

**The Concordia University Art
Index to Nineteenth Century
Canadian Periodicals.**

Edited by Hardy GEORGE
Concordia University, 1981
304 pages, \$19.00

Art was not a theme that absorbed the editors of Canadian periodicals during the nineteenth century. The general view was that the conditions for a flowering of the arts had yet to be achieved, and the editors tended to share this opinion, with regret. "The taste of our colonial fellow-subjects is almost at the zero point" lamented the editor of the *Anglo-American Magazine* in 1854, although he went on to suggest that imported art magazines might help to change this. And indeed artistic activity developed a momentum throughout the last half of the century with the establishment of the first public art gallery in 1860 in Montréal, the introduction of art schools into the educational system, and the coming together of artists into lasting associations, beginning with the Royal Canadian Academy and the Ontario Society of Artists in 1881.

While magazines solely devoted to art were not a part of this activity, a lay readership for art reviews and criticism, and artistic reproductions and photographs soon existed. The general interest magazines with their occasional articles about art and regular "Art" columns were able to satisfy the need for information. The authors included artists Napoleon Bourassa, Daniel Fowler and W.A. Sherwood, and several fearless critics who hid under "noms de plume:" Jimmie Rembrandt, "Lynn C. Doyle," and "Ignoramus." More often the "Art" columns and exhibition reviews were unsigned. Engravings in imported magazines, especially in the illustrated weeklies had educated the general public to an appreciation of art and pictorial imagery. With growing national awareness, and pride in the vast Canadian landscape, domestic illustrated magazines were needed. They attracted masters of the quick sketch and photographers, in many cases drawn from their easels and studios to roam and record in the far north and west, becoming the

popularizers of a new art form, the artistic reproduction.

Professor Hardy George and his team of Canadian art history graduate students are the compilers of the *Concordia University Art Index*. By culling, extracting and analyzing articles about art, and a multitude of illustrations from thirty-one Canadian magazines, they have given us more than bleak references to nineteenth-century published writings about art. The observant browser can effortlessly step into nineteenth-century shoes, and move around in the art world that existed then. In considering the relative popularity of the best known artists, no one should be surprised that Reynolds, Gainsborough and Turner are cited 28, 15 and 22 times respectively, and Daumier and Manet only 3 times each. Perhaps 12 mentions of Monet is unexpected. Among historical figures and public personae, a few stand out as the favoured subjects of photographers and engravers. The Canadian landscape in its untamed aspects presented a particular challenge to the talents and the stamina for travel of the illustrators. The reader may in many cases learn for the first time about illustrators and photographers whose names were as familiar to their contemporaries as those artists whose signatures adorned canvases in the public art galleries, among them Eugene Haberer, Alexander Henderson, Dickson Patterson and E.J. Russell. In other cases the *Index* introduces one to an unfamiliar but extensive body of work by well-known artists as represented by their magazine illustrations.

The observations that follow are intended to serve as cautionary notes to the user of the *Index* rather than as fundamental criticisms. Student indexers come and go; some are meticulous while others are not as conscientious when submitting to the discipline of indexing. Revision after the fact is tedious, if not humanly impossible. If it had been possible to computerize the project from the beginning, with built-in codes and reminders, it would have been easier to maintain an even degree of detail and consistent adherence to editorial policy. Instead, we have a product which is "quick and dirty" in many ways, but still as delightful and unexpected as a grab-bag of goodies,

and infinitely more browsable than more reliable systematic indexes.

In the *Index* we have a new Canadian "book of lists." This reviewer was held entranced from Central Station in Montréal to disembarkation in Toronto by the innumerable lists of cross references appearing under a number of carefully chosen headings: "Art Schools," "Art Societies," "Engravings," "Illustrations," "Lithographers," "Painters," "Photographers," "Sculptors," "Sketches," each with lists of practitioners of the art. Under the names of cities are listed the buildings and monuments which have been discussed or pictorially reproduced. The lists are probably the most absorbing feature of the *Index*, and they lead one on a merry chase from reference to reference, finally winding up at the beginning again for another pursuit. "Sculptors, Canadian" is a disappointingly short list, with no new discoveries, reinforcing the general impression that plaster casts and models, monuments to the worthies, and architectural carving and reliefs were the closest approximations to sculpture with which Canadians were familiar. The comment by a *Bystander* critic in 1880 that "sculpture seems dead" was apparently apt.

Because the lists are such a prominent and delightful feature of the *Index*, it is all the more regrettable that there are significant omissions. Despite a stated policy in the introduction that "illustrations having more than one creator or medium, such as an engraving after a photograph, are listed under both artists' names, if known, media, and subject," there are almost as many examples of this policy being ignored as there are of it being carried out. Sketches by J.D. Kelly, E.W. Morrison, P. Roy and many others for illustrations in the *Illustrated War News* have not entitled these artists to inclusion in the list of names under "Sketches, Canadian." Photographers Fred Timms, the Rev. J.B. Silcox, and Brady, who are mentioned in connection with reproductions of their work are not entered under their own names nor do they appear in the lengthy lists of "Photographers." Numerous references to photographs by Notman and Fraser scattered throughout the *Index* do not necessarily re-appear under the photographers' names.

Readers accustomed to more systematic indexes will perhaps regret the lack of precision and completeness in artists' names. Many names of lesser known artists have been repeated simply as found, without verification. Riel Rebellion illustrator John David Kelly is entered simply as "Kelly," just as he signed his work. To find women artists who worked under both their maiden and married names, it is necessary to keep handy a copy of J. Russell Harper's *Early Painters and Engravers in Canada*. Both Mary Bell Eastlake and Maria Morris Miller appear in connection with their early work in the *Index* under their less familiar maiden names, but not under their married names. Without an authority list for place names, an indexer can easily go astray, especially if he has a precarious hold on Canadian geography. Newark, the old name for Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., is assigned to New Jersey. "Bytown, U.C." is unrecognized to be present-day Ottawa, and Toronto in its former identity as "York" stands alone without provincial or national qualification.

The choice of magazines for indexing is inevitably contentious. I myself would not quarrel with the weighting towards reproductions in the late nineteenth-century pictorials where the interest is more often documentary than artistic. Too often Canadian iconography has been summarily dismissed by those who judge it from a European aesthetic, without considering Canadian art in its social and cultural context. If another round of indexing is contemplated, I recommend further art-oriented titles for inclusion: *Arion; Canadian Journal of Art* (1880-81) and *Our Monthly; a magazine of Canadian literature, science and art* (1896). Add to these the agricultural journals and women's magazines, a mine of artists' gossip, tips on art and craft techniques, and commentary on cultural events.

Without annotations, questions are tantalizingly raised in the titles of articles which can only be answered by consulting the articles themselves. Who was "Une dame canadienne peintre" recorded by Michel Bibaud in the *Encyclopédie Canadienne* in 1842? A Madame B...t, it turns out, residing in the village of S... on the St. Lawrence River, artistic genius and portraitist extraordinary. "Notre pays, et souvent

nos campagnes, recèlent des talents qui mériteraient d'être connus plus qu'ils ne le sont généralement." Taking a cue from Bibaud, one might add that the *Concordia University Art Index to Nineteenth Century Canadian Periodicals* has taken us well along the path towards re-discovery of our artists and illustrators, and while the result may be flawed, the service to the recovery of the Canadian artistic past is welcome and overdue.

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**Royal Academy of
Arts/Académie royale des arts du
Canada
Exhibitions and members
1880-1979**

Evelyn de Rostaing McMANN
University of Toronto Press, 1981
xviii, 448 pages, \$60.00

La bibliothéconomie a poussé l'art de préparer un index à un point de raffinement où les conventions semblent obéir à une logique dont seuls quelques initiés peuvent saisir toute la subtilité et toutes les nuances. L'ouvrage de G. Norman Knight, *Indexing, The Art of, A Guide to indexing books and periodicals* (Londres, 1979) vient, souvent avec humour, mettre un peu d'ordre dans cet art dont la pratique exige des qualités toutes particulières. Il faut donc féliciter Madame McMann d'avoir entrepris et dactylographié de façon aussi claire un tel travail que consulteront plusieurs générations de chercheurs canadiens et étrangers.

L'index des artistes membres et des exposants invités de l'Académie royale des arts du Canada (A.R.A.C.) et des oeuvres qu'ils ont présentées (et non le contraire comme le titre pourrait le suggérer) aux différentes expositions organisées ou parrainées par l'Académie, se présente comme un modèle de clarté et de simplicité ainsi que l'on en juge par la lecture des remarques techniques préliminaires (pp. xi à xiii). Les artistes sont listés par ordre alphabéti-

que et pour chacun d'eux, les oeuvres citées aux catalogues d'exposition sont données chronologiquement et par ordre numérique. Les informations connexes dans les catalogues sont également mentionnées: adresse de l'artiste, son statut à l'Académie, le médium employé et les dimensions de l'oeuvre, et à l'occasion le prix et le nom du prêteur.

L'auteur a compilé la liste de toutes les expositions préparées par l'A.R.A.C., liste qu'elle fournit en annexe, ainsi que la liste de membres des différents conseils de l'Académie avec le poste qu'ils y ont occupé. Madame McMann est intervenue à quelques reprises en compilant ses listes: elle a eu l'amabilité de souligner le prénom usuel de certains artistes et la ténacité de compléter les informations sur les lieux et dates de naissance et de décès de beaucoup d'artistes dont plusieurs sont aujourd'hui peu connus. De plus, elle a fourni une piste de recherche importante en rédigeant la liste des portraits d'un artiste qui furent exposés à l'A.R.A.C., ces indications iconographiques sont regroupées à la fin de la notice de l'artiste portraituré (ex. Dyonnet, p. 113).

Les autres interventions, d'un caractère non systématique, semblent moins heureuses. Ainsi on aimerait retrouver les titres des oeuvres tels que cités originalement, afin de ne pas avoir à toujours vérifier le titre dans les catalogues dont peu de bibliothèques possèdent une série complète. Indépendamment de ce qui pourrait sembler une faute de frappe (Capello, 1880, 27, p. 61; Robert Harris, 1883, 35, p. 173), l'on remarque que souvent les articles au début d'un titre ont été omis, la typographie originale du titre a été changée et que même des corrections ont été apportées (ex. Paul Peel, 1883, 10, p. 321 se lit dans le catalogue: *The Sardine Fishery of Cape Finisterre, France*, alors qu'il est retranscrit: *Sardine fishery of Cape Finistère, France*). Certains titres sont même présentés avec une inversion (ex. Alfred Boisseau, 1882, 111, p. 40 se lit originalement: *Portrait of Mr Barron*, alors que l'index indique: *Mr Barron, portrait*).

L'auteur indique dans ses notes préliminaires qu'elle a corrigé puis indiqué les erreurs typographiques par l'indication *misprint*. Ce genre de correction