

qui les ont mises en oeuvre? Qui sait, si nous n'atteindrions pas d'emblée un plus grand respect et une meilleure compréhension de la femme indienne? Ce sont là semble-t-il, les questions qui ont soutenu l'effort de l'auteur tout au long de sa recherche; questions dont elle a su nous communiquer les réponses avec un fervent enthousiasme.

Elle même tisserande, elle s'est mise à reconstituer sur le métier, les innombrables et ingénieuses solutions que les femmes tlingits avaient employées dans la fabrication des "couvertures chilkats". Son effort me paraît se situer tout à fait dans la ligne de ce que l'archéologue de Cambridge, John Coles appelle l'*archeology by experiment* et qui consiste à reconstituer empiriquement les techniques préhistoriques. Ce genre d'approche comporte la vérification d'un modèle dans la fidélité de sa reproduction. Pour ne citer qu'un exemple, on sait comment la reproduction des outils paléolithiques nous a aidé non seulement à comprendre les techniques de leur fabrication mais bien souvent à orienté la recherche des archéologues vers le type d'indices qui leur permette de distinguer un atelier d'un autre site. L'examen des techniques débouche également sur une meilleure compréhension des groupes sociaux qui les avaient d'abord utilisées.

L'étude des techniques de tissage aussi complexes que celles impliquées dans la fabrication des "couvertures chilkats", ne peut que favoriser une meilleure compréhension de la place de la femme dans les sociétés indiennes de la Côte du Nord Ouest. Serais-je accusé de chauvinisme, si je voyais dans le livre de Cheryl Samuel, un exemple réussi de ce qu'une histoire de l'art spécifiquement féministe pourrait donner? Il ressort en tout cas de la lecture de son livre et de l'examen des nombreux croquis de Sara Porter, un tel respect pour l'intelligence, le savoir et le goût de ces anciennes tisserandes qu'il me semble au contraire que l'ouvrage constitue une contribution importante à la grande cause du féminisme.

Il n'ait plus guère que le mythe à faire preuve d'une aussi grande complexité. Les techniques de tissage ne le font pas sous un mode narratif, mais sous un mode plus abstrait et purement for-

mel. Ne faudrait-il pas chercher de leur côté une analogie plus féconde afin de comprendre leur structure plutôt que dans la musique classique comme l'a fait Claude Lévi-Strauss? N'aurions pas ainsi l'avantage de rester dans la même aire culturelle? Et qui sait si, après avoir longtemps suivi cette voie, nous ne serions pas ramener par le truchement des mythes eux-mêmes, à la signification des motifs qui apparaissent sur les "couvertures chilkats"?

François-M. Gagnon

Notes

1 Franz BOAS, *Primitive Art*, Dover, (1927), 1955, p. 108.

2 *Id.*, p. 216.

FitzGerald as Printmaker: A catalogue raisonné of the first complete exhibition of the printed works

Helen COY

Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1982

116 pages, 119 ills.,

\$15.50 (paper), \$30.00 (cloth)

FitzGerald as Printmaker is the latest publication on the work of noted Winnipeg artist and teacher Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald (1890-1956). It records the initial attempt to exhibit the complete body of prints done by this artist over a twenty-six year period, from 1922 to 1947. The exhibition was held in Gallery 111 of the University of Manitoba's School of Art. Helen Coy, former Curator of the FitzGerald Study Collection, co-ordinated the project and wrote most of the catalogue.

Although FitzGerald is best known as a draughtsman and painter, he left behind an appreciable number of prints, especially drypoints and linocuts. He began experimenting with drypoint at the Art Students' League in New York in 1922. Back in Winnipeg the following year, he took up linocutting, completing the first known of his annual Christmas cards in the medium that year. Monoprinting, engraving, wood engraving, lithography and sten-

cil printing were additional techniques which he attempted.

FitzGerald said to his students, "Consider technique as a means by which you say what you have to say, and not an end in itself. What you say is of the first importance; how you say it is always secondary."¹ His printmaking bears out this message. Never does technique draw attention to itself. The methods he employed were direct and simple, and always closely allied to drawing. They allowed him variations on those techniques used in his drawings and paintings to search out form and depict light. It would appear that FitzGerald was not interested in exploring the possibilities of printmaking, but sought a practical solution to the occasional need for multiple images of his work.

FitzGerald as Printmaker is the second major exhibition catalogue out of Winnipeg on this artist in the past five years, succeeding the Winnipeg Art Gallery's 1978 *Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: The Development of an Artist*. (See *Journal of Canadian Art History*, V, 1, 1980, for a review of this publication.) Like its predecessor, *FitzGerald as Printmaker* has considerable visual appeal and is important as a record of the artist's work. Unfortunately, and also like its predecessor, unresolved textual problems all but negate its credibility as a serious piece of scholarship.

Essentially, the catalogue is an updating and reworking of a Master of Arts thesis, *The Prints of L.L. FitzGerald*, completed by this author at Carleton University in 1979. Later that year Hugh W. Morrison of Toronto, former son-in-law of the late artist, made accessible much previously withheld information when he placed his considerable collection of FitzGerald prints, many unique in their documentation by the artist, on permanent loan with the FitzGerald Study Collection at the University of Manitoba. Helen Coy writes in her "Acknowledgements": "Mr. Morrison's splendid collection has ensured that the University has available the largest and most complete resource anywhere of FitzGerald's printed works."

Coy introduces the catalogue in a commendable manner with "An Autobiography," part of a previously unpublished application which FitzGerald made for a Guggenheim Fel-

lowship in 1941. She writes: "This interesting document... amounts to a biography of the artist to age fifty, in his own words." Not as successful is the entry which follows. "On LeMoine FitzGerald" is a sentimental piece, something which unfortunately seems obligatory for a FitzGerald publication. This particular one, written by Hugh Morrison, offers no fresh insights into the man, and contains nothing which relates to FitzGerald as a printmaker. One might assume that, since Morrison owns such an important body of FitzGerald prints, he would have something to say about them. There is also a need for Morrison to verify his factual information. Describing his former father-in-law, he writes: "On his last visit to Toronto in 1941 to serve on an Art Jury... ." It is well-documented, including Coy's own "Chronology," p. 110, that FitzGerald's last visit to Toronto was twelve years later, in 1953, to judge that year's art show at the Canadian National Exhibition.

The most troublesome portions of the catalogue are the next two entries, Coy's "FitzGerald's Printmaking Techniques," and Arnold Saper's "FitzGerald's Methods." Coy outlines the School of Art's plan of action for conclusively categorizing the prints, many of which have suffered improper designations over the years. She describes the sequence of first consulting Professor Saper, senior printmaking instructor at the school, who in turn suggested that the plates in the Study Collection be inspected and photographed under high magnification. Next, the two plates held by the Agnes Etherington Art Centre of Kingston, Ontario (not Hamilton, as stated in the catalogue), were also borrowed for inspection and photography. Finally, she continues, "The drypoint plate for *Backyards, Water Street*, held at the National Gallery of Canada, was examined there under high magnification," giving credit in a footnote to this author's thesis. That this information is listed third in the sequence is not only misleading but erroneous. The inspection done at the National Gallery of Canada predated that of the University of Manitoba by approximately two years. What the catalogue states as being proven at the University of Manitoba, namely that FitzGerald's inta-

glio prints are not etchings, but dry-points and engravings, had already been proven conclusively at the National Gallery and documented in the thesis. Saper states: "The FitzGerald Study Centre has obtained conclusive evidence that these prints are dry-point...." The conclusive evidence was already there. Apart from expanding upon this evidence, and publishing some excellent photographs of the magnified plates, that which the School of Art actually added to the existing scholarship on the subject was the fact that two of the plates are engravings rather than drypoints.

In an attempt to clarify the issue, Coy sent a letter to this author some weeks after the catalogue was published, apologizing because she had suddenly remembered having omitted, inadvertently, an entire paragraph on page seven describing this author's research into, and conclusions concerning, the etching versus drypoint debate. The information which that paragraph contained is absolutely essential, not only for the clarity of the catalogue entry, but also for an understanding of the evolution of scholarship pertaining to this issue. It is unfortunate that the publication is severely weakened by this oversight.

Saper is to be commended for his concise and lucid explanations of the terms intaglio, engraving, etching and drypoint. However, his entry does not bear out its title, "FitzGerald's Methods." Etching was not one of FitzGerald's methods, and nowhere does Saper, in his detailed explanation of the process and his thoughts on FitzGerald as a printmaker, point out this fact.

The strength of the publication lies in its catalogue section, which includes entries for 119 prints, all reproduced, most in actual scale. The catalogue will be a valued reference for this reason alone. At the time of publication it was thought that FitzGerald's complete output of prints had been represented, but Helen Coy, in correspondence with this writer, reveals that two additional works have since been reported to her. Even without reference to these recent findings, however, one must still question Gallery 111 Director Dale Amundson's claim, in his "Foreword," that FitzGerald's "complete graphic work" is documented in the catalogue, as only

brief references are made to the artist's huge body of drawings.

Coy chose four separate classifications for the prints: fine art, Christmas card relief prints, utility prints and monoprints. Problems with this system include the facts that all of these works, except the utility prints, are arguably fine art prints, and that the Christmas greeting cards are not all relief. Several are intaglio, and one is a stencil print. The catalogue is not seriously impaired by this problem of semantics, however, as each work is not only thoroughly documented but reproduced and indexed for reference purposes.

In her major essay, entitled "FitzGerald as Printmaker," Coy delves into the question of the importance to the artist both of his experiences at the Art Students' League and the words of artist/critic John Ruskin. These and other internationally significant factors in FitzGerald's development are discussed successfully in relation to the single greatest influence on the artist — his natural environment. Noticeably missing in the essay, however, is any concentrated attempt to place FitzGerald within a larger printmaking context. Coy suggests that his initial experimentation with drypoint in New York might relate to John Sloan, a printmaking instructor at the Art Students' League. Sloan was an important rebel against the American emulation of nineteenth-century art, especially as promoted by the Brooklyn Society of Etchers. Coy points out that FitzGerald might have responded to Sloan's beliefs that "line is the most powerful device of drawing" and that "etching is a way of drawing — purely a drawing technique." Although not without potential merit, this proposed connection between Sloan and FitzGerald is tenuous. Sloan was not one of FitzGerald's instructors, and there is no evidence in diaries or correspondence to suggest that any relationship between the two existed.

Within the Canadian context, Coy mentions that a group of printmakers was active in Winnipeg during the twenties and thirties. She cites H. Eric Bergman and W.J. Phillips as the two most significant of these. That, however, is the extent of the exploration. Although it is unlikely that FitzGerald had any important contact with other Winnipeg printmakers, some analysis

of the situation is necessary, if only to determine why he worked apart from these people. One might wonder if FitzGerald's apparent reluctance to explore the wood engraving medium to any appreciable extent was due to Phillips' reputation as a master of that medium. Also, FitzGerald's first principal at the Winnipeg School of Art, C. Keith Gebhardt, now living in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is on record as stating that he and FitzGerald pulled drypoints together on the school press.² That particular printmaking relationship should have been explored, as well. Although Coy is correct in her view that serious printmaking did not hold the place in Canada in the first half of this century that it does now, the subject does merit more national coverage than it received in the essay.

On the national level, a very important comparison that could have been initiated and developed is one between FitzGerald and David B. Milne. Milne was pulling his famous colour drypoints during the period when FitzGerald was involved with the same medium. Like Milne, FitzGerald restricted printmaking to a simple procedure, an extension of drawing, or, especially in Milne's case, painting. Neither artist showed an inclination to explore printmaking processes for the technical possibilities inherent in them, but each did explore the drypoint process to a considerable degree for his own specific purpose. Each artist evolved a highly individualistic handling of drypoint (and in FitzGerald's case, linocut as well), with the prints more strongly reflecting their larger concerns as artists more than any interest in the medium *per se*. Since Milne's extensive colour drypoint output has already been comprehensively catalogued in R.L. Tovell's 1980 *Reflections in a Quiet Pool*, comparative references to this publication could have added an interesting dimension to *FitzGerald as Printmaker*. Unfortunately, Milne is only briefly mentioned in the publication.

Coy's essay on "The Christmas Greetings" describes in depth this aspect of FitzGerald's production. She advances the interesting idea that the artist used the annual card as a form of "modest self-promotion." A somewhat troubling aspect of this essay, however, is Coy's attempt to deal with the emotional content of FitzGerald's

work. At the end of paragraph two she describes how in these works "he recorded directly what he saw while not revealing what he felt." In the previous sentence, however, she had claimed: "The series... confirms his delight in vision." Is not delight a feeling? Later in the essay, when discussing the use of light in the series, she states: "The feeling induced was more one of nostalgia for a hushed and silent world..." Is she not suggesting, in these instances, that he did indeed reveal his feelings?

An intriguing aspect of FitzGerald's printmaking is the posthumous restrikes made in 1972, sixteen years after the artist's death. These reprints were authorized by the artist's daughter, Patricia L.F. Morrison, who had in her possession a number of her father's plates and blocks. FitzGerald had never made any effort to indicate that the edition from a plate or block had been terminated. In "The Posthumous Restrikes" Coy analyzes the differences between the originals and the restrikes, giving expert guidance to anyone seeking such information.

The "Appendix" contains an interesting section entitled "Notes by FitzGerald," in which pages of his actual notes and diagrams pertaining to printmaking are reproduced. Although the "Chronology" is the most thorough on the artist to date, in view of the nature of the publication there is one serious omission. Since Coy deemed it important to note the National Gallery of Canada's first purchase of a FitzGerald painting in 1918, she should have noted also its first and only purchase of a FitzGerald print. The National Gallery had purchased a copy of the drypoint *Backyards, Water Street* in 1930.

FitzGerald as Printmaker is a handsome catalogue. Coy's decision to reproduce *Backyards, Water Street* in actual size on the cover was an excellent one, as the work is a classic in FitzGerald's oeuvre. Despite the imperfections of the publication, the reader is left with a very strong concept of the artist as printmaker. *FitzGerald as Printmaker* is an important contribution to the growing body of scholarship on a major Canadian artist.

Kevin Forrest
Extension Educator
Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery
Regina, Sask.

Notes:

- 1 L.L.F. as quoted by Ferdinand ECKHARDT in "Introduction," *Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald/A Memorial Exhibition*, (catalogue) Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1958, unpaginated.
- 2 C.K. GEBHARDT to K.A. FORREST, Correspondence of October 2, 1978.

Errata: VOLUME VI No. 2, 1983

- i) à la page 188, les lignes 7 à 11 devaient se lire comme suit:
p' travaux faits tant en voyage p' le retable que p' frais faits à l'Église... 250''²³.
C'est donc bel et bien dans la première église de pierre de Neuville, un édifice construit entre 1696 et 1715, que fut installé l'ancien "retable" de la chapelle du premier palais épiscopal de Québec²⁴.
- ii) à la page 192, les photographies 11 et 12 ont été interverties.

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