

qui se situe le sens d'une différence dont nous avons encore à évaluer la signification? Entre le portrait naïf de l'abbé Hubert (cat. no 7) et celui plus sentimental de Napoléon Aubin (cat. no 61), une histoire s'est instaurée, visible au niveau formel comme sur un plan technique. Mais il se peut que nous ne maîtrisions pas encore la matière que représente les arts graphiques pour que nous nous permettions des recoupements entre les images et des considérations d'un ordre symbolique. Tant que la question de l'ordonnance des faits se rapportant à cet art n'aura pas été posée sans confusion, nous nous reposerons sur la chronologie pour donner une ordonnance dans le temps à l'apparition de ces planches. Cependant, nous négligerons une de leur fonction première qui a été la transmission des styles et nous assisterons à une séparation, comme dans ce catalogue, entre l'histoire de la technique et l'étude descriptive de la planche. Le catalogue de cette exposition devient un ouvrage de référence pour la somme d'informations qu'il contient et pour être une première publication sur le sujet des débuts de l'estampe au Canada. La méthode muséographique, qui consiste en l'identification, le repérage des lieux de conservation (bien que certains lieux de conservation qui étaient connus et qui auraient bien dû y figurer aient été omis) et la bibliographie rattachée à chacune des planches, est constituée avec minutie et en fait un ouvrage à retenir.

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Notes:

¹ La traduction du titre est ambiguë parce qu'il est difficile de comprendre pourquoi l'on a insisté sur le terme d'«estampe imprimée» créant une redondance alors que le titre anglais était très général.

² Cette distinction appelle plusieurs nuances puisque l'on retrouve également des gravures de mode, une scène allégorique et deux sujets religieux.

³ Il faut mentionner ici l'excellent travail de Marie Tremaine, ainsi que mon mémoire de maîtrise présenté à l'Université de Montréal et déposé aux Archives publiques du Canada, en 1977, intitulé *Les origines de l'art de l'estampe au Québec*.

THE GALLERY SCHOOL 1939-1980 A CELEBRATION

Shirley Yanover:
Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 1980
63 pages, 59 ill., \$2.00

Art education in Canada is becoming aware of its past and is searching for its roots. Its history coincides in time with that of the educational programme of the Art Gallery of Ontario. Shirley Yanover has written an account of the Gallery School on the occasion of its fiftieth birthday, tracing its development from its origins in the twenties to its present day active and varied role as an educational department.

An important person in the history of the Gallery School and in the history of Canadian art education was Arthur Lismer. Lismer was responsible for setting up the children's art classes at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1930. From 1930 to 1938 he organized and ran a large range of educational activities which included public lectures, extension exhibitions, and gallery tours. His main contribution, however, to Canadian art education, was his work with children. It is Yanover's account of the Lismer years, and her quotations from the people who worked with him, that gives this little book its place in the work of documenting the roots of contemporary art teaching in Canada.

Inspired by Franz Cizek and the writings of John Dewey, Lismer believed in allowing the children to paint from imagination and express their own ideas. Supported by grants from the Carnegie Corporation, he experimented with programmes, ways of organizing classes and motivating art activities. He emphasized creativity and "free expres-

sion" at the same time involving children in large group projects and pageants that they would research in the Gallery and work on for months. An inspired artist and charismatic leader, he gathered around him a group of dedicated teachers whom he whipped up into a frenzy of activity and directed towards valuing child art for its own sake.

Many of the teachers and students who worked with him became important influences in Canadian art and art education. Amongst them Yanover mentions Dorothy Medhurst, Norah McCullough, Erma Lennox Sutcliffe, Audrey Taylor, Aba Bayefsky, William Withrow, Michael Snow, Bruno Bobak and Edwy Cooke. Cooke remembers painting on Saturday mornings in the Galleries as a child, surrounded by Group of Seven paintings, on a roll of wrapping paper spread out on the Gallery floor. He returned later on to teach adult painting classes, joining other Toronto artists like Jack Bush and York Wilson.

Lismer left Toronto in 1939 and came to Montréal to organize the Art Centre at the Museum of Fine Arts, where Anne Savage, Ethel Seath and others were teaching children on Saturday mornings. As Dorothy Medhurst reports:

I think that the people that he left behind were very excited about the whole thing... saw almost endless possibilities, and were perfectly capable of carrying them on. While Lismer was always a tremendous inspiration, and a tremendous leader, he was never a leader in the sense of organizing something, you swum (*sic*) or sank on your own.

This lack of organizational ability and his fear of interference from organized educational authority Lismer brought to Montréal, and perhaps accounts for his continuing crusade against public edu-

cation. He objected to systemization, believing that it would kill spontaneity and self-expression, the cornerstones of his philosophy and his teaching method. Rather than work for reform from within the system as Anne Savage did, he preferred to set up an alternative to art education in the schools, convinced that the schools would follow eventually. His influence, therefore was felt more by individuals than by the educational system as a whole. As a high school art teacher during the fifties, I remember following Lismer around the galleries as he led groups of children through an exhibition. Like the Pied Piper, he held the children in his spell using his personal magic, combined with a solid knowledge of both art history and the process of making art. I learned many "tricks" which I subsequently borrowed for use with my own students on gallery visits.

After the war, due to pressures from within, the Art Centre and the Children's Classes at the Art Gallery of Ontario were discontinued. The children's classes resumed in 1947 in a restricted form and the ensuing years saw a slow growth toward extending community services again. The balance of Yanover's book while lacking the spirit of Lismer's story adequately documents the ups and downs of the educational programme.

In 1977, with the opening of the Activity Centre, designed by Jim Williamson, head of Education Services, and the appointment of Jim Thornton as its director, the Gallery School became a physical presence again. Following in the tradition established by Lismer, Jim Thornton is an artist. As Williamson says, "...the tradition of the Gallery School is to have it run by an Artist... and to have only producing artists as instructors...."

The Gallery School is a valuable source of enrichment for its students and a place to test innovative teaching

methods. Art education in Canada can profit by alternative schools such as this one. It is sad that museum trustees do not always see their educational function in the same light as Arthur Lismer did. In his first "Educational Proposal" to the Education Committee of the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1926, he wrote, "...it is through the children that we wish for a new world, in which art and beauty may find a place in the common expression of living."

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