷

Along the way, and hand-in-hand, the Group has also been “feminized.” Since its first retrospective in 1966 at the National Gallery of Canada, it came to be defined, for the most part, as a group of women artists. Part of *1920s Modernism in Montreal*’s project is to put men back into the group, or rather to recognize the group’s gender parity, incomparable in its day. At times, the project can appear at pains to point out male erasure. (Quoting Blodwen Davies’s

general reference to “a particularly strong group” of Montreal women artists, within the context of reviewing a women’s art exhibition, for a women’s magazine, is hardly a convincing example. And Melvin Hammond’s inclusion of Montreal modernists in a chapter on women painters, in his 1930 *Painting and Sculpture in Canada*, speaks to a different form of gender segregation altogether.⁸) However, the group’s equal membership is key to understanding its modernity and, as Huneault points out, “a turning point in the history of Canadian art, as women began to play a greater role in its development.”⁹

At the project level, it’s hard not to continue comparison with the Group of Seven. In its thorough assembly of archival data, *1920s Modernism in Montreal* takes its cue from the Charles C. Hill brand of exhibition cataloguing and is not unlike his 1995 *The Group of Seven: Art for a Nation*. There is a wealth of resource material beyond the scholarly essays: sidebar discussions of individual works of art; timelines charting art school attendance; artist biographies clarifying degrees of Group involvement; and a history of exhibitions 1920–33 involving Group members. The publication is richly illustrated with not only artwork reproductions, but also archival images such as photographs, newspaper clippings, invitations, book illustrations, and artist cartoons. Admittedly, conditioned by online research, I wish I could click some of the detailed thumbnails to enlarge.

One consequence of so much investment is the impulse to include

everything found – a curatorial reluctance to cut (which can extend into exhibition didactics) – and occasionally there’s a whiff of that here. The fact that, for example, Hal Ross Perrigard’s (1891–1960) paintings went straight from an Art Association of Montreal exhibition to his art dealer four times, in 1920, 1922, 1923, and 1925, could perhaps go into a footnote. On the other hand, with such volume of detail, a solid base is, and at last, established upon which new scholarship can build. This getting-to-the-bottom of the Beaver Hall matter is extremely satisfying to the art historical soul.

1920s Modernism in Montreal is not just about assembling the record and setting it straight, it’s also about an expanded and a changed art historical outlook, particularly when it comes to the question of what constitutes an artists’ group. This approach is compelled in part by the lack of definitive membership lists and officialdom as well as the feminist feminization of the Beaver Hall of recent decades, which prioritized the women’s experiences over the group itself: “After decades of writing on the group’s women, including the ‘non-official’ members such as Heward, there can now be no question of omitting those artists whose manner of participation does not conform to the institutional criteria of more conventional scholarship.”¹⁰ What emerges is a diverse group of twenty-nine artists (give or take) that (more or less) shared a city and a building; contributed to similar local, national, and international exhibitions;

attended certain art schools and had the same teachers; and pursued common thematic and artistic approaches, which also intersected with Montreal’s broader modernist arts and entertainment scene in the 1920s and early 1930s. Our view of the Beaver Hall Group will never be quite the same again.

The Group had both modern and conservative members, and the exhibition is certainly a showcase of the former, further balancing the view, in more ways than just gender, of Canadian art in the early twentieth century, still heavily weighted toward the Group of Seven. The span covered, 1920 to 1933, in fact takes its cue from the latter group, extending past the Beaver Hall’s end-date to the year the Seven folded into the much larger, nation-wide Canadian Group of Painters, which many former Beaver Hall artists joined.

What was striking, in stepping into the exhibition, was the relative simplicity of the introductory space (even further pared down at the hosting institutions), reflecting the modest run and record of the Group. The playing of a 1920s film and two paintings depicting Beaver Hall Hill provided urban context for the Group’s locus. In a display case was the original invitation to the Group’s 1920 exhibition, the only remnant left of its very first show. Randolph Hewton’s (1888–1960) stunning *Miss Audrey Buller* (ca. 1925) was fittingly highlighted nearby, the only portrait confirmed to have been in a Beaver Hall exhibition. The adjacent section “A List of Artists as Introduction” conveyed how the Beaver Hall was more an informal network than

an official roll-call, with a rather intimate display of portraits that the artists made of each other and themselves. While not necessarily proclaiming the boldness of approach associated with the Beaver Hall, this section really revealed the diversity of its membership and associations.

Moving from these introductory spaces, the exhibition opened up into vibrant colour, where the figure for the most part prevailed. Thematic sections were primarily subject-based: The Humanized Landscape, Portraits of Women, Out on the Town, The Nude: New Canons of Feminine Beauty, and The Urban Landscape. Perspectives from Abroad featured paintings that had been in international exhibitions of Canadian art, while the “Jazz Wall” theme took its cue from critics of the day. These paintings really popped from their dramatic black-purple walls, the largest space in all the venues, encompassing “Jazz Wall” and Out on the Town. The Feminization of the Beaver Hall Group – though a necessary topic for analysis in the catalogue – felt a bit out of place in an exhibition space, art historiography being a difficult theme to constitute (oddly enough) through art. But didactics are also ignorable; they’re there if you want to read them, providing visitors with choice. The theme The Ongoing Adventure ends the exhibition with a “where they went after this” summation, introducing the Canadian Group of Painters (CGP).

Touring exhibitions bring different works and adjacencies to the fore at every

venue, with different space configurations and curatorial considerations. At the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, toward the end of the exhibition and before the pop-up tchotchkes shop, Lilius Torrance Newton’s (1896–1980) *Nude in the Studio* (1933) served as conclusion and new beginning, having been accepted into but then ejected from the 1933 CGP exhibition for what was deemed immodest nudity. In Hamilton, this nude with full pubic hair and green shoes appeared alongside Prudence Heward’s (1896–1947) *Girl Under a Tree* (1931), underscoring the boldness of bodies with which these women artists reversed traditional female objectification. At the Art Gallery of Windsor (where Newton’s nude apparently continued to have a fraught exhibition history and was not allowed to travel), *Girl Under a Tree* cleverly claimed a whole wall hovering between Humanized Landscape and Portraits of Women.

So rarely acknowledged in critical analyses of exhibitions is the difficulty in sourcing artworks – the long process of connecting a historical title, or a description in an exhibition review, or a past reproduction (often black and white and small), to an actual artwork somewhere in the world today – and then obtaining loans (not always granted) for the exhibition display. What one saw in 1920s *Modernism in Montreal* could only have been the result of an incredible amount of work on this front. There was so much to love and some sweet surprises, such as Sarah Robertson’s (1891–1948) rough sliver

of a horse-and-sleigh in *Laurentians in Winter* (ca. 1924), Randolph Hewton's jazzy pastiche in *Carmencita* (1922, or earlier), John Y. Johnstone's (1887–1930) quiet *Chinatown, Montreal* (1915–20) (so little is seen by this artist), and – echoing the smoke stacks of Adrien Hébert's (1890–1967) *Montreal Harbour* (1924) from afar – Prudence Heward's *The Immigrants* (1928) in full colour, which had been “location unknown” in the art historical world for a long time.

While a number of works were familiar to me from other exhibitions or even having used them in exhibitions myself, the pleasure and feat of 1920s *Modernism in Montreal* was finally being able to see them *together* in a public institution under the banner of Beaver Hall: André Biéler's (1896–1989) *The Shoe* (1931); Emily Coonan's (1885–1971) *Girl in Dotted Dress* (ca. 1923); Adrien Hébert's *Grain Elevator No. 3* (1928?); Prudence Heward's *At the Theatre* (1928), *Sisters of Rural Quebec* (1930), *Rollande* (1929), and the unbelievably modern *The Bather* (1930) (Heward really does steal the show a bit); Edwin Holgate's (1892–1977) *Ludivine* (1930) and *Totem Poles, Gitsegukla* (1927); Sarah Robertson's (1891–1948) *In the Nuns' Garden* (1933) and *The Blue Sleigh* (ca. 1924); Mabel May's (1877–1971) *Indian Woman, Oka* (1927); Kathleen Morris's (1893–1986) *Nuns with Children* (ca. 1927); Liliás Torrance Newton's *Self-Portrait* (ca. 1929); Anne Savage's (1896–1971) *The Plough* (1931–33); Regina Seiden's (1897–1991) *Dora* (ca. 1923). They're all here and many more. There's a satisfying tome-

marked resolution in this exhibition, after decades of constituting the Beaver Hall Group in different ways. One that allows us to ask, refreshingly: Where can we go from here?

NOTES

- 1 Alisa SIEGEL, *Who Gets to Be Remembered?*, Sunday Edition with Michael Enright, CBC, first broadcast 21 Feb. 2016.
- 2 Jacques DES ROCHERS, “Defining the Beaver Hall Group Today,” in *1920s Modernism in Montreal: The Beaver Hall Group*, ed. Jacques Des Rochers and Brian Foss (Montreal and London: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and Black Dog Publishing, 2015), 110.
- 3 Quoted in *ibid.*, 70.
- 4 Richard William HILL, “9 Group Exhibitions That Defined Contemporary Indigenous Art,” *Canadian Art* (28 July 2016). Accessed on 19 Aug. 2016, <https://canadianart.ca>.
- 5 Esther TRÉPANIÉ, “The Beaver Hall Group: A Montreal Modernity,” in *1920s Modernism in Montreal*, 162.
- 6 DES ROCHERS, “Setting the Stage: The Emergence of the Beaver Hall Group,” in *1920s Modernism in Montreal*, 40.
- 7 Kristina HUNEAULT, “‘As well as men’: The Gendering of Beaver Hall,” in *1920s Modernism in Montreal*, 276 and 279.
- 8 DES ROCHERS, “Defining the Beaver Hall Group Today,” 103.
- 9 HUNEAULT, “‘As well as men,’” 264.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 274.

ALICIA BOUTILIER is curator of Canadian historical art at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre and adjunct professor in the department of Art History and Art Conservation, Queen's University. She has produced numerous exhibitions and publications on Canadian historical art and visual culture, with emphasis on women artists, artistic groups, regional scenes, and collecting histories. Among her noteworthy curated and co-curated projects are *The Artist Herself: Self-Portraits by Canadian Historical Women Artists* (2015); *A Vital Force: The Canadian Group of Painters* (2013), for which she received an OAAG Curatorial Writing Award for Major Essay; *William Brymner: Artist, Teacher, Colleague* (2010); *Inspirational: The Collection of H.S. Southam* (2009); *Public Pictures/Private Homes: London's Lending Library of Canadian Art* (2007); *An Intimate Circle: The F.B. Housser Memorial Collection* (2005); and *4 Women Who Painted in the 1930s and 1940s* (1998).

MARIE-CLAUDE CORBEIL a obtenu un baccalauréat ès sciences (chimie) de l'Université de Montréal, puis s'est spécialisée en chimie inorganique et en cristallographie et a fait des études de maîtrise (1984) et de doctorat (1987), toujours à l'Université de Montréal. En 1988, elle s'est jointe au Laboratoire de recherche analytique de l'Institut canadien de conservation (ICC), où elle a effectué des analyses d'objets de musée et a mené des recherches sur les matériaux et les techniques des artistes canadiens du ^{xx}e siècle, dont Alfred Pelland, Tom Thomson et Jean Paul Riopelle. Elle est actuellement gestionnaire de la Division de la science de la conservation à l'ICC.

IAN C. FERGUSON is an independent scholar and former Canadian diplomat who, during his 35-year career, served in a variety of regions (Latin America, Africa, Middle East, United Nations). He received his MA in Art History in 2014 from Carleton University under the supervision of Adjunct Professor Diana Nemiroff. The title of his thesis was "Contemporary American Art at the National Gallery of Canada (1967–75): The Surprising Legacy of Brydon E. Smith." He authored the 26 November 2014 online article "Eiko Emori: Pioneering Graphic Designer" in the *National Gallery of Canada Magazine* (See: <http://www.ngcmagazine.ca/features/eiko-emori-pioneering-graphic-designer>). He serves on the board of Heritage Ottawa and volunteers as a docent at the National Gallery of Canada. Recently, he has lectured on the topic of the Art Deco architecture of Shanghai to the Canada-China Friendship Society of Ottawa, Art Deco Montreal, and the China Institute at the University of Alberta. (See <http://www.ccfso.org/2016-art-deco-shanghai>). He curated the exhibition *Joseph Beuys (1921–1986): The Man and His Multiples*, shown from October 2016 until January 2017 (National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives). Another area of research and ongoing interest concerns traditional, modern, and contemporary African art.

ÉLISABETH FOREST a obtenu une maîtrise en restauration des peintures de l'Université Queen's à Kingston (1997) et un baccalauréat en histoire de l'art de l'Université Laval à Québec (1993). En 1997, elle effectuait son stage de fin d'études en restauration au Frans Halsmuseum (Pays-Bas) sous la direction d'Ella Hendriks. Elle est restauratrice de peintures au Centre de conservation du Québec depuis 1998 où elle a restauré de nombreux tableaux, tant européens que canadiens, et développé un intérêt pour l'étude des matériaux et des techniques en peinture ancienne. Elle a publié quelques études de cas portant sur la restauration et la technique picturale de tableaux d'artistes tels que Claude Vignon, Aide-Créquy et William Berzcy. Elle est membre de l'Association canadienne des restaurateurs professionnels depuis 2002.

ADAM LAUDER recently completed all of the requirements of a PhD in the Graduate Department of Art at the University of Toronto. His current research focuses on Canadian artists' engagements with changing concepts of "information" in both the Modern and contemporary periods. He has contributed articles to scholarly journals including *Amodern*, *Art Documentation*, *Canadian Journal of Communication*, *Future Anterior*, *Imaginations*, *Journal of Canadian Studies*, *Technoetic Arts*, *The Journal of Canadian Art History*, *TOPIA*, and *Visual Resources* as well as features and shorter texts to magazines such as *Art Handler*, *Border Crossings*, *C*, *Canadian Art*, *e-flux*, *Flash Art*, *Hunter and Cook*, and *Millions*. He is the editor of *H& IT ON* (YYZ, 2012) and is the author of chapters appearing in *Finding McLuhan* (University of Regina Press, 2015) and *The Logic of Nature, The Romance of Space* (2010), as well as *Byproduct: On the Excess of Embedded Art Practices* (2010). He was guest curator of *Imaging Disaster* (with Cassandra Getty, Museum London, 2013) and of *It's Alive! Bertram Brooker and Vitalism* (Art Gallery of Windsor, 2009; Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 2009–10; Museum London, 2010–11). He is currently an instructor in the School of Creative Arts at the University of Windsor.

KARLA MCMANUS is an SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow at Queen's University in the Department of Art History and Art Conservation. She received her PhD from Concordia University in 2015 and has taught courses on the history of art and photography at Concordia and Queen's. Specializing in the study of photography and the environmental imaginary, her current research explores the work of wildfowl photographer Lorene Squire, whose images of Canadian wilderness and wildlife circulated in popular publications such as *LIFE* and *The Beaver* during the 1930s and 1940s. An essay on Canadian photographer Andreas Rutkauskas' documentary series of the Canadian-U.S. border is forthcoming from *Imaginations: Journal of Cross-Cultural Image Studies* (2017). Her article on the curatorial, nationalist, and aesthetic decisions

that informed the Walter Phillips Gallery's first exhibition of photography was published in the *Journal of Canadian Art History* (2016). McManus's writing on eco-photography and its influence on the global imagination can be found in *Captures. Figures, théories et pratiques de l'imaginaire* (2016). Her contribution to the *Canadian Photography History/Histoire de la photographie canadienne* group-authored article "Imaged Communities: Putting Canadian Photographic History in its Place," was published in the *Journal of Canadian Studies* (2015).

ELIZABETH MOFFATT a obtenu un baccalauréat spécialisé en chimie de l'Université Memorial de Terre-Neuve, et une maîtrise, avec spécialisation en chimie organique, de l'Université d'Ottawa. Elle s'est jointe à l'Institut canadien de conservation (ICC) en 1978 où elle s'est spécialisée dans l'analyse d'un large éventail de matériaux dans les collections de musée par spectroscopie infrarouge à transformée de Fourier, spectroscopie Raman et microscopie électronique à balayage couplée à la spectrométrie des rayons x par dispersion d'énergie. Son principal intérêt de recherche était la caractérisation des matériaux et des techniques employés par les artistes canadiens, notamment Paul-Émile Borduas, Cornelius Krieghoff, Tom Thomson, David Milne et Alfred Pellán. Elle a pris sa retraite en 2015.

DAVID P. SILCOX, C.M., has been a Senior Fellow of Massey College since 1992 and was President of Sotheby's Canada from 2001–13. His career has been in the broad cultural sector as professor and associate dean of the then new Faculty of Fine Arts, York University; first arts officer, Canada Council; first director of the cultural department, Metro Toronto; assistant deputy minister (culture), Department of Communications (federal); deputy minister, Ministry Culture and Communications (Ontario); and director, University of Toronto Art Centre, now Art Museum, University of Toronto. He has served on the boards of nearly forty cultural institutions including the Stratford Festival, Royal Conservatory of Music, National Museum of Broadcasting, National Film Board, Téléfilm Canada (chairman), and Canadian Producers and Artists Professional Relations Tribunal (chairman). He was the only Canadian on the Americas Nominating Committee for the prestigious international Japanese arts prizes, *Præmium Imperiale*. He is the Chairman of the Canadian Friends of Dulwich Picture Gallery, which mounted the startling exhibition *Painting Canada: The Group of Seven and Tom Thomson* and the recent *Emily Carr: From the Forest to the Sea*, and now is working on *Aftermath: The War Paintings of David Milne* scheduled for Dulwich in 2018. He chairs the annual Canadian Museum Awards jury. Silcox has written a great deal on Canadian artists and art in magazines and catalogues, and has done frequent radio and

television interviews. His books include the much expanded and about-to-be-reissued (April 2017) *Tom Thomson: The Silence and the Storm* (with Harold Town), *Christopher Pratt, The Group of Seven and Tom Thomson*, and the definitive biography of David Milne, *Painting Place*, and the fully illustrated two-volume *Catalogue Raisonné* of Milne's paintings, the only such work on a major Canadian artist.

ROBIN SIMPSON is an art historian, curator, and student based in Vancouver. He is currently enrolled in the PhD program in Art History at the University of British Columbia and holds a doctoral fellowship with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. He earned his MA at Concordia University, Montreal (2011) where he completed a thesis on the experimental school and co-operative Rochdale College (1968–75) and its influence within Canadian contemporary art. This research was conducted under the auspices of Fonds de recherche sur la société et la culture. His current research investigates video art of the 1970s and 1980s and the interplay of video technology between the artist's studio and clinical psychotherapeutic contexts. He is a contributing author to *A Play to be Played Indoors or Out: This Book is a Classroom* (ed. Corinn Gerber, Lucie Kolb, and Romy Rüegger, Passenger Books, 2012), *Oh, Canada* (ed. Denise Markonish, Mass MoCA/MIT Press, 2012), *Heteropolis* (ed. Adaptive Actions, Leonard and Bina Ellen Gallery, 2013) and *Sarai 9: Projections* (ed. Raqs Media Collective and Shveta Sarda, Sarai/Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, 2013).

LIZ WYLIE has been curator of the Kelowna Art Gallery since 2007. Previously she held the position of University of Toronto Art Curator for eleven years. As well as her work as a curator, she has been writing reviews and articles on contemporary and historical Canadian art since 1977. At the Kelowna Art Gallery in 2010 she began a program of bi-annual exhibitions called the Okanagan Artists Series. In 2009 Wylie launched the programming of a new forty-foot-long satellite gallery space at the Kelowna International Airport with six-month-long solo installations of work by Okanagan artists. Her recent publications include monographs on the Canadian artists Keith Langergraber, Keith Harder, John Hartman, Bill Rodgers, Christos Dikeakos, John Hall, and Landon Mackenzie. Wylie holds an MFA in art history from Concordia University in Montreal. She is a past president of the Ontario Association of Art Galleries.

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Martha Langford, Editor-in-chief
JOURNAL OF CANADIAN ART HISTORY
1455 de Maisonneuve West, EV 3.725
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, H3G 1M8
jcah@concordia.ca
<http://jcah-ahac.concordia.ca>

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Martha Langford, rédactrice en chef
ANNALES D'HISTOIRE DE L'ART CANADIEN
Université Concordia
1455, boul. de Maisonneuve ouest, EV 3.725
Montréal (Québec) H3G 1M8
jcah@concordia.ca
<http://jcah-ahac.concordia.ca/fr>

