

An Educational Journey:  
Women's Art Training in Canada and Abroad, 1880-1929

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## ABSTRACT

An Educational Journey:  
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Lori Beavis

By describing the art training of Canadian women artists, this thesis will document the presence of women in Canadian, English and French art schools from the 1870s to 1929. The nineteenth-century feminine ideal of the accomplished young woman aided in the development of women's artistic sensibilities in the eyes educators. Upon enrolment in art schools, women often found they were subject to segregation, restricted access to studying from the nude, and poorer studio space. While this was often the experience of women in English and European art schools before 1860, this does not seem to have been the case in Canada as the art schools opened both men and women were admitted to the schools and outright segregation or discrimination. In fact women were often in the majority in the student population and the institutions depended on the women's presence (specifically, their enrolment fees) for their survival.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In my first class as an M.A. student with Prof. Sandra Paikowsky I began to research the women art students who worked under William Brymner at the Art Association of Montreal in the years between 1885 and 1921. That research and a short sentence in Reid's history of Canadian art which spoke of the number of Canadian artists "of note" who began to travel to Paris as they saw that experience as integral to their development as artists is at the base of this thesis. I would like to thank Dr. Brian Foss, my supervisor whose attention to this work has been invaluable. I would also like to thank Dr. Catherine MacKenzie who, along with Sandra Paikowsky was an examiner for this thesis. I would like to thank Dr. Kristina Huneault and her assistant, Kim Roberts for generously allowing me access to Dr. Huneault's files on Canadian women artists.

Other archival research for this paper led me to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts where Danielle Blanchette was very helpful and accommodating as I returned again and again for the elusive bits of information that would document the presence of the women in the institution. I also discovered the Rare Books collection at McGill University where the staff was very helpful and let me handle the crumbling pages of the Canadian Illustrated News and other more obscure journals. These periodicals were a source of unending fascination for me as the contents revealed the nineteenth-century readers' hunger for information about the world. At Concordia's Webster library, the women in the Inter-Library loans

department were always very resourceful in helping me lay my hands on yet another article written for women who were contemplating or had already established a career as an artist.

Finally, I need to thank my family and friends. I appreciate the support of my mum and dad over the years (and yes, I finally finished it!) from 1980-something to now. To my sisters, Leslee thank you for all you do and Lynn, thank you for the talk, laughter and the occasional gig. I don't know where I would be without you. To my friends, Andrew and Mathieu, Brian and Paulette, and Karen I appreciate all the laughter and talk about food and gardening and kids and everything that had nothing to with the history of women's art education in Canada and abroad.

In my life with Dominic Hardy I have found someone who gives me the courage to begin and finish a project such as this. He has been my editor, my translator and the person who has unconditionally supported me in all my endeavours. His knowledge of and love of history is infectious (and for that we need to thank Elizabeth) and his humanist-feminist-leanings are refreshing, if occasionally a little dogmatic!

This thesis is dedicated to my two daughters, Caitlin Laura and Iris Veronica Anne. They grew so much while I worked on this project and I hope they took pride in my educational growth. I certainly love and take pride in them and look forward to being a part of their own educational journey.

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## Introduction

This thesis traces the educational journey taken by four English- Canadian women artists working in the years following Confederation. The experiences of Laura Muntz (1860-1930), Florence McGillivray (1860-1938), Helen McNicoll (1879-1915) and Prudence Heward (1896-1947) are cited as being emblematic of the experience of other Canadian and American women, who are also brought into the discussion. All four attended art schools in Toronto and Montreal between 1880 and 1924. After their training had been completed in this country they each accepted the recommendation of a respected teacher or mentor and made the decision to further their art training in Europe. They all went to both England and France, but only Muntz attended art schools in both London and Paris. In the European cities these women encountered schools, teachers, colleagues as well as artistic styles that would have lasting effects on their artistic production. These final stages of their training then typically came to represent a benchmark for future achievement. Within the historiographic record, the importance of their training in Canada was diminished, if not erased. The challenge that faces us is to reconstitute their training in its context and to see what its patterns and phases have to tell us about the changing status of women artists in Canada in this period. It must be noted, however, that this thesis is not a study of Muntz, McGillivray, McNicoll and Heward, but rather an analysis of the social and educational contexts that shaped Canadian women artist's experience of art training in Canada, Britain and France.



The challenges in writing the story of the art training of a woman artist in Canada are exemplified by the case of Laura Muntz, whose biography can be pieced together only with difficulty. Muntz said of herself that she “came late” to her art training.<sup>1</sup> She came from a family that had not encouraged her interest in art. It was William Charles Forster (1816-1902), a summer visitor to the Muskokas and art teacher from Hamilton, who reacted positively to her interest and her ability. The historical record is silent on all but the pioneering support that he gave Muntz and on his role as her benefactor. He encouraged her to leave her family farm and move to Hamilton where she lived with his family while attending what she described as a “sort of Art School in that city [where she] learned a few of the rudimentary principles of drawing.”<sup>2</sup> Muntz took another step in her art training when she moved to Toronto and enrolled in the Ontario Art School in 1882-1883.<sup>3</sup> Her first trip abroad was in 1887, when she went to London for three months and enrolled in the St John’s Wood School of Art. The key next step was to travel to Paris; but this would come only through a return home to Canada.

In 1889-1890, Muntz worked privately in George Reid’s studio in Toronto. Reid had been a student at the Ontario Art School and at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia in the early to mid-1880s, after which, he and his wife, the painter Mary Hiester Reid (1854-1921), traveled to France in 1888. They found Paris a rich and rewarding experience. At that time Reid had enrolled in the Académie Julian. He and

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<sup>1</sup> Newton McTavish, “Laura Muntz and Her Art,” The Canadian Magazine Vol.37, no.5 (September 1911): 419.

<sup>2</sup> This school may have been a forerunner of the Hamilton School of Art, which only began operation in 1886. See Paul Duval, Impressionism in Canada (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1990): 152.

<sup>3</sup> The name of the school changed many times. It was known as the Ontario Art School from 1876 to 1886. In 1886 the school began to be called the Toronto Art School. In 1892 the school was renamed the Central

Hiester Reid also attended the Académie Colarossi co-ed costume and life classes. In years to come Reid would be an advocate of the Parisian academies. In all likelihood he urged Laura Muntz to travel there to further her own art training. In 1891 she left Canada and sailed to France. She lived and worked in Paris for seven years. There she attended the Académie Colarossi. Muntz's experience of Paris was very successful. She won prizes within the school, had her work exhibited five times at the Paris Salon and was recognized by the international press.<sup>4</sup> On her return to Canada her académie training and successes in Paris were written of, but this is in contrast to how little notice was taken of her Canadian training.<sup>5</sup> When her early art school experience was mentioned it was often couched in vague and romantic terms and concentrated more on her time in Hamilton than on her work in Toronto at the Ontario Art School or with George Reid.

Writing the story of Muntz's life and art training, as well as those of the other women discussed in this thesis is challenging because there are rarely firsthand accounts and very few, if any letters. The personal effects of many women born before 1900 simply were not preserved. In the course of my research I have only come across one letter written by Muntz that deals with the minutiae of the whereabouts of a particular painting. The situation is the same with the other artists surveyed. I have found copies of letters written by McNicoll to her father between 1907 and 1914 from England and France. They

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Ontario School of Art and kept the name until 1912-13. At that time the name was changed to the Ontario College of Art.

<sup>4</sup> MacTavish, op.cit. 422. In regard to the exhibition of Muntz's work at the Paris Salon she is not listed in Sylvain Allaire's "Les Canadiens au Salon Officiel de Paris Entre 1870 et 1910: Sections Peinture et Dessin," *Journal of Canadian Art History* Vol.4 (1977-1978):141-153. Muntz's work was reviewed in *Studio. An Illustrated Magazine Fine & Applied Art*, vol. 17, no. 75 (London, June 15 1899): 62, 65, 66.

describe her lodgings, her travels with 'Dolly' (Dorothea Sharpe), a visit to the Royal Society of British Artists and an eventful trip out of France after war had been declared in 1914. These few letters offer a glimpse into her personal life but yield little evidence of what being an artist meant to her.

Even less information is available on the art training women received in Canada. There is little documentation regarding any of the early students, either male or female, in the art schools, as early attendance records, class lists and outlines of the curricula are no longer extant. Disasters or attrition have usually been the cause of this loss. In 1912 a fire at the Art Association of Montreal (AAM) destroyed all the early records. The Ontario School of Art changed location several times between 1876 and 1912 and these various moves resulted in the loss of documents. The paucity of documents is particularly true of the period up to 1912. In Winnipeg, too, the prospectus and other records pertaining to the first two years of the School of Art (1913-1915) are almost non-existent.<sup>6</sup> No comprehensive history of the AAM or Ontario School of Art has been published to date. An in-house history of the AAM art school was written by Richard Halliday (director of the Art School) in 1977 pulled information together from a number of sources. William Brymner's annual reports, written during his tenure, are informative as they contain documentation of the makeup of some of the classes and the numbers of students, as well as his support of his more gifted students and the scholarship programme he instituted.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See for example - Margaret Bell, "Women and Art in Canada," *Everywoman's World* (June 14, 1914):7, 15, 30. Irene B. Hare, "Close-ups of Toronto's Women Artists no. 8 Laura Muntz" *Sunday World* (July 13, 1924).

<sup>6</sup> Marilyn Baker, *The Winnipeg School of Art: The Early Years* (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1984):34.

<sup>7</sup> Richard S. Halliday, "History of the Art Classes of the AAM," History Fond, P4/A4-2, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts Archives, AAM History, April, 1978.

In many cases I found information about the art schools and women in contemporaneous weekly and monthly journals. Before 1890 there were few periodicals in Canada that were devoted to the arts but as interest in the arts developed in the country, newspapers and magazines began to report to some extent on local, national and international art and artists. The Montreal-based Arcadia was a semi-monthly publication that reported on music, the visual arts and literature.<sup>8</sup> It regularly mentioned women artists in its reviews of exhibitions in Montreal, Toronto and outside Canada. The Canadian Magazine was another monthly, and began in 1893. The magazine had a regular art column, and feature articles on women and art appear almost from the beginning. Other magazines which were not solely interested in the arts, such as Saturday Night and Macleans also carried columns that presented the arts. A valuable piece of visual evidence related to women's presence in art schools appeared when the Canadian Illustrated News published a page of sketches by students of the Ontario Art School in Toronto in May 1880. Women are present in almost all of the images of life in the studio.

These images and stories in the popular press point to what seems to be a common recognition that women were enrolling in North American art schools in increasing numbers, that they were earnest in their training and that they took advantage of these classes. In an analysis of the conditions that helped create the modern artist, Sarah Burns writes that magazines were involved in constructing a new reality for women as they took

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<sup>8</sup> Arcadia was published in Montreal from April 1892 to February 15, 1893.

on new social roles.<sup>9</sup> Magazines acted as arbiters of public opinion and helped mediate the attitudes and responses to these new roles. Changes in public attitudes towards women's social and educational goals came about as a result of greater educational opportunities, and the nascent women's movement dating from the 1880s gave legitimacy to the actions taken by young women who wanted to pursue a career in art.

Commentaries such as the 1865 "Women and the Fine Arts," Candace Wheeler's "Art Education for Women" (1897), and "Women's Chances as Bread-Winners: Women in Art: From an Artist's View" written by William Merritt Chase in 1891 all relate to the American experience; articles such as "Views Abroad: A Day with the French Painters" written by Albert Rhodes as a fly-on-the-wall sketch of the Académie Julian, and "The Girl Student in Paris" (Magazine of Art, 1883) focused on American women in Paris. Anna Lea Merritt's "A Letter to Artists: Especially Women Artists" of 1900 also reported women's progress in the art world and the need for a professional attitude towards training and work.<sup>10</sup> This literature gave women permission to consider professional careers and then suggested the many ways in which they could achieve their ambition.

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<sup>9</sup> Sarah Burns, Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1996): 11-12, 330. The author quotes the results of a survey from 1892, which in turn is based on the research of Frank Luther Mott, in A History of American Magazines, 1885-1905 (Cambridge, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957).

<sup>10</sup> F. T. Palgrave, "Women and the Fine Arts," MacMillan's Magazine 12 (May, October, 1865): 118-127, 209-221, Candace Wheeler, "Art Education for Women," Outlook 55 (January 2, 1897):81-87, William Merritt Chase, "Women's Chances as Bread-Winners: Women in Art: From an Artist's View," Ladies Home Journal Vol.8 (December, 1891): 37, Albert Rhodes, "Views Abroad: A Day with the French Painters," Galaxy Vol.16, no.1 (July, 1873):5-15, Alice Greene, "The Girl Student in Paris," Magazine of Art 6 (1883):286-287, Anna Lea Merritt, "A Letter to Artists: Especially Women Artists," Lippincott's Monthly Magazine 65(1900):463-469

In the absence of academic texts regarding Canadian art education I have looked to the general Canadian histories of art and to American sources in order to contextualize the experience of North American women in art schools. While books such as By a Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women, and Painting Friends: The Beaver Hall Women Painters, and catalogues like From Women's Eyes: Women Painters in Canada, provide biographical material as well as visual documentation of women's art work, there is little detailed discussion of their art training.<sup>11</sup> In light of this I turned to Kirsten Swinth's Painting Professionals: Women Artists and the Development of Modern American Art, 1870-1930, which is a rich resource on the conditions of women's entrance into American art schools. Swinth's research on women's presence in American art schools gives a sense of how the women negotiated the schools in the United States, and then follows the progress they made as they traveled to Europe and France in particular to further their training.

In writing this thesis my goals are to place women within two geographic contexts: that of the Canadian art schools that took shape between 1870 and 1913, and that of the English and French art schools and academies. In the first chapter I consider the development of education as a social mechanism and how the decision to introduce drawing into the public school curriculum played out against the development of a broadening popular interest in art across North America. The increasing availability of

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<sup>11</sup> Maria Tippett, By a Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women. (Toronto: Viking Penguin, 1992), Dorothy Farr and Natalie Luckyj, From Women's Eyes: Women Painters in Canada. (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1976), Barbara Meadowcroft, Painting Friends: The Beaver Hall Women Painters. (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1999). Some American and British dictionaries of women's art occasionally mention Canadian women. References to the women in this study will also be found in Jules and Nancy Heller's North American Women Artists of the Twentieth Century: A Biographical Dictionary. (New York: Garland, 1995) and Chris Petteys' Dictionary of Women Artists: An International Dictionary of Women Artists Born Before 1900. (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1985).

imagery generated by technical advances in printed materials captured the public imagination. A plethora of drawing manuals in the years around 1840 meant that inside and outside of the schoolroom those who wished to further their knowledge and drawing skills could do so. Girls and young women found the new interest in art worked to their advantage. I therefore consider school-aged girls' education as it evolved from one that was accomplishments-based to that of an academically grounded education. These two aspects of girls' education meant that as women took a larger role in society, they were able to take up the arts as a profession. An important role was played by British and American monthly journals beginning in the mid-1860s, as editors and journalists encouraged women to take an active position in culture and the arts. The latter would become important social outlets for women. Women across the country joined art associations and worked to promote the arts in their communities, and many became art teachers. Other women enrolled in art classes. Many did so as a leisure activity, but many others sought the training that would lead to a professional career.

The second chapter traces the growth of art schools in Canada. It charts the progress of Canadian women as they gained access to art schools from the 1860s onwards. In Canada, as private and professional art instruction became available, women were eager pupils. They enrolled in the art schools as they were established in Montreal, Toronto and in Halifax from the 1860s to the 1880s. In the last two decades of the century women dominated the student body of every major art school in the country. While they may have enrolled with the idea of becoming teachers or working in design, many women

found their outlook changed as they were exposed to new ideas and role models.<sup>12</sup> I trace the curricula offered by the schools, paying particular attention to painting and the availability of the life class. These classes, which were generally taught by a generation of artists who had trained in Europe, were modeled on the European academic approach, which emphasized drawing skills and working from the live model. I also explore why some women chose to attend co-educational schools, with the latter's focus on a fine arts curriculum, as opposed to women-only design/ handicrafts-focused schools such as Toronto's Associated Artists School of Art and Design (AASAD).

The third chapter focuses on the experiences of Canadians who traveled to Britain in the years 1880 to about 1905 to train as artists. As travel became more accessible many artists went there before moving on to France. Some, such as Helen McNicoll, stayed and enrolled in the more progressive art schools that had been founded in the 1860s, such as Heatherleys, or the Slade School of Art at University College, London (1870). Some English Canadians felt it was their patriotic duty to visit Britain, and that exploring their cultural roots was as important as exploring the British art world. I contrast the various options available to the women who made the decision to train in London. I also consider the impact of the rural artists' colony at St. Ives on McNicoll and other Canadians who visited this art site, and give a general description of some of the other art colonies that sprang up there and in France from the 1860s onward.

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<sup>12</sup> Maria Tippett, By a Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women (Toronto, Viking-Penguin, 1992): 29-30.



The fourth and final chapter looks at Paris as a site of training for Canadian artists from the 1870s onwards. I map out the importance of Paris as a destination for North American artists and for women in general. I consider the two most known académies, the Julian and the Colarossi, and the importance of working from the live model. I also look at how the strong friendships that developed among women reinforced the formation of their identity as artists and how as they lived together, shared studio spaces, and traveled together. Women found these relationships could be as valuable as the academic training. The importance of travel for women lay primarily in the opportunity it gave them to experience an often unprecedented amount of freedom from domestic and familial obligations. The twentieth-century image of the Victorian and Edwardian woman who was confined to the domestic sphere, chaperoned and socially restricted, was not the image that was encouraged by writers and editorialists at the time. Public commentators acknowledged women's French-atelier art training, and their involvement in international and national art clubs.

It was in going away that women were able to have autonomy and the time to consider their goals as artists. As women went abroad they increased their skills, had the opportunity to see and copy great works of art, and were able to prepare for and often exhibit their work at the Salons. The recognition of their work at these venues gave them the credentials to return home as professionally trained artists.

## Chapter One

### From Accomplishments to the Fine Arts

Throughout the nineteenth century, Canadian society changed from a multi-tiered, strictly hierarchical social structure focused mostly on agriculture to one that was decidedly urban. As the Dominion of Canada grew out of its pioneering infancy and moved toward a more urban sensibility there was an increasing emphasis on culture and refinement. Culture was meant to edify the life experience of all citizens, no matter what their stations in life. Over the course of the century, key transformations in education shaped the development of a cultural sensibility, and women's roles in Canadian Anglophone society altered as well. As girls and young women were able to partake of the changes in the education system, especially its broader availability and a more academically-based curriculum, they were able to consider greater possibilities in terms of shaping an identity for themselves and taking a more public role. Women's interest in art was cultivated in their schooling, and by mid-century social ideologies promoted the idea that culture and the arts were important social outlets for women. Women across the country joined art associations and worked to promote the arts in their communities, becoming art teachers and exhibitors. Many women enrolled in art classes for leisure activity, while others seriously intended to take the training that would lead to a professional career.

Prior to the 1850s, the girls (seven to fifteen years old) who were educated tended to be from the middle and upper classes. Generally these girls were taught to copy, draw and

paint in watercolour as a part of an accomplishment-based education. Along with artistic skills they were also taught to speak a modern language such as French, to play the piano and to have an understanding of literature and natural history. It was thought that these various skills would make them intellectually companionable to future husbands. The improved status claimed by women artists in later nineteenth-century Canada may be linked to Egerton Ryerson's (1830-1882) belief that an educated populace would be the key to Canada's social advancement.<sup>1</sup> Ryerson and his contemporaries believed education and the ability to read and write would confer cultivation of the mind, and therefore respectability and betterment.<sup>2</sup> When he was appointed Chief Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada in 1844 he began to make changes to the education system that reflected his belief that school should be available to all children, transforming education in Canada. He set standards for curriculum, teacher training and the selection and distribution of textbooks. Ryerson also instigated the organization of libraries in every school in Upper Canada. Throughout his life he combined his religious convictions with his mission to make schooling and literacy a fact of life for all young Canadians.

The transfer of the traditional accomplishments-based education to a more academically-based curriculum converged with the changing role of women in society, including Ryerson's reforms making education more available to girls from all social classes. As girls gained admittance to schools that offered a superior education they were required to take the same academic subjects as did boys. These developments came most fully into

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<sup>1</sup> See: Nathaniel Burwash, Egerton Ryerson (Toronto: Morang, 1903), Charles Sissons, Egerton Ryerson: Life and Letters Vol.1-3 (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1937-1947), Laura Daminia, Egerton Ryerson (Don Mills, Ontario: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1975).

effect in the 1870s, and meant young women in Canada benefited from changes that had taken place in England a decade earlier when a generation of progressive female educators had been instrumental in promoting an enhanced curriculum for girls, as well as advocating their entrance into schools of higher learning. In Canada, a well-educated and accomplished daughter came to be seen as a social asset and a positive attitude towards the educated woman came about.<sup>3</sup> While Ryerson proposed secondary level education based on the study of Latin and Greek, parents who advocated schooling wanted a more practical curriculum. The compromise was that outside the required subjects, young women were encouraged to pursue ‘ornamental’ studies, which included fancy needlework, drawing, painting, instrumental music, dancing, and modern languages while optional courses for boys included book-keeping and technical drawing.<sup>4</sup> The amalgamation of academic courses and ornamental studies came to be seen as integral to the educational experiences of a well-educated girl. This view brought a new focus to the arts.

However, it was not until the late 1870s, under the influence of Walter Smith (1838-1888) and the South Kensington School system, that drawing would become more fully integrated into the public schools at both the elementary and secondary level.

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Lanning, “Models of Art, Portraits of Self: Culture and Drawing Courses in Ontario, 1875-1919,” The Journal of Canadian Studies Vol.24, no.2 (1989): 54.

<sup>3</sup> Egerton Ryerson, “A Special Report on the Systems and State of Popular Education on the Continent of Europe, in the British Isles and the U.S.A., with Practical Suggestions for the Improvement of Public Instruction in the Province of Ontario,” (Toronto, 1868):192, cited in Susan Howsden and Alison Prentice, Schooling and Scholars in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988): 326, note 52. The authors cite the increased support for the funding of girls’ schooling across Ontario by families from all classes as reflective of this attitude

<sup>4</sup> Roger Clark, Art Education: A Canadian Perspective (Toronto: Ontario Society for Education Through Art, 1994): 2-3.

The introduction of drawing into the public school curriculum was based on the opinion that it was as essential as reading and writing, as this skill would enhance the child's visual vocabulary. In 1879 the painter, Lucius O'Brien (1832-1899) made a public plea for art education. He spelled out how an art education would not mean that all children would take up the paint brush or the sculptor's chisel, but they would gain an understanding of and a practical knowledge of aesthetics and thus be prepared for any endeavour they might wish to pursue in life.<sup>5</sup> For young men this meant the military, business or the trades but for young middle-class women, artistic ability was considered an asset in the marriage market, while young women of the working class gained access to design and technical drawing as the century drew to a close.<sup>6</sup>

In an era when many products were custom made, the ability to draw or visualize an object or to record topographical features and buildings meant that the young person who had this skill would be of great use to future employers, or in the case of young men, the military. However, the introduction of drawing into the curriculum did not mean that children drew from life or even from plaster casts; nor did they learn to paint, or grasp the rudiments of colour. The teaching of drawing was not based on creativity, knowledge of the fine arts or imaginative expression, but on learning the procedures to develop orderly

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<sup>5</sup> Lucius O'Brien, "Art Education – A Plea for the Artizan" Rose Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review vol.2, (January-June 1879): 584.

<sup>6</sup> By the turn of the century, young women were given 'manual training' consisting of 'Household Science and Artwork and Drawing' wherein they would be taught freehand drawing and elementary designing. These skills were seen by the Ontario Superintendent of Education, John Seath as extremely important in meeting the needs of Canada's rapidly expanding industrial market. Ruby Heap, "Schooling Women for Home or for Work?" Vocational Education for Women in Ontario in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century". In Ruby Heap and Alison Prentice, Gender and Education in Ontario: An Historical Reader (Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press, 1991), 195.

and organized work habits.<sup>7</sup> Children drew from prints that were especially produced for amateurs and schools. Drawing was introduced because it was considered valuable as a practical form of knowledge which, along with the wider school curriculum, contributed to the formation of the person.<sup>8</sup>

And yet, as Diana Korzenik has noted in Drawn to Art, the number of people who took an interest in art and taught themselves to draw had been significant well before Ryerson's reforms, beginning as early as the 1840s.<sup>9</sup> She attributes this interest to the introduction of drawing in schools and to the ever-louder call of industry to have skilled designers and draughtsmen who would be able to compete with European manufacturers. This led to the growth of drawing as a part of the school curriculum as well as greater opportunities for adults to learn to draw at Mechanics' Institutes, or in night classes offered to workers. While in some respects, Canada may have lagged behind the United States drawing was introduced into the public school curriculum earlier north of the border and became a component of the Mechanics' Institutes beginning in the 1840s.<sup>10</sup>

One of the most important factors in the development of drawing in and outside of school must be seen as the huge influx of representational imagery into everyday life. Product labels, advertising, illustrated journals and printed scenes of everyday life all contributed to the public's heightened knowledge of art and imagery.

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<sup>7</sup> John Swift, "Controlling the Masses: The Reinvention of a National Curriculum," Journal of Art and Design Vol.14, no.2 (May 1995):120.

<sup>8</sup> Lanning, op.cit. 54.

<sup>9</sup> Diana Korzenik, Drawn to Art: A Nineteenth Century American Dream (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1985): 24-25, 48

The visual culture of Canada, like that of the United States and European nations, had been increasingly marked by the circulation of the printed pictorial image. Among North American markets that of the United States underwent the most rapid expansion and it was there that lithographic imagery first became emblematic of the very practice of drawing. This practice was to have an impact on the Canadian organization and circulation of educational imagery.

In Canada, a home-grown printing industry was slowly being established. From the late eighteenth century amateur printmakers and topographical artists, especially those associated with the British military, began experimenting with reproducing their work while still in Canada. Most often though they had their work reproduced as prints on their return to Great Britain. By the turn of the century some trained printers began to set up business in the larger settlements of Quebec City, Montreal or Halifax. This meant that by the end of the War of 1812 artists such as William Berczy (1744-1813) and Elizabeth Simcoe (1762-1850) had begun to produce prints inspired by the Canadian landscape and have them printed in Canada. However it was during the following three decades, and especially in the 1840s, that professional printers in the Maritimes, and Upper and Lower Canada (Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec City and Halifax) undertook partnerships with artists and engravers to produce city views and portrait prints, in addition to maps, certificates, book illustrations and advertisements.

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<sup>10</sup> Roger Clark, *Art Education: A Canadian Perspective* (Toronto: Ontario Society for Education through Art, 1994): 2. Clark states that Horace Mann is frequently cited as introducing drawing into the school curriculum in 1870, but Ryerson implemented it into the public school system twenty-five years earlier.

Lithography remained the predominant print format from the 1830s until the steam-driven rotary press was introduced in the late 1850s. As printers began to produce coloured lithographs the demand for prints grew. European printers refined the printing process to the point that they were able to print using up to thirty layers of colour. This process, chromolithography, was adopted by printers as full colour images could be produced. These technological advances in printing, lithography and the mass production of printed paper products meant images continued to flood into households across the country. This impetus reached a new high when Canadian Illustrated News went into publication in 1869 using a technique, developed principally by William Leggo (1830-1915), which was designed to allow for the reproduction of half-tone photographic images. The combined efforts of artist and printmaker went a step further in fewer than fifteen years later when Picturesque Canada (1882) was first published. The often romanticized views of the country in this series were compiled by American and Canadian artists and offered Canadians a new vision of the country.<sup>11</sup>

As paper became cheaper and easier to manufacture the printed image became ubiquitous. Magazine publishers, manufacturers and advertisers worked hand-in-hand as the volume of print advertising exploded between 1865 and 1900. It is estimated that in the United States in 1865 there were ten million advertisement insertions in magazines and by the end of the century that number had risen by ninefold.<sup>12</sup> The European émigré Louis Prang's Chromolithograph Company, established in 1860, is an example of a print

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<sup>11</sup> William Colgate, Canadian Art: Its Origin and Development (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1967):39-40.

<sup>12</sup> David Reed, The Popular Magazine in Britain and the United States 1880-1960 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997):14.



business that successfully combined art, advertising and art education. Prang (1824-1909) built his reputation on fine art reproductions. These reproduction oil paintings appealed to the sensibilities of Americans as they were a symbol of status and cultural refinement. They were also deemed educational. In Canada, Frederick Brigden (1841-1917), the founder of the Toronto Engraving Company, also made a commitment to the principle that art was work, and therefore a part of daily life.<sup>13</sup> When Brigden emigrated from London in 1872 he found that Toronto had the necessary foundations for him to make a success as a printer: there was a large reading public, new printing technologies were accessible and there was new market for retail advertising.<sup>14</sup>

The boon in the commercial demand for imagery occurred during the same decades when children's interest in art was furthered by the increasing availability of drawing books, drawing cards and manuals.<sup>15</sup> Children and adults who wished to further their knowledge and skills could turn to the many how-to-draw manuals that were published throughout the nineteenth century. Over one hundred forty-five how-to-draw manuals were published in the United States between 1820 and 1860.<sup>16</sup> In the 1870s Prang collaborated with Walter Smith when the latter was Massachusetts's State Director of Art Education. He marketed Smith's handbooks as a systematic course of instruction in drawing for schools and for the general public.

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<sup>13</sup> Angela E. Davis, "Art and Work: Frederick Brigden and the History of the Canadian Illustrated Press," *Journal of Canadian Studies* (1992): 23

<sup>14</sup> Davis, *op.cit.* 27.

<sup>15</sup> Korzenik, *op.cit.* 1-3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* 50-51. In Britain many drawing manuals were published from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century on. At least twenty were published between 1798 and 1840; many of them ran into extended print runs. See Graeme

While Canadians were able to obtain American and British drawing manuals through the years during which Ryerson's reforms were taking place, it was not until the 1880s that drawing manuals were published by Toronto- and Montreal-based firms. One example is Lucius O'Brien's The Canadian Drawing Course: Elementary Freehand, Object, Constructive and Perspective Drawing (1885).<sup>17</sup> Whether used inside or out of the classroom, such manuals helped people to teach themselves the rudimentary skills of drawing.

Children with an artistic aptitude also benefited from this influx of material and other ephemera. British and Canadian children also had access to juvenile publications that aimed to inspire ideals and impart knowledge of the world and the arts. Beginning in 1879, the most successful and widely available of the penny weeklies was the Boy's Own Paper, and in 1880 the Girl's Own Paper. These papers were richly illustrated and contained fiction and non-fiction with an emphasis on verse and music. The Girl's Own Paper tended to put a greater emphasis on biography and historical non-fiction as well as fashion, social life and manners, decorative art and domestic matters. Both children's papers expressed an interest in the fine arts, with many engraved reproductions and articles on popular Victorian artists such as Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema.<sup>18</sup>

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Chalmers, Women in the Nineteenth-Century Art World: Schools of Art and Design in London and Philadelphia (Westport, Conn. and London: Greenwood Press, 1998): 43.

<sup>17</sup>L.R. O'Brien, J.H. McFaul, Wm. Revell, The Canadian Drawing Course: Elementary Freehand, Object, Constructive and Perspective Drawing (Toronto: Canada Publishing Co., 1885). This five-volume drawing course was authorized for use in public schools by the Ontario Minister of Education. Other Canadian drawing books included: The Kindergarten Drawing Course (Toronto: Selby, 1887), A.C. Casselman, The Public School Drawing Course. (Toronto: Canadian Publishing Co., 1899), and The High School Drawing Course (Toronto: Canadian Publishing Co., 1894).

<sup>18</sup> Reed, op. cit: 85-86. In the U.S.A., Youth's Companion catered to the youth market. The magazine began publishing in 1860s, it neglected the arts but focused on fiction, humour and entertainment and social interests (travel, sport, foreign life).

As interest in and exploitation of visual culture developed from the middle of the nineteenth century in the lives of all age groups, a corresponding expansion of the art market and an increase in the number of exhibitions took place. The earliest art club in Canada had begun in the Maritimes: the Halifax Chess Pencil and Brush Club operated between 1787 and 1817. This group and others like it drew members from the arts and from polite society. The Montreal Society for the Encouragement of Science and Art, which was active in 1828, was made up of both amateur and professional artists, with other members drawn from a range of professions and from the clergy. In Toronto the first art society made up of professional and amateur artists formed in 1834. This first society was short-lived, and another would appear in 1847. This group called themselves the Toronto Society of Arts and made art education part of its directive. In its charter the members declared the fine arts would contribute to the reputation, character and dignity of the province. They also proposed importing antique plaster casts that might instigate a 'school for the study of the human figure and to provide cultivation of pure taste.'<sup>19</sup> The founding of the Royal Canadian Academy in 1880 under the patronage of the Marquis of Lorne and Princess Louise marked the most important official national recognition to date of Canada's artists.

This new found interest in the arts led to calls for public art institutions. As early as the 1850s there were calls for the establishment of art galleries and art schools. In a review of the Toronto agricultural fair exhibition written in 1852 one writer cited the need for such institutions, stating that in order to learn to like and understand art, it was important to be able to see paintings and other decorative arts in the 'flesh.' He disparaged the fact that

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<sup>19</sup> J. Russell Harper, Painting in Canada: A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2<sup>nd</sup>

many citizens were only able to view paintings within the context of the county fairs.<sup>20</sup>

The artistic scene began to change and become more professionally focused at about the time this article appeared. Among his other work at this time, Egerton Ryerson opened the Museum of Natural History and Fine Arts in 1857. This Museum (also called the Education Museum) was housed in the Toronto Normal School at St. James Square. After Confederation it became the Ontario Provincial Museum, the forerunner of the Royal Ontario Museum. It housed a collection of copies of sculptures, paintings and engravings as well as specimens of natural science. The intention was to introduce visitors to a host of artistic, cultural and scientific activities. Ryerson also recommended that a school of design be founded to complement the collection. However this art school did not come into existence until the Ontario Society of Artists began to offer art classes in Toronto in 1876. The Society had been founded in 1872 as an exhibiting society. In Montreal the Art Association also began with the intention of organizing exhibitions. The AAM arose out of the Montreal Society of Artists, which was established in 1847. By 1860 the focus of the Association had moved away from acting as an artist's society to one that was geared towards art collectors. Many of the artists then became part of the Society of Canadian Artists, which formed in 1867. The group of businessmen and social leaders who came together to found the AAM in 1860 also wished to see a library established and to offer art and design classes. Space was made available for these courses from the very beginning but the classes were often sporadic and only became a regular feature in the late 1870s.

Artists such as Robert Harris (1849-1919), William Brymner (1855-1925), William Cruikshank (1849-1922), George Reid (1860-1947) and Edmond Dyonnet (1859-1954) almost all had long teaching careers in Toronto or Montreal. Harris was the exception, teaching in both cities. From 1879 until 1881 he was at the Central Ontario School of Art, later called the Ontario College of Art, and then moved to Montreal to the Art Association where he taught for four years (1885-86). He was succeeded by William Brymner, who taught at the Art Association of Montreal Art School for thirty-five years. Cruikshank and Reid were among the most longstanding artist-teachers in the Toronto school. Cruikshank taught there from 1876 until 1918 and George Reid, who had formerly been a student there, began teaching in 1890. When the school was re-organized in 1912 he was appointed principal, a position he held until 1929. Dyonnet was the administrator and professor of art at the Monument National in Montreal from 1892 until 1922, when the school was closed and had its responsibilities taken over by the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Women were eligible for enrolment in all these schools from the very beginning. Laura Muntz (1860-1930), Florence McGillivray (1860-1938), Helen McNicoll (1879-1915) and Prudence Heward (1896-1947) would all benefit from their contact with professional artist-teachers, such as Harris, Brymner, Cruikshank or Reid.<sup>21</sup>

There is little documentation that enables us to state how these women were motivated to become artists, but some information is available. As noted in the "Introduction", above,

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<sup>20</sup> Henry Youle Hind, "The Provincial Agricultural Show," Canadian Journal: A Repertory of Industry, Science and Art and a Record of the Proceedings of the Canadian Institute Vol.1, no 3 (October 1852): 60.

<sup>21</sup> I am focusing almost exclusively on fine art training which for the most part was accessible to women who could afford to pay the tuition. However, vocational training was available to women, and as the century progressed and women entered the work force in increasing numbers, many entered design schools. Many of these schools opened across the Ontario and Quebec. See J.A. Radford, "Canadian Art Schools, Artists and Art," The Canadian Magazine Vol.2, no.5 (March 1894): 466.

Laura Muntz was not encouraged by her family but by an acquaintance, William Charles Forster (1816-1902), who worked as an art teacher in the Hamilton public school system. Florence McGillivray was the granddaughter of Charles Fothergill (1782-1840), a well-respected amateur artist. Helen McNicoll's interest developed early and there are a number of scrapbooks compiled by McNicoll as a young woman that reveal her interest in illustration and the work of women artists such as Jessie Wilcox Smith (1863-1935) and Rosa Bonheur (1822-1899), as well as a vast array of images from popular culture.<sup>22</sup> Her interest in art was surely fostered by her parents, who collected art and were members of the AAM. McNicoll's mother, Emily Pashey, was an amateur artist who may have belonged to the Women's Art Association, which began operation in 1893. Like Prudence Heward during the first decades of the twentieth century, McNicoll had a family that was able to provide her with the means and materials that allowed her, in her own time, the opportunity to pursue art training in Montreal and abroad. Heward first enrolled in the elementary class at the AAM as a school-aged child in 1908. Her interest in painting may have stemmed from her mother and grandmother, both of whom had artistic skills.<sup>23</sup>

As intelligent and literate young women interested in art, Muntz, McGillivray, McNicoll and Heward would have been aware of new trends like Impressionism. In all likelihood, they would have had knowledge of the progress being made by women artists such as Mary Cassatt (1844-1926), Henrietta Ward (1832-1924), Rosa Bonheur, Kate Greenaway (1846-1901) and Laura, Lady Alma-Tadema (1852-1909) through publications such as

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<sup>22</sup> Natalie Luckyj, Helen McNicoll: A Canadian Impressionist (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1999): 20.

the Canadian Magazine, which kept up a steady stream of articles about developments in art.<sup>24</sup> The widely-read Canadian Illustrated News referenced almost all of these women at one time or another. The paper also described and illustrated the lives and work of other international women artists throughout its publication history and featured illustrated articles about art schools in Canada, the USA and in Paris, as well as more general articles about women studying art, and other topics such as a typical student's day at the National Gallery, London.<sup>25</sup>

In addition (as noted above) to providing a wealth of visual imagery to their readers, the journals of the day also allowed women the chance to reflect on their position in society and presented options to them. Illustrated magazines often focused on subjects of interest to the female head of household, women in the latter half of the nineteenth century being held to be at the vanguard of cultural appreciation. These magazines featured women who had achieved professional standing in the cultural arena – as artists, musicians, actresses, and writers.<sup>26</sup> Through their access to American and British magazines, Canadian subscribers enjoyed not only Canadian publications such as the Canadian Magazine and Canadian Illustrated News, but also periodicals such as Scribner's Monthly Magazine,

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<sup>23</sup> Barbara Meadowcroft, Painting Friends: The Beaver Hall Women Painters (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1999): 36.

<sup>24</sup> Examples include "The Influence of the French School upon Recent Art," Canadian Magazine Vol.1. (October 1893): 638-641. and "Canadian Art Schools, Artists and Art," Canadian Magazine Vol.2 (December 1893): 462-466.

<sup>25</sup> "School of Art and Design for Women, In Philadelphia," Vol.23: 52. "Ontario School of Art, Toronto Sketches by Students," Vol.21: 309, 311. "Women Artists," Vol.13: 51.and Vol.19: 36. "Students Day at the National Gallery, London," Vol. 8: 181,186. "The Study of Art by Women,"Vol.7: 155. and Vol.27: 158. "Accomplishments of Women," Vol.13: 7 Canadian Illustrated News

<sup>26</sup> Kirsten Swinth, Painting Professionals Women Artists and the Development of Modern American Art, 1870-1930 (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001). See Bibliography of Primary Sources, 264-270.

Harper's New Monthly Magazine and Lippincott's Magazine.<sup>27</sup> These furthered the reader's knowledge of the arts, art schools and women's place in the profession. American magazines that specifically targeted a female audience, such as Godey's Lady's Book, began to discuss women in the arts in the early 1870s. The article, "Painting as a Profession for Women" published in Godey's Lady's Book in 1871 started an editorial genre that flourished from that point onwards.<sup>28</sup> However, the majority of such pieces were published in the 1880s and 1890s in magazines such as Scribner's or Lippincott's Magazine. They featured articles on particular artists such as Cecilia Beaux (Scribner's, October 1897), and also commissioned articles on such topics as "The Nude in Art" (Scribner's, December 1892), "Fostering American Art" (Lippincott's Magazine August 1882), and the three-part "The Young Painters of America" (Scribner's, May 1880, July 1880, July 1881). As was often the case, Canadian magazines followed the lead of the American papers. In September 1879 Scribner's published "The Art Schools of Philadelphia." The Canadian Illustrated News printed a similar piece in September 1882 when it published sketches by the students and a short article on the Art School of Ontario.<sup>29</sup> (Figures 1 and 2) Similarly, the association of women with art was taken up by Agnes Machar under the pseudonym 'Fidelis'; and published "The New Ideal of Womanhood" in the Canadian Monthly and National Review in 1879. She discussed Princess Louise's painting practice and wished to see it have a positive effect on similarly

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<sup>27</sup> Canada was a great importer of books and journals. The United States was the principal source and Great Britain was the second greatest exporter of reading material for Canadians. See Fiona A. Black, "Supplying the Retail Trade," In Yvon Lamonde, Patricia Lockhart Fleming, and Fiona A. Black, History of the Book in Canada Volume 2 1840-1918 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005): 206-207.

<sup>28</sup> Swinth, op.cit. 18.

<sup>29</sup> The Scribner's Magazine article had an impact on the Ontario painter, George Reid. In later years he credited it as instrumental in his decision to leave the Ontario Art School in Toronto and go to Philadelphia in 1882. "Sketches by the Pupils of the Ontario School of Art," The Canadian Illustrated News Vol.21,



inclined Canadian women.<sup>30</sup> There were many more such articles in Canadian journals after the turn of the century. One notable example dates from 1914, when Maclean's Magazine published a series of three articles on prominent women in Canada. The third in the series was devoted to "Canadian Women in the Arts." The author, Madge MacBeth, noted the successful careers of Laura Muntz, Mary Hiester Reid, Mary Wrinch (1878-1969), Florence Carlyle (1864-1923), and Elizabeth McGillivray Knowles (1866-1928).<sup>31</sup>

The knowledge gained from the monthly papers and from other literary sources gave women the chance to create a connection with and establish their authority over culture.<sup>32</sup> In addition, the impetus to move into a more public role and even to take up a profession, such as that of the artist, was often the subject of novels, from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Nineteenth-century Canadians were prolific readers. As public libraries opened across the country women were identified as the primary users. Novels were the most widely circulated book genre in library collections and women borrowed almost ninety percent of the novels held in those collections.<sup>33</sup> Reading novels allowed women to cross physical and ideological distances without ever leaving home, but

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no.20 (May 15 1880):309. Anonymous, "The Ontario School of Art," The Canadian Illustrated News Vol.21, no.20 (May 15 1880): 311.

<sup>30</sup> Fidelis [Agnes Machar], "The New Ideal of Womanhood," Canadian Monthly and National Review Vol.2 (June 1879): 665.

<sup>31</sup> Madge MacBeth, "Canadian Women in the Arts," Maclean's Magazine Vol.27, no.12 (October 1914): 23-25, 105-108.

<sup>32</sup> Maria Frawley, A Wider Range: Travel Writing by Women in Victorian England (Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1994): 24.

<sup>33</sup> Black, op. cit. 261-262.

nevertheless being confirmed in the notion that they could make a move into the wider world.<sup>34</sup>

In many popular novels, such as George Elliot's Middlemarch (1871) female heroines move on from a domestically-minded young woman to the 'new woman' who develops her talents.<sup>35</sup> In Mrs. Humphrey Ward's best-seller Robert Ellsmere of 1888, two sisters are contrasted, one domestically-minded, puritan and predictable, the other a "new woman" who travels to Germany to pursue of her dream of developing her musical talents.<sup>36</sup> The heroine's ambitious spirit was a popular device; some female characters were forced to take their own life while others refused to give up their dream. In many of these novels the woman who chooses to become an artist is a composite of the 'modern woman'. Often in order to achieve her professional aspirations she must overcome a series of tribulations in order to understand what she really wants.<sup>37</sup> An early Canadian example is Marguerite Kneller, Artist and Woman. This serialized novel was written by Louisa Murray and published in the first issues of the Canadian Monthly and National Review in 1872. At the beginning of the series the heroine had already established herself as an artist. Through the narrative she models herself on male artists. When her love interest fails her, Marguerite takes solace in her work and in time wins respect and a gold medal at the Parisian Salon. She works within a liberated social and familial context where an educated and talented woman is allowed to remain autonomous and equal to her

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<sup>34</sup> Frawley, op. cit. 15.

<sup>35</sup> Frawley, op. cit. 18-19

<sup>36</sup> Mrs Humphrey Ward, Robert Ellsmere 1888 (Reprint New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

<sup>37</sup> Lyn Pykett, "Portraits of the artist as a young woman: representations of the female artist in the New Woman fiction of the 1890s," In Nicola Diane Thompson, ed., Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 135-150.

male peers.<sup>38</sup> In contrast, in Sara Jeanette Duncan's novel A Daughter of Today published just under twenty-five years later, the heroine, Elfrida Bell, is representative of the late nineteenth-century female who searches for her artistic calling. While Elfrida is not completely successful in winning recognition for her talents she does manage to support herself and live independently in Paris and later in London.<sup>39</sup> However, when she fails to make a love match she is humiliated and commits suicide. Duncan was known to Canadian readers as a regular contributor to the "women's pages" of the Montreal Star and the Globe in the 1880s, and, in the 1890s, of The Week. In her columns she discussed current issues such as Canadian and literary nationalism, and women's suffrage and education.<sup>40</sup>

Beginning in the 1880s and through the 1890s women took the idea of working as art advocates or as artists increasingly seriously. A number of women worked in support of the visual arts and they began to see their involvement as being as important to society as the social caretaker role had been to earlier generations of women. In local art societies women participated as artists, acted as patrons and worked to generate interest.<sup>41</sup> In 1887 Mary Ella Dignam (1857-1938) organized the Toronto Women's Art Club, basing the club on the model of the Art Students' League in New York, which had a mandate to

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<sup>38</sup> Louisa Murray, "Marguerite Kneller: Artist and Woman," The Canadian Monthly and National Review vol.1 – 6, 1872. See also Gwendolyn Guth, A World for Women: Fiction of the Female Artist in English-Canadian Periodical 1840-1880 (Mary Eliza Herbert, Suzanna Moodie, Eliza Lanesford Cushing) Phd. Dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1999.

<sup>39</sup> Sara Jeanette Duncan, A Daughter of Today (London: Chatto and Windus, 1895).

<sup>40</sup> Misao Dean, introduction, A Daughter of Today by Sara Jeanette Duncan (Ottawa: The Tecumseh Press, 1988): iv.

<sup>41</sup> Maria Tippett, By a Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women (Toronto: Viking Penguin, 1992): 36-41.

provide a “self-governing, mutually helpful society.”<sup>42</sup> Twenty-seven women joined Dignam in forming the Toronto Women’s Art Club, which ran under this name from 1887 until 1890. There were similar clubs in Montreal, such as the Montreal Society of Decorative Art, which originated in 1878, and the Montreal School of Art and Applied Design (1893), and in London the Women’s Art Club was formed in 1893. In the Maritimes the School of Art in Picton, Nova Scotia also came into being around this time. These groups merged under the banner of the Women’s Art Association of Canada in 1892. The WAAC was founded with the intention of providing a venue for women artists to exhibit (and possibly to train) as professional artists. Despite the professional aspirations the Association’s general focus came to rest on handicrafts. Partly as a result of this, the WAAC could never completely escape the label of amateurism. Nor were its members able to participate as exhibitors with the established exhibiting bodies such as the Ontario Society of Artists and the Royal Canadian Academy.<sup>43</sup> However, with membership across the country the WAAC became the first national organization of women artists and as such developed its own exhibitions.<sup>44</sup>

Through their participation in clubs, organizations and associations, women gained self-confidence and increasingly claimed art and culture as their responsibility. Indeed John Ruskin (1819-1900) had already made this explicit in Sesame and Lilies (1865). In this

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<sup>42</sup> Florence Deeks, “Historical Sketches of the Women’s Art Association of Canada,” A Published Lecture presented in Toronto, (May 1912):1 Quoted in Maura Lesley Broadhurst, Strategic Spaces: Towards a Genealogy of Women Artists’ Groups in Canada (M.A. Thesis, Concordia University, 1997): 23.

<sup>43</sup> Broadhurst: 20 and Kathleen Dowsett, The Women’s Art Association of Canada and Its Designs on Canadian Handicraft, 1898-1939 (M.A. Thesis, Queen’s University, 1998): 24.

<sup>44</sup> Dowsett: op. cit. 27. Through the 1890s and into the first decade of the twentieth-century branches formed across Ontario and into provinces to the east and west. There were branches in Hamilton, Brockville, St. Thomas, Kingston, Ottawa, Peterborough, Owen Sound, Sudbury, Welland and Oshawa. In Quebec there was a branch in Montreal, and in the Maritimes in Saint John, Charlottetown, Moncton and

book Ruskin declared it was women's role to foster gentility and purify society through culture.<sup>45</sup> "The man's duty...is in the defense of the state. The woman's duty, as a member of the commonwealth, is to assist in the ordering, in the comforting, and in the beautiful adornment of the state."<sup>46</sup> Ruskin was popular in the United States from the time Sesame and Lilies was published.<sup>47</sup> In the United States the association of women with culture was borne out in the unprecedented growth of women's clubs beginning in the 1890s. Women were soon involved in initiating community programmes such as public libraries, concert series and art exhibitions.<sup>48</sup>

As a result of all the factors outlined in this chapter, Canada's establishment of an identity of its own coincided with an increased emphasis being placed on Canadian art and culture, and on women becoming closely associated with these phenomena. The professional artist would be an important exponent of this new cultural undertaking and as a result this figure was rewarded with an increased social status: the artist came to be seen not just as a craftsman, but as a professional with academic qualifications. The artist, and those with a connection to the arts, developed personas as "cultural improvers" and as such they benefited their own towns and their own social position at the same

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Fredericton. The WAAC was represented on the Prairies in Portage La Prairie, Edmonton, Brandon and Regina and in Fernie, British Columbia.

<sup>45</sup> John Ruskin, Lecture 2. "Lilies of Queen's Gardens," Sesame and Lilies: The Two Paths and the King of the Golden River (London: J.M. Dent and Company, n.d.): 48-79.

See also Swinth, op. cit. 18.

<sup>46</sup> Ruskin, op. cit. 72.

<sup>47</sup> Mary Ann Stankiewicz, "The Eye is a Nobler Organ": Ruskin and American Art Education," Journal of Aesthetic Education 18(Summer 1984): 57-58. However Ruskin's romanticism was reshaped by Americans and combined with the philosophical ideals of the German idealists. The best known of Ruskin's American disciples was Charles Eliot Norton (1827-1908). He contributed to the development of art education in the United States and promoted the fine arts as a reflection of the spiritual character of the nation

<sup>48</sup> Karen Blair, The Torchbearers: Women and Their Amateur Art Associations in America, 1890-1930 (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994): 30-31.

time; “with the promise of cultural improvement, the nation felt it could only benefit from having artists in its midst.”<sup>49</sup> As art schools opened in Toronto and Montreal in the 1870s, in Halifax in 1887 and Winnipeg in 1913 and in other smaller cities across Ontario and Quebec from the 1880s onwards, women took their places in this promise.

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<sup>49</sup> Korzenik, *op.cit.*93.

## Chapter Two

### Eager Pupils: Women in Canadian Art Schools

In this chapter I will suggest that Canadian women, along with their American counterparts, were actively engaged in gaining access to art schools from the 1860s onwards. In Canada, as private and professional art instruction became available across the country women were eager pupils. They enrolled in the art schools as they were established in Montreal, Toronto and in Halifax between the 1860s and the 1880s and in the last two decades of the century women dominated the student body of every major art school in the country. While they may have enrolled with the idea of becoming teachers or of working in design, many women found their outlook changed as they were exposed to new ideas and role models.<sup>1</sup> In time their commitment to their art training would lead many of them to European schools and art academies. I also consider the curriculum offered by Canadian art schools with particular attention paid to painting and the availability of the life class. In addition I will explore why many women chose to attend co-educational schools, with their focus on a fine arts curriculum as opposed to the Associated Artists School of Art and Design (AASAD), a school run by women for women.

In 1897 the American textile designer and women's advocate Candace Wheeler (1827-1923) asserted,

“Girls are being educated for much arduous and responsible work in life, and for many varieties of it; but most of all, perhaps they are studying art. There are today thousands

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Tippet, By a Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women (Toronto: Viking-Penguin, 1992): 29-30.

upon thousands of girl art students and women artists, where only a few years ago there was only one.”<sup>2</sup>

In her article Wheeler described the achievements of a generation of women who had streamed through American art schools after 1865. Wheeler herself had both artistic talent and a social conscience creating a career for herself as a textile designer and as a teacher, author and lecturer. Her first public venture in New York was the founding of the Society of Decorative Art in 1877. A major commission for Wheeler came about when she was asked to design the interior of the Woman's Building at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. She also campaigned for social change, especially as it pertained to women's financial independence. Wheeler described how important it was for women to seek fulfillment as well as the skills and credentials they needed to be professional artists. It was a contagious idea. As schools opened across Canada women eagerly joined the student bodies.

Some of the earliest known art classes in Canada can be dated to the arrival of the United Empire Loyalists. A number of artist-teachers, both men and women, opened 'schools' across the Maritimes and in Upper Canada after the 1770s. Itinerant painters continued to travel across the regions through the next century. As artists trained in France, Britain or the United States arrived in Canada they set up as drawing and painting teachers. When Jeanne-Charlotte Allamand (1760-1839), a Swiss-trained painter, arrived in Montreal in 1798, she advertised her skills and taught art, music and language arts in Montreal for nearly twenty

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<sup>2</sup> Candace Wheeler, "Art Education for Women," *Outlook* Vol.55 (January 2 1897): 81. Quoted in Kirsten Swinth, *Painting Professionals: Women Artists and the Development of Modern American Art, 1870-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001): 12.



years. Eliza Thresher (active 1816-1843) successfully taught art on the east coast as she traveled from Montreal to Halifax, Saint John and Charlottetown. An American-trained artist, William H. Jones, gave classes to a fashionable clientele in Halifax in 1829-1830. This led to Halifax's first art exhibition of works by the young ladies and gentlemen of the town and the garrison.<sup>3</sup>

In other instances, established painters were hired by girls' schools, or were prevailed upon by a parent or pupil to give private lessons. Cornelius Kreighoff (1815-1872) is known to have done both. Kreighoff taught painting at the Misses Plimsoll's School in Montreal from 1847 to 1850. He probably took up teaching again when he fell on hard times in the early 1860s. He was living in Quebec City at that time and it was likely then that he gave Alicia Killaly (1836-1908) lessons.<sup>4</sup> Other women were trained as artists by family members. Susanna Moodie (1803-1885) passed on the skills she had been given by her mother, to her daughter Agnes Fitzgibbon (1833-1913), in teaching her the art of botanical illustration.<sup>5</sup>

The first institutionally-based art classes started in 1840 when the Montreal Mechanic's Institute offered drawing courses to working men in conjunction with elementary subjects such as reading and writing, and other vocational subjects such as bookkeeping. No such classes were available for young women.<sup>6</sup> The first school in Canada to train women in the

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<sup>3</sup> Tippett, op. cit. 5-7 and Dennis Reid, *A Concise History of Canadian Painting* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1973): 33.

<sup>4</sup> Dorothy Farr and Natalie Luckyj, *From Women's Eyes: Women Painters in Canada* (Kingston, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, 1976): 2.

<sup>5</sup> Charlotte Gray, *Sisters in the Wilderness* (Toronto: Viking-Penguin, 1999): 293.

<sup>6</sup> Dorothy McLeod, "Historic Atwater Library Looks to Future," *Westmount Times* Vol.5, no 1 (January 12 2005): 1-2 the article offered a brief history of the Mechanics Institute.

visual arts was the Wesleyan Ladies College in Sackville, New Brunswick. This school, with its focus on music, drawing and painting, was established in 1854.<sup>7</sup>

Art classes were part of its mandate when the Art Association of Montreal was incorporated in 1860. At that time wealthy businessmen and civic leaders recognized the benefits of investing in the arts.<sup>8</sup> The AAM made space available for art classes in its Philips Square building from its inception. From the start the classes were well-attended, although for some two decades they were somewhat sporadic. The classes were regularized when Robert Harris took up teaching there in 1881 and in 1886 William Brymner became the professor-director of the art school. Brymner had gone to Paris in 1876 and stayed for nine years. During that time he enrolled in the Académie Julian, then considered one of the most progressive art académies because the studio practice was based on working from life. The students could come and go as they saw fit, and their work was critiqued by fashionable artists. Women were fully integrated into the Académie.

On taking up his post at the AAM Art School in 1886, Brymner's intention was to provide an art training in Montreal that was as much as possible like the experience he had had in Paris.<sup>9</sup> He introduced a practical and orderly curriculum which began with students drawing from simple wooden geometric shapes and proceeding to "the drawing of parts

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<sup>7</sup> In 1862 the Wesleyan Academy for Boys and the Ladies College were combined as Mount Allison College. From that time, the college was a degree granting institution.

<sup>8</sup> Jean Trudel, "Aux Origines du Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal – La foundation de l'Art Association of Montreal en 1860," *The Journal of Canadian Art History* Vol.15, no.1 (1992) : 31-62.

<sup>9</sup> Richard S. Haliday, "History of the Art Classes of the AAM" Unpublished essay, 1978: 3. Harris was influenced by the French academy and introduced it as the basic art educational philosophy at the AAM. Nevertheless he relied on drawing from casts as the main focus of his teaching.

and faces, and thence to the full length figure.”<sup>10</sup> This work was done from plaster casts of classical Greek and Roman sculptures. Once certain proficiency had been attained in pencil and coloured crayon the student moved on to painting in oils from the antique. The next stage found the student modeling the figure three-dimensionally in clay. At the advanced level in the drawing and painting classes the student worked from the draped or nude model. Anne Savage (1896-1971) remembered of Brymner, “He possessed that rare gift in a teacher – [he] never impose[d] his way on his pupils” but suggested they “work out [their] own salvation” and then left the student to find her own solution.<sup>11</sup> Brymner’s longevity at the AAM Art School (1886-1921) meant that he came into contact with successive generations of art students.

The other important art training centre in Montreal in the forty-year period between the 1890s and the early 1920s was the Conseil des Arts et Manufactures established in 1871. The Conseil classes were held at the Monument National on lower Saint Lawrence Boulevard. Its original mandate was to offer vocational art training, and this was in keeping with the ideals of the South Kensington art training model. The South Kensington School began in London in 1853 in response to a demand for trained artisans and designers after the Great Exhibition of 1851. It was based on a system of precise drawing that would train both the hand and the eye. Walter Smith, a British-born graduate of the South Kensington School, acted as a catalyst for the methods of the school in North America. In his position as Director of Drawing for public schools in Boston in 1870 and then as State Director of Art Education from 1871 he was able to broadcast the ideology and method of precise

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<sup>10</sup> Untitled article, *Montreal Witness* (October 15 1904) from Clipping File, MMFA Library Archives

<sup>11</sup> Barbara Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends: The Beaver Hall Women Painters* (Montreal: Véhicule Press): 46.

drawing across the USA and Canada. Smith's teaching manuals were first published in Montreal in 1877 and in Toronto and Manitoba in 1883 and 1884. By the middle of the 1880s these manuals were authorized by the Department of Education in most Canadian provinces.<sup>12</sup> This system of training designers and artisans was looked upon favourably by industrialists wherever schools of art and design were established in Canada. At the founding of the AAM, the trustees authorized a letter to Henry Cole, Director of the South Kensington School of Art, to ask his advice on how to implement a school of design in Montreal.<sup>13</sup> In Quebec the South Kensington system was favoured by the provincial government, English industrialists and the Catholic Church. While the AAM did not follow this route, the South Kensington system influenced other schools in Quebec, including the Monument National.

The provincial government mandated the Conseil des Arts et Manufacturers to define drawing instruction in night school for workers. The Conseil also oversaw the implementation of drawing into the public grade schools, which according to Suzanne Lemerise and Leah Sherman was adopted as early as 1877.<sup>14</sup> As a result, when the school at the Monument National was opened under the direction of the Conseil, the focus was not on the fine arts but vocational art education would be most beneficial in making working men become self-motivated, skilled and prepared to pay attention to details and accuracy.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Graeme Chalmers, "South Kensington and the Colonies II: The Influence of Walter Smith in Canada," The History of Art Education: Proceedings from the Penn State Conference (State College, Pennsylvania: Penn State University College of Arts and Architecture, School of Visual Arts, 1985): 108-109.

<sup>13</sup> MMFA Archives, Council Meeting, Book 1 (1860-1895): 4-5. At the first meeting in February, 1860 it was suggested that associate secretary Thomas King draft a letter of inquiry to Cole.

<sup>14</sup> Suzanne Lemerise and Leah Sherman, "La Place du dessin dans les politiques scolaires catholiques et protestantes du Quebec," Historical Studies in Education Vol.8, no.1 (1996): 3.

<sup>15</sup> Jean-Marc Larrue, Le Monument Inattendu: Le Monument National 1893-1993 (Montreal: Cahiers du Quebec, 1993): 152.

As was discussed in Chapter One in reference to the introduction of drawing into the public school classroom, while this system focussed on the training of workers, an overriding consideration was maintaining the social order.

The Monument National kept this vocational focus even after Edmond Dyonnet was appointed director in 1892. However, he made changes to the art training that reflected his own fine art training. At an earlier age, Dyonnet had been enrolled as a student at the Montreal Conseil and later traveled to Europe for further training. On becoming director of the school he reinvented the curriculum of the Conseil as a more innovative art programme, making a distinction between the industrial arts and the fine arts. The students were first introduced to drawing from the object, or drawing geometric shapes, rather than drawing from copy book transfers.<sup>16</sup> By focussing on the fine arts Dyonnet acknowledged two things: the association of the lower social classes with the industrial arts and the increase in enrolment experienced at the Monument National when drawing from transfers and antique casts was dropped in favour of drawing from objects. Within the first three years of the school being under his direction, enrolment grew from forty-five pupils to over three hundred. Women students were in the majority in the daytime classes through the 1890s. Dyonnet's association with the school lasted until 1922, at which time it was folded into the *École des Beaux-Arts de Montreal*. Dyonnet was instrumental in helping found the *École* and he taught there during its first two years, until his retirement in 1924. The Montreal school was run by Charles Maillard. The school focussed on the fine arts, applied

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<sup>16</sup> Harry J. Smith, "Edmond Dyonnet, R.C.A.," Educational Record of the Province of Quebec Vol.71, no.2 (April-June 1955): 102-109.

arts and architecture.<sup>17</sup> Many notable Quebec-born women artists such as Pegi Nicol McLeod (1904-1949, enrolled 1920s) and Marian Dale Scott (1906-1993, enrolled 1920s), Francoise Sullivan (born in 1925, enrolled 1941-1945), Marcelle Ferron (1924-2001, enrolled 1940s), Mimi Parent (born in 1924, enrolled 1946-1947) and Rita Letendre (born in 1928, enrolled 1948-1950) attended the school. The Ecole des Beaux-Art in Quebec City was also founded in 1922, the opening of the two schools and their being funded by the Quebec government was in response to a flourishing interest in art and culture which also led to the founding of the Musee de la Province de Quèbec and the National Archives at this time.

In Toronto in the 1870s the call for fine art instruction was strongly linked to a feeling that the arts were important to the development of a national sensibility.<sup>18</sup> The first Toronto School of Art was opened in 1876 after funding was secured from the Ontario government through the Minister of Education. Casts from the Normal School collection (Egerton Ryerson's Educational Museum) were loaned, and the direction of the school was placed under the leadership of the Ontario Society of Artists. Many of its teachers, such as William Cruikshank, John A. Fraser (1838-1898), J.W.L. Forster (1850-1938), Robert Holmes (1861-1930), Farquar McGillivray-Knowles (1859-1932), and Thomas Mower Martin (1838-1934) were drawn from the OSA's membership. In its early years the school provided both vocational and fine art training. The Ontario Society of Artists also sent a delegation to the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876, to look into types of art education employed in other industrialized nations. Lucius O'Brien was one of the

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<sup>17</sup> See Laurier Lacroix, *Peindre à Montréal 1915-1930* (Montreal: Galerie de la UQUAM, 1996): 56-62.

<sup>18</sup> M.O. Hammond, *Painting and Sculpture in Canada* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1930): 11.

delegates and he was impressed by the success of the South Kensington School of Art and by the implementation of its 'system' in Britain and in Massachusetts. As a result the OSA offered an arts programme that reflected this ideology when it officially opened in Toronto that same year. This programming continued into the 1890s, when the school was reorganized, although courses continued to be arranged to allow the training of art teachers, as well as of artists and architects.<sup>19</sup> It was not until the restructuring of the school in 1912 that fine art was separated from the vocational arts.

The OSA's fine art curriculum was given a boost in 1879 when Robert Harris arrived in Toronto. He was the first artist to come to the Ontario School of Art with an up-to-date French training. Harris had spent a year in London (1876) at the Slade School and then another two years in Paris in Léon Bonnat's atelier. In both London and Paris Harris had worked in studios where the emphasis was placed on drawing from the figure. Before Harris' arrival in Toronto, the OSA students worked freehand, drawing lines and geometric shapes, and then moved on to copy designs in the Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Moorish styles. Instruction in perspective and the use of light and shade followed. Once these skills were mastered, the student was finally allowed to draw the clothed figure. George Reid, an OSA pupil during Harris' first year in Toronto, later said that Harris taught the antique classes and that his introduction of "French way of working" changed the school's teaching methods. Reid also described Harris as a romantic figure whose enthusiasm for art and teaching made him a favourite of and an inspiration to the students.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Muriel Miller Miner, George Agnew Reid, Canadian Artist (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1946): 58.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 17.

Notwithstanding Harris' reforms, the twinning of the fine arts and vocational art training continued as the schools of art and design that opened in the 1880s and 1890s across Ontario and Quebec tried to accommodate both a diverse student population and respond to the requirements of the manufacturers who were calling for skilled draughtsmen and designers. In Hamilton a group of businessmen was instrumental in establishing an art school that would, as these men saw it, ultimately contribute to the needs of industry. In addition it was proposed that such a school would have a positive impact on the cultural life of the city. The Hamilton Art School was opened in 1886. This provincial institution was recognized by Newton MacTavish in his 1925 book on Canadian art as being one of the three "most important" schools in Canada.<sup>21</sup> (The other two were in Toronto and Montreal.) The school focused on the fine arts, but there were also two- to four-year courses in architecture and industrial design.<sup>22</sup> By 1894 there were six other art schools in Ontario. They were located in St. Thomas, Brockville, Kingston, London, Toronto and Ottawa, and had a total of eight hundred seventy-five pupils. Hamilton had the largest number of students with one hundred and ninety. Toronto followed with one hundred and five.

In Quebec over one thousand students attended nine schools across the province in 1894. These were located in Montreal, Quebec, Lévis, New Liverpool, Sorel, Ste-Hyacinthe, Huntingdon, Granby and Iberville. A number of them were focused on a vocational art and design curriculum, though they all seem to have taught drawing, perspective, design, architecture, modeling, geometry, and painting in oil and watercolour. However, "three of

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<sup>21</sup> Newton MacTavish, The Fine Arts in Canada (Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1925): 54.



them are so advanced, that they sketch from models,” noted the Canadian Magazine in 1894.<sup>23</sup> The two threads, applied art and design, and an academic fine art education, continued to run through the curriculum of the schools into the twentieth century.<sup>24</sup>

A private benefactor provided the funding for the first art school on the east coast in 1884. This was the Owens Art Institution in Saint John, New Brunswick. The school was incorporated into Mount Allison College at Sackville in 1893. Yet another school, the Victoria School of Art and Design, was opened in Halifax in 1887 once a group of women led by Anna Leonowens had raised the necessary funds.<sup>25</sup>

While an art training infrastructure was slow to develop in Western Canada, private instructors did occasionally crop up. In 1886 in Victoria, Emily Carr had the privilege of meeting Georgina (1848-1930) and Charles de L’Aubinière. The couple had come from France (although Georgina was English) with the intention of starting an art school and a museum. They were not successful and left within a year.<sup>26</sup> There was no provincial school of art in British Columbia until the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts opened in 1925. However, between 1889 and 1900 the Vancouver Art Association was founded, the Studio Club was formed in Victoria in 1900, and that same year the Vancouver Arts and Crafts Association was established. In Winnipeg, the School of Art opened in 1913. Previous to that date, women such as Mrs. Angus Sutherland, a member of the WAAC, had

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<sup>22</sup> Stuart McCuaig, Climbing the Cold White Peaks: A Survey of Artists in and from Hamilton 1910-1950 (Hamilton: Hamilton Artists’ Inc., 1986): 15.

<sup>23</sup> J.A. Radford, “Canadian Art Schools, Artists and Art,” Canadian Magazine vol.2, no.5 (March 1894): 465.

<sup>24</sup> Radford, op. cit. 466.

<sup>25</sup> Phyllis Blakeley, “Key Roles Played by the Nova Scotia College of Art,” Atlantic Advocate (May 1967): 33.

<sup>26</sup> Paula Blanchard, The Life of Emily Carr (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1987): 57.

organized non-institutional art classes for men and women and for children.<sup>27</sup> The Winnipeg School of Art's first director was Alexander Musgrove (1882-1952). He was one of two teachers at the school to have been trained at the Glasgow School of Art. Musgrove's art training strongly influenced the school's direction as it carried forward a traditional academic emphasis on drawing and the use of plaster casts.<sup>28</sup> In its first two years the Winnipeg School had a healthy enrolment of about one hundred fifty students each year. The administrators recognized the needs of a diverse population and as a result offered a variety of courses from junior to advanced and professional level.<sup>29</sup> From the beginning women were enrolled at all levels of instruction.

Thirty years before the opening of the Winnipeg School of Art, the arrival of women in art schools had coincided with an educational, governmental and social push towards widespread art education. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century there was also a great deal of attention paid to women's employment, and to how women would best be served. Much of the dialogue around this issue was class-based as it was working-class women who were the greatest concern. By the turn of the century, young women were given manual training consisting of Household Science, and Artwork and Drawing wherein they were taught freehand drawing and elementary designing. These skills were seen by the Ontario Superintendent of Education, John Seath, as extremely important in

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<sup>27</sup> Marilyn Baker, The Winnipeg School of Art: The Early Years (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1984): 24.

<sup>28</sup> Baker, op. cit. 29-31.

<sup>29</sup> Baker, op. cit. 34.

meeting the needs of women and of Canada's rapidly expanding industrial market.<sup>30</sup> It was presumed that middle-class women would more often work in the area of the fine arts, and that the vocational arts would be the source of employment for working-class women. As a result their careers would play out quite differently – where one would see her efforts devoted to manufacturing the other would display her work on the walls of an art exhibition. A number of forces converged to create the interest in art schools. Several of these were noted in Chapter One. In addition to these, women, who had once been expected to possess artistic skills to be put to use in the home, wanted useful endeavour in their lives and also needed financial security. They looked upon the art market as a resource and upon art schools as essential training. Further, as a new dedication to the figure came about, the human form became the subject and made lengthy training seem necessary.<sup>31</sup>

Women and men worked together in Canadian schools from the beginning, in contrast to the European academies and art schools where women had been denied entry and a pattern of exclusion had continued in many cases until the later decades of the nineteenth century. A case in point was the Royal Academy in London. The RA initially admitted two female members in 1768; it then fended off all challenges by women for entry into its schools until 1860. At that time the first female student to be admitted was Laura Herford (1831-1870). The situation was no better in France. The government-run academy, the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, did not admit women until 1893. The first request to admit women to a North American school was in Philadelphia in 1807. In 1844 women began to study at the

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<sup>30</sup> Ruby Heap, "Schooling Women for Home or for Work? Vocational Education for Women in Ontario in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century," in Ruby Heap and Alison Prentice, Gender and Education in Ontario: An Historical Reader (Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press, 1991): 195.

<sup>31</sup> Swinth, *op. cit.* 35.

Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts School (PAFA), when a resolution was passed by the Board of Directors that they were to be given access to the sculpture gallery for the purpose of drawing from antique casts.<sup>32</sup>

However, with women's presence growing in art schools in Canada, changes to the traditionally male setting had been required. Maintaining a level of propriety was of the utmost importance. In 1897 Dyonnet and the administrators of the Conseil des Arts et Manufacture had to reassure Catholic Church representatives and government ministers that the art school would maintain and promote proper morality, as they had voiced concerns with regard to men and women working in the same classes. A decision was made that there would be no drawing from the nude model.<sup>33</sup> Maintaining propriety extended to descriptions of the setting itself, and the place of women in that setting, both of which were often couched in a rhetoric of refinement. This was evident in the continued use of the term "The Ladies Class."<sup>34</sup> The schools also cast the male teacher as a role model and a figure of authority. This had the added benefit of diminishing the likelihood of inappropriate familiarity between instructor and female student. The presence of a female instructor could also circumvent anything of this sort. But it was relatively rare to find women teaching in Canadian art schools before the turn of the century. Charlotte Schreiber (1834-1922) was an exception when she taught figure drawing, oil painting and drawing from the antique at the Ontario School of Art from 1877 to 1880.<sup>35</sup> She was the first (and for a long

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<sup>32</sup> The Pennsylvania Academy and Its Women: 1850-1920 (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, May 3-June 16, 1973):12.

<sup>33</sup> Documents de la Session, Province du Quebec Vol.31, no.3 (1896-1897): 290.

<sup>34</sup> Halliday, op. cit. 14. Halliday states the Art school never really lost the reputation of being a finishing school for the leisured classes.

<sup>35</sup> Miller Miner, op. cit. 17-19. and Tippett, op. cit. 205,fn.20.

time the only) female member of the OSA (1876), and it was through this connection that Schreiber took up teaching at the school. Alberta Cleland (1876-1960) was appointed as the elementary class teacher at the AAM just before the turn of the century. A former pupil at the school, Cleland held this post from 1898 to 1939.<sup>36</sup> After 1900 many more women were teaching at schools across the country. Berthe LeMoyné (active 1918-1924) and F.D. Nutter (active 1904) taught at the AAM. Liliás Torrance Newton (1896-1980) and Ethel Seath (1879-1963) had also attended the AAM before they joined the faculty of the school in the 1930s. Seath also taught for forty-five years at The Study, a private school for girls in Montreal. Her fellow AAM pupil, Anne Savage, ran an innovative art programme at Montreal's Baron Byng High School, for over thirty years beginning in 1922. In Halifax Edith Smith (1867-1954) taught at the Halifax Ladies' College before she began teaching at the Victoria School of Art in 1909.

The number of women students in the schools meant they were in an advantageous position as they were able to meet with their male colleagues on a daily basis and in doing so were able to form alliances around issues that were important to all the students, such as an elevated caliber of teaching and setting high standards within the school. As was briefly mentioned in Chapter One, in the May 15, 1880 issue of the Canadian Illustrated News (Figure 1) there was a full page dedicated to sketches created by the pupils of the Ontario School of Art. The six scenes describe the goings-on in the studio. Four of the sketches are of great interest as they illustrate women and men working together in the studios. In Hard at Work two figures are viewed through an archway; a female student is seated working at her easel, while her male colleague stands at his easel. Both are absorbed in their work. In

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<sup>36</sup> Meadowcroft, op. cit. 39.

another scene, entitled Critics, two men and a seated woman observe the model; they are viewed from the back. The woman is slightly bent forward as she observes the model. The two male figures frame the seated woman. The vantage point is low, the figures are drawn close together and they are in a very shallow space. A third image reveals the convivial nature of the school setting as an older man and five female students congregate around the stove at lunchtime.<sup>37</sup> In The Charcoal Class fifteen figures are loosely grouped side by side in a semi-circle opposite the model on the dais. There is a low viewpoint with a strong perspective that leads the eye into the studio and takes in the costumed model on the far side of the room. The two largest figures are centrally placed. A male figure, slightly to the left, is caught as he pauses to look at his work while the central female figure is seated as she works on her drawing. There are at least four other women who are dotted throughout the sketch. The most animated grouping in the composition (located towards the back, in the middle, under the right side of the archway) consists of a woman who stands at the apex of the triangle made by the central female figure and the woman to her right. This first woman is the most dynamic figure in the group as she faces the viewer with both arms extended in opposite directions. In one hand she holds the charcoal as she sizes up the model, and her left arm is bent back towards her easel. (Figure 1A)

These sketches and their placement in the popular press present women's enrollment in an important Canadian art school and they acknowledge the fact that women were earnest in their training and took advantage of any classes that were open to them. The images show the school to be female-friendly territory. These and other illustrated articles such as

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<sup>37</sup> "Sketches by the Pupils of the Ontario School of Art," Canadian Illustrated News Vol.21, no.20 (May 15 1880): 309.

“Scenes in the Classes of the Art Students League” (Daily Graphic, New York, 1877) appeared in periodicals which had, according to a contemporaneous study, “an almost incalculable influence upon the moral and intellectual development of individuals, upon home life and public opinion.”<sup>38</sup>

The debate over whether women should view the nude female or the partially draped male figure was also played out in the social dialogue of the magazines. Life classes were often a feature of any reports on the progress of women’s work in the art schools because these were the sites at which, it was often feared, femininity was most likely to be transgressed. Female art students at the Art Students’ League in New York were the focus of such a report. There the correspondent found that “there was no suggestion of sex about the matter. The girls were students, not women.”<sup>39</sup>

Most (though not all) women agreed with this. Those who were in favour of life drawing understood their femininity would not be compromised by working from the nude and they also knew it would be only after they had access to life classes that they would be able to compete equally with their male colleagues. While European women fought hard for this right, North American women had initiated calls for life drawing at the same time as American art schools were professionalizing their curriculum and adopting European art training methods, including life classes. As a result women at Philadelphia’s Pennsylvania

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<sup>38</sup> Sarah Burns, Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996): 11-12, 330 The author quotes the results of a survey from 1892, which in turn is based on the research of Frank Luther Mott, A History of American Magazines, 1885-1905 (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957).

<sup>39</sup> Swinth, op. cit. 35. The author is quoting Jane Cunningham Croly who wrote under the pen name “Jenny June.”

Academy were admitted to a women's life class in 1868 (Figure 2).<sup>40</sup> The class was instituted under the direction of Christian Schussele (1824-1879), the director of the school. He had previously taught women privately and accepted that this would be an important addition to the PAFA's training. In the beginning the women worked from the female figure. Thomas Eakins was hired by the Academy in 1876, and within a year he had begun to bring male models into the women's life class. He took the emphasis away from working from antique casts and moved to painting and modeling from the figure. He also introduced an intensive anatomy course. In the ten years Eakins was at the Academy he became one of the most influential artist-teachers in country. Under his guidance women were given equal access (albeit segregated) to all parts of the curriculum. While he privately doubted that women artists could ever be "great", he nonetheless insisted that their work was good enough to merit top-notch professional support. In this respect, the PAFA was progressive and the calibre of women artists who came out of the school reflected the training they had received.<sup>41</sup> Susan MacDowell (later) Eakins (1858-1938), Alice Barber Stephens (1858-1922) and Jessie Wilcox Smith (1863-1935) are some of the best-known artists who were pupils during Eakins' tenure at the PAFA.<sup>42</sup>

In Canada the Ontario School of Art did not offer life drawing until George Reid introduced it into the curriculum in 1903. According to his biographer, Muriel Miller Miner, Reid had been enrolled in the Toronto school, but left in 1882 after reading the

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<sup>40</sup> Swinth, op. cit. 19. Other schools such as Boston's Museum School adopted similar methods of teaching art in the 1870s under William Morris Hunt and the New York Art Students League was founded on the same premise in 1875 by a group of both sexes.

<sup>41</sup> The Pennsylvania Academy and Its Women 1850-1920. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, May 3- June 16, 1973): 21.

<sup>42</sup> Barber Stephens was at the PAFA from 1876-1879, Macdowell Eakins from 1876-1882 and Wilcox Smith was there from 1885 until 1888.



article in Scribner's about the Pennsylvania Academy.<sup>43</sup> Harris had been one of his instructors and he had encouraged Reid to go to Philadelphia to further his training. Harris recognized that the training Reid would receive there would give him access to painting from the nude, that the training would be extensive, and that it would be the next best thing to going to Paris.<sup>44</sup> In time Reid would use these methods and adopt an ideology that was based on his own educational experiences. He would also come to recommend travel abroad to his pupils as a way of completing their educational journeys as artists.<sup>45</sup>

In Montreal, as discussed above, Edmond Dyonnet's classes in the 1890s were constrained from drawing the "nude" figure.<sup>46</sup> In the 1884-85 school year, Montreal's AAM School, under Brymner's direction, became the first Canadian art school to allow male and female students in the advanced class to draw from the nude figure (Figure 3). In Toronto in 1886, the Art Students League was formed to give artists and art students the opportunity to draw from life. The League was a group of artists who met regularly rather than an art school per se. Both male and female members had access to these life sessions from the draped nude.<sup>47</sup>

Figure drawing from the nude for women was offered at the women-only Associated Artists' School of Art and Design in Toronto. This school was opened in Toronto in 1884 by a Miss E.K. Westmacott (n.d.) and some other women. Life drawing classes were

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<sup>43</sup> Miller Miner, op. cit. 138.

<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth Milroy "Points of Contact: Thomas Eakins, Robert Harris, and the Art of Léon Bonnat," The Journal of Canadian Art History Vol.10, no.2 (1987): 92 and Christine Boyanski, Sympathetic Realism: George Reid and the Academic Tradition (Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario, 1986): 16.

<sup>45</sup> Miller Miner, op. cit. 138.

<sup>46</sup> However Lacroix published an undated photograph of the men's studio in which there is a nude female model. Lacroix, op. cit. 58 fig.10.

<sup>47</sup> R. Holmes, "Toronto Art Students League," Canadian Magazine Vol.4, no.2 (December 1894): 180.

available there from September 1887 in a studio in the Yonge Street Arcade.<sup>48</sup> The women who joined the classes, held each Wednesday, were able to draw, paint, model and sketch from still life and from the female model. Every other week there was an open studio and lectures, while once a month the women critiqued one another's work.<sup>49</sup> Initially the mandate was to teach handicrafts to both men and women, but by 1887 there were no men in the school. Mary Ella Dignam had joined the school in the mid-1880s and she had begun to push the curriculum into the realm of the fine arts.<sup>50</sup> Dignam had trained as an artist at the Western School of Art and Design in London, Ontario and then went to the Art Students League in New York.<sup>51</sup> She completed her training in Paris in the ateliers of Raphaël Collin (1850-1916) and Luc Olivier-Merson (1846-1920) and, as has been discussed above, would become the driving force behind the creation of the WAAC. When she joined the AASAD she started the first painting classes and added drawing, sketching and modeling to the design focused curriculum.<sup>52</sup> It may be that it wasn't until Dignam's arrival that there was any teaching or professional instruction.<sup>53</sup> Dignam was a serious artist who sought to provide professional opportunities for women. She became Principal of the AASAD in 1887: the same year she began to organize the Toronto Women's Art Club, the forerunner of the WAAC.

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<sup>48</sup> Little is known about this school. See Important Moments in Canadian Art History at [web.ubc.ca/okanagan/creative/links/timeline/1918.html](http://web.ubc.ca/okanagan/creative/links/timeline/1918.html) (March 7<sup>th</sup> 2006). Maura Lesley Broadhurst, Strategic Spaces: Towards a Genealogy of Women Artists' Groups in Canada (M.A. Thesis, Concordia University, 1997): 22-23.

<sup>49</sup> Anne Mandely Page, Canada's First Professional Women painters, 1890-1914: Their Reception in Canadian Writing on the Visual Arts (M.A. Thesis, Concordia University, 1991): 14.

<sup>50</sup> This date is based on Dignam's exhibition history which began in Toronto in 1884. See Jonathon Franklin, Index to Nineteenth Century Canadian Art Catalogues Vol.1 (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2004): 428-434.

<sup>51</sup> The New York Art Students League does not use an apostrophe but the Toronto Art Students' League does.

<sup>52</sup> Kathleen Dowsett, The Women's Art Association of Canada and Its Designs on Canadian Handicraft, 1898-1939 (M.A. Thesis, Queen's University, 1998): 37.

<sup>53</sup> No instruction was given, the object being to provide an incentive and help towards self-development, to draw out (independent of the instructor) personal resources, which are necessary to individual effort.

Attending art school and later exhibiting with their male contemporaries marked women's ambitions and was an indicator of their seriousness. In all likelihood it was the association with "amateur" and "handicrafts" that kept women like Laura Muntz and Florence McGillivray out of the AASAD, and that led them instead to study at the Ontario School of Art. The school's connection to design and handicrafts reinforced the idea of art as an accomplishment. The teaching staff was made up of women, many of whom were former pupils, and this suggested a less professional approach to teaching. The WAAC, which was closely aligned with the AASAD, was dedicated to educating women and advocating for women artists through exhibitions and lectures, but it tended not to include among its members artists who challenged existing conventions or who desired broader critical recognition.<sup>54</sup> Many women enrolled in the Ontario School of Art or the Art Association of Montreal's School precisely because they wanted professional qualifications and a critical rather than a primarily sympathetic reaction to their work.

While women would have found the structure of the co-educational art schools to be based on patriarchy they nevertheless found the schools a supportive environment.

In this setting they were able to circumvent the established social structures and build strong personal and professional connections with other like-minded women. Prudence Heward, for example, established a circle of friends at the AAM in the years after the First World War, which would sustain her for the rest of her life, both artistically and socially. Heward and most of her women friends did not leave the school until the advanced class was closed in 1924. Her associates - Mabel May (1877-1971), Nora Collyer (1898-1979),

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This description of the school is from <[www.trentu.ca/library/archives/97-006.htm](http://www.trentu.ca/library/archives/97-006.htm)>

Lilias Torrance Newton (1896-1980), Sarah Robertson (1891-1948), and Kathleen Morris (1893-1986) - stayed at the school for at least five years each. In contrast, male students such as Randolph Hewton (1888-1960) and Edwin Holgate (1892-1977) left for Paris after a year or two studying with William Brymner.<sup>55</sup> Staying in the school over so many years, the women enjoyed a nurturing environment, studio space, models, and scholarships and prizes.

As this chapter has demonstrated, between 1860 and 1925 art schools opened across Canada, from Saint John to Vancouver. By the end of the nineteenth century women were a formidable presence. While art schools in France and Great Britain had traditionally restricted women's access in favour of male students, this was not the case in Canada. The small population base meant that the schools needed to draw on students of both sexes and to provide for a variety of skill levels as well as different areas of interest. This also meant that most schools offered both a vocational and a traditional fine arts training into the twentieth century. In addition, women were able to make of the environment what they needed, as they were given the space to work, form alliances and work towards achieving professional standing.

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<sup>54</sup> Joyce Zemans, "A Tale of Three Women: The Visual Arts in Canada/ A Current Account/ing," RACAR Vol.25, no.1-2 (1998): 104.

<sup>55</sup> Meadowcroft, op. cit. 41-42.

### Chapter Three

#### “Make Artists of Them.” Canadian Women in British Art Schools

Male and female artists followed a similar path whereby art training in Canada led to a number of years in London or Paris. Many of the Canadians who enrolled in art schools in Montreal, Toronto, Halifax and Saint John from the 1880s onwards were encouraged by their male teachers to look to Europe as the next step in their training as artists. Both England and France offered the student of art the opportunity to see great art collections, to view contemporary art at annual exhibitions and to enroll in reputable schools. London did not have the Bohemian *cachet* of Paris (see Chapter Four) but it was home to a well-respected and historically-based artistic milieu.

In this chapter I will focus on the experiences of the Canadians who travelled to Britain to train as artists. Travel from Canada was much improved and increasingly accessible in terms of schedules and cost at the end of the century and Britain was a logical choice both for those who wanted to stay as well as for those who wanted to use it as a jumping-off point for the Continent. In going to London many Canadian art students were able to explore their cultural roots as well as the British art world. In order to come to a fuller understanding of why Canadian women choose to study in Britain I will sketch out the development of women's art training in London. While it did not have the same

reputation as Paris as an art student's mecca,<sup>1</sup> there were many options available for women seeking to further their art education.

Both Laura Muntz and Helen McNicoll enrolled in art school when they went to London. After initial study in Hamilton and Toronto in the early 1880s Muntz went to England in 1887 for a short period, during which she enrolled in an art school in West London. In 1902 McNicoll travelled from Montreal to London to begin the second phase of her art training. She had attended the Art School of the Art Association of Montreal for three years. At the end of this time she had been encouraged by William Brymner to go to Europe to complete her art education as he himself had twenty-five years earlier. Brymner continued to believe throughout his life that his students should see and experience all that the art centres of Europe had to offer.

In contrast, Florence McGillivray and Prudence Heward were both in England shortly before or during the First World War, although neither of these women was affiliated with any art schools there. McGillivray was in Europe in 1913 and 1914. Her family was English-Scots in origin, and visiting England and Scotland gave her a chance to discover the places they had come from.<sup>2</sup> In England she traveled along the northeast coast, as well as to Whitby in Yorkshire and to the artist's colony at St Ives, Cornwall. She also went to Scotland to paint the Scottish coastal landscapes.<sup>3</sup> In 1916 Heward went with her mother and sister to London to be near her brothers while one was studying at Cambridge

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<sup>1</sup> Clive Holland, "Lady Art Students' Life in Paris," *International Studio* Vol.12 (January 1904): 225.

<sup>2</sup> The 1900 Canada census indicates 2,000,000 Canadians as being of British descent, and 1.6 million as having French descent.

and two others were serving in the army. While in England the female members of the family worked for the Red Cross. Heward did not take any art classes at that time and we cannot be sure of what she might have seen at exhibitions during her time in London.<sup>4</sup>

For Muntz, McNicoll, McGillivray and Heward, and for many of their female friends and colleagues travel meant bypassing the boundaries of the domestic space (literally and figuratively) and going to a place where one could, if one chose, work only at painting. The decision to travel abroad was not taken lightly – nineteenth century women were socialized within the home and the notion of being uprooted from family for a lengthy period could be difficult. The financial wherewithal to pursue their studies was another consideration unless the women came from financially well-off families, as women rarely had benefactors outside of their family circle. The European art schools, especially before the division of classes into male and female-only, was another daunting obstacle as women needed to consider the importance of maintaining their respectability. Despite the obstacles, many women took on the challenge of travel and study in Europe. Once abroad and living independently or with other women who were also training as artists, women then had a greater liberty to become completely engrossed in producing art.

The pattern of women travelling had been seeping “into [the] social fabric and colour[ing] the narratives of female identity” since the beginning of the nineteenth

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<sup>3</sup> Colin S. MacDonald, Dictionary of Canadian Artists Volume 4 (Ottawa: Canadian Paperbacks Publishing Ltd, 1967): 1021.

<sup>4</sup> Natalie Luckyj, Expressions of Will: Prudence Heward and Her Art (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1986), 29-30. Luckyj suggests Heward’s cousin, Mary Hervey, a designer, may have introduced her to the aesthetic of Roger Fry (1866-1934) and the Omega Workshop. The Omega Workshop opened in 1913 and ran throughout the war, at 33 Fitzroy Square. Heward may have seen their work there or at the Ideal Home Exhibition in 1916.

century.<sup>5</sup> Fictional heroines acted as catalysts for female readers, as they collectively made the journey from domestically-minded young women to the 'new women' who travelled to develop their talents.

Previously women had journeyed with family, or with a significant male companion who was travelling on business or for pleasure, but rarely on their own. Women's experience of travel began to change in the late nineteenth century, as the number of women traveling independently grew and their reasons for traveling changed. By the beginning of the twentieth century women were experiencing greater freedom as their perception of themselves and their place in society shifted. This change was facilitated by the increased accessibility of affordable travel. Four steamship lines operated out of Quebec and eastern Canada, all of them traveling to Liverpool/Hull. These were the Allan Line, the Dominion Line, the Cunard Line and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. In 1887 the Allan Line refurbished or built three new, larger ships to meet the increasingly sophisticated needs of its passengers. In 1904 the CPR became a competitor, when the company commissioned two fourteen thousand-ton express liners. The first of these, the *Empress of Britain* was ready for service on the Quebec to Liverpool route. The second ship, the *Empress of Ireland*, was ready and in service a month later. These two ships quadrupled the marine travel capacity and were the largest and fastest liners crossing the

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<sup>5</sup> Maria H. Frawley, *A Wider Range: Travel Writing by Women in Victorian England* (Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1994): 14,18-19.



Atlantic between Canada and England.<sup>6</sup>

Another serious competitor was the Cunard Line. In 1907 it introduced two ships, the *Lusitania* and the *Mauretania*. These were able to cross the Atlantic in less than five days, the fastest crossing yet. While speed was important, the greatest changes were made in the third-class cabins. By 1905, amenities were introduced. Meals were served by stewards, and smoking rooms, ladies' rooms, a promenade and a shelter deck were added. But by far the greatest improvement was the introduction of individual cabins all equipped with proper beds and running water and housing two to six passengers. These updates were essentially made to capture the tourist market. From 1895 Cunard had marketed Europe as a place for young people to explore, and by the beginning of the century third class was seen as perfectly acceptable for respectable middle-class tourists.<sup>7</sup> As the size and comfort of the ships increased and travel time was shortened, trans-Atlantic travel became increasingly attractive to a wider clientele and consequentially more accessible to women.<sup>8</sup>

While women did not have as many opportunities or as much freedom to travel as did men, from the 1860s unmarried women had a certain freedom when they traveled as part of a group. From the 1860s, tour operators such as, Thomas Cook began organizing Continental and Trans-Atlantic tours. Cook's Tours provided women with a convenient

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<sup>6</sup> Warren Tute, *Atlantic Conquest* (London: Cassell, 1962):155. The Cunard Line also ran a passenger service from Canada to France and the Compagnie Generale Transatlantique ran a passenger service between New York and Le Havre.

<sup>7</sup> Tute, *op.cit.*159.

<sup>8</sup> Frawley, *op. cit.*121.

means to travel unaccompanied and still remain within the protection of a guide and a group.<sup>9</sup>

For many Canadians of British origin, such as McNicoll and McGillivray the prospect of travelling to Britain was akin to a homecoming.<sup>10</sup> They were first-generation Canadian natives who retraced their parents' steps, and included – in addition to McNicoll and McGillivray - Muntz, Heward, Robert Harris, William Brymner, William Blair Bruce (1859-1906), Elizabeth Armstrong (1859-1912), Harriet Ford (1859-1938), Sophie Pemberton (1869-1959), Theresa Wlyde (1870?-1949), Sydney Strickland Tully (1860-1911) and Emily Carr (1871-1945). A period in England gave these artists the chance to make contact with relatives and family friends, and an opportunity to adjust to and explore a foreign, yet still recognizable environment. Many Canadian artists interested in landscape painting were familiar with the British landscape tradition, and had often been trained in it, back in Canada. When French Impressionism had begun to filter through the international art world at the end of the nineteenth century (it was represented in England by such artists as Philip Wilson Steer (1868-1942)) this, too, resonated with British and Canadian artists as *plein-air* painting appealed to Canadian artists.

Women's art training was well established in England by the 1880s. The notion of art instruction as complementary to the education of young women was firmly established in

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<sup>9</sup> Bonnie Jill Borenstein, Perspectives on British Middle Class Pleasure Travel to Italy and Switzerland, 1860-1914, (M.A. Dissertation, McGill University, Montreal July, 1997): 21.

<sup>10</sup> Eva-Marie Kroller, Canadian Travellers in Europe, 1851-1900 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987): 90.

English upper-class society by early in the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> Women with an interest in a British training would have been aware of this well before they left North America. As noted in an earlier chapter, novels and magazines regularly carried stories and articles about the arts, the work of women artists and the inherent value of travel and art education abroad. Similarly, advice books and guides directed at a female audience dealt with women's art education, and were written by women who had travelled to Europe and enrolled in, or visited, various schools in England and on the Continent.<sup>12</sup> These books and articles reached their peak in the 1880s and 1890s. In 1879 the American art student May Alcott Nieriker (1840-1879) wrote Studying Art Abroad and How to do it Cheaply. In this book she noted of the relative merits of London and Paris. She recommended housing and art schools in each city based on their costs, their locations, the teachers and their areas of expertise. This genre was still in demand when Tessa MacKenzie published The Art Schools of London in 1895. This small book was filled with brief descriptions of the many art schools in operation. While Nieriker made a point of recommending certain watercolour teachers to her readers, MacKenzie gave a wider survey of the art training available to women. This author did not specifically recommend any school, but noted art schools and artist's studios across London from South Kensington to the Crystal Palace. With the recommendations of art teachers and this advice in mind young women such as Muntz, Carr, Ford, Pemberton, Wylde and McNicoll travelled to London for the purpose of furthering their art training.

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<sup>11</sup> A. W. Ward & A. R. Waller, "The Victorian Age: Part Two -Girl's Education," The Cambridge History of English and American Literature Vol.14:1907-21.

<sup>12</sup> May Alcott Nieriker, Studying Art Abroad and How to do it Cheaply (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1879) and Tessa MacKenzie , The Art Schools of London (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd., 1895). Prior to writing A Daughter of Today (see Chapter Two) Sara Jeanette Duncan had written An American Girl in London (New York,: D. Appleton and Company, 1891) which included references to an outing to the private view at the RA Summer Exhibition.

The foundation of early nineteenth-century art instruction in England lay in the accomplishments-based education that gave young women the tools to interact admirably in society, win a husband and be both entertaining and practical. However, the education and employment of women from all classes became a significant social concern as the century progressed. The ongoing question from the 1840s through to the 1890s was, ‘What should we do with our daughters?’ A frequent answer was, ‘Make artists of them.’<sup>13</sup> To this end many art schools both public and private were opened in London from the late 1840s onward, thus making art education accessible to women. For women interested in an art training in England there were many possibilities.

The first government art-related institution developed specifically for women, the Female School of Design, opened in London in 1843. The school was established to give employable skills to women who needed to earn their own living. Problems arose when it was apparent that the women who were most interested in art training were from the middle classes and wanted a fine art training. These women were not interested in acquiring the skills to work as teachers or designers. They wanted to learn how to draw the figure despite the fact it was considered quite inappropriate and foreign to English standards for women to view the nude, whether in the flesh or in plaster.<sup>14</sup> However, those female students who sought accuracy and proficiency knew they needed to have access to drawing from life. It would take many years, many petitions and some open-minded art school directors before women gained unrestricted access to this aspect of art

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<sup>13</sup> Charlotte Yeldman, Women Artists in Nineteenth Century France and England: Their Art Education, Exhibition Opportunities and Membership of Exhibiting Societies and Academies Vol.1 (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1984): 35, fn 216. The author quotes the Pall Mall Gazette (November 12 1888): 5.

<sup>14</sup> Yeldman, op. cit. 20.

training. The first director of the Female School of Design, Fanny McIan (c.1811-1897, principal in 1842-1857), was an active artist who had no qualms about women pursuing a professional career. She had attended Henry Sass's Academy, one of the first schools to admit women in the 1830s, and she first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1836. She painted and exhibited domestic scenes, flower studies and major history paintings. The latter challenged popular sentiment and presented women as heroic. In her career as a painter and the principal of the Female School she sought to highlight women's abilities and to help young women launch art careers. She had to fight social convention as well as the head of the National Training School, Henry Cole, and her own management board to try to bring this about, and was further hampered by the fact that the system was geared towards training (working-class) women to a skill level at which they were capable of producing quality mass-produced goods.

One of the first art schools to admit women that did not focus on design or an "accomplishments" curriculum was the above mentioned, Henry Sass's Academy in Bloomsbury, where Fanny McIan had trained. The school was in operation in the 1830s and 1840s. The women who could attend this school were restricted in number, as the fees were high. Nor were women able to study from the figure at Sass's, and to counter these inequities women resorted to forming their own classes. In 1848 Eliza Fox, formerly a student at Sass's, started an evening class at which ladies could practice drawing from the nude. Fox's evening classes ran until 1859.<sup>15</sup> However, classes such as

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<sup>15</sup> Yeldman, *op.cit.* 21.

this were limited in number and it was not until private art schools with mixed-sex enrolment began to open that women were able to enter life drawing classes.

In 1848 Leigh's General Practical School of Art, run by James Mathew Leigh, became the first art school in London where male and female students could study from the nude simply by paying an entry fee. This school set a benchmark as it was the first to admit women and men on an identical basis and at the same fees, and where lectures and life studios were available to all students.<sup>16</sup> The school was open all year round from six o'clock in the morning until ten in the evening. The nude model sat four times a week. Leigh's school emulated the French atelier system in which students drew from the life model, as opposed to traditional English training, which was based on copying. By introducing his students to this method Leigh hoped they would develop their individual talents.

In 1861 Leigh's came under new ownership and became Heatherley's School of Art. The fees continued to be low and students had the freedom to work from either the nude or the costumed model every day from nine in the morning until dusk. They could also draw from plaster casts, paint still life subjects, work in oil, watercolour or pastel, and attend portrait classes. The one limitation was the fact that there were no teachers. Nevertheless, in offering the same amenities to male and female students, Heatherley's proved that when women had access to the facilities they could produce work of a high standard.<sup>17</sup> In 1896, Mrs Heatherley wrote that she and her husband had been warned in 1860 that they would be ruined by allowing mixed classes; instead they found it was more convenient

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<sup>16</sup> Yeldman op. cit. 22, fn.88.

<sup>17</sup> Yeldman op. cit. 22.

than restricting access to alternate days, and that a very friendly feeling grew up among the students. Nor was there ever any need to dismiss any student for improper behaviour.<sup>18</sup> These developments in the late 1850s and early 1860s show the advances made in the private art schools. In the government-run schools, however, women's art education continued to face biases based on sex and class.

Shortly after Fanny McIan left the Female School of Design its government grant was withdrawn for two reasons. First, women could find similar training in government-run district schools or at the National Art Training School at South Kensington. Second, "the State was not prepared to finance an institution which offered instruction for well-to-do students ... whose aim was to become professional artists as opposed to artisans."<sup>19</sup> The implication of both these reasons was that women could continue to train as designers or they could become teachers but the focus on other types of art making was withdrawn. This meant a loss of autonomy and a regression in terms of the variety of classes and types of training open to women.

The Female School as directed by McIan's successor, Louisa Gann (1824-1912, headmistress 1858-1907), was put in a difficult position and scrambled to avoid dissolution. Gann, the teachers and students petitioned the Queen for her patronage and raised the funds to make the school self-supporting. In gaining royal patronage, the school became a solvent institution largely independent of state control, although it was

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<sup>18</sup> Graeme Chalmers, Women in the Nineteenth Century Art World: Schools of Art and Design for Women in London and Philadelphia (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1998): 67.

<sup>19</sup> Yeldman, op.cit. 16.

affiliated with the Department of Science and Art through departmental examinations and was run by a management committee of clergy and other “gentlemen.”<sup>20</sup> Despite this independence the focus of the school was always towards design and vocational skills, although the school did offer a broadened curriculum which included geometrical drawing, perspective drawing, figure drawing from the antique and from life, painting in watercolour, tempera and oil, and clay modelling, in addition to original designing for decoration and manufactures. As a speaker remarked at one of the school’s annual prize-giving ceremonies, the purpose was not to “raise Michael Angelos and Raffaelles” but “to afford good elementary instruction in the principles and practice of art to ladies who desire to accomplish themselves in its study; and secondly, to qualify those who require it to gain an honourable livelihood by the exercise of an elegant and refined occupation.” These opinions held through to the end of the century, when speechmakers continued to suggest that “it would be wiser if [women] were to direct their energies and abilities into the less ambitious groove of applied art.”<sup>21</sup>

The dichotomy of fine art and design training especially affected women attending government schools. This was also the case in Canada and elsewhere. Even in the mixed-sex schools women’s training did not match the art training men were able to access. Despite the changes taking place in the private art schools, the government-run schools, including the Royal Academy, continued to emphasise elementary drawing and drawing from plaster casts in its women’s classes. Laura Knight (1877-1970) later complained of the National Art School training she had had when she was a student at one of the mixed-

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<sup>20</sup> Chalmers, *op.cit.* 53.

<sup>21</sup> Chalmers, *op. cit.* 54-55.



sex provincial government schools in Nottingham beginning in 1890, “No nude model was then provided for any female student at the Art School. This entailed my having to make endless studies from life-size plaster casts of antique statuary instead. This copying of such stillness I discovered later in life to have been extremely harmful, bringing a woodenness, a dead look, to all my studies.”<sup>22</sup>

While women had never been specifically excluded from the Royal Academy Schools, neither had they been encouraged to apply for admission; the acceptance of the first, in 1860, did not bring about significant change.<sup>23</sup> The Academy promptly limited the number of women accepted, the female students who were admitted were not allowed to study from the nude, and women were separated from their male counterparts when studying from the draped model or modelling from the head. Lack of space was often cited as the reason for these measures. But the fact the RA continued to see the National School as the place for women interested in the arts; it had to be a factor in its dismissive attitude. Women complained and agitated against these attitudes and exclusions through the next three decades. Those at the RA were finally given the chance to work from the (partially) nude figure in 1893 when the model was dressed in bathing trunks and then

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<sup>22</sup> Laura Knight, *Oil Paint and Grease Paint* (London: Ivor, Nicholson and Watson Limited, 1936): 46-47.

<sup>23</sup> In 1860 Laura Herford gained admittance when her portfolio was accepted as she only used her initials on the application. The following year four women entered the RA Schools. In 1862 six more women were admitted but that number was cut in half in 1863 and no women were admitted in the next four years. During the twenty year period from 1883 to 1904 the number of women admitted never exceeded twenty-one (1883) and usually hovered in the teens. Even after the turn of the century there was a year (1904) in which only one woman was admitted to the Schools. See Yeldman, op. cit. “Female Intake - Royal Academy.”Vol.1.Appendix III: 123.

wrapped with nine feet of material.<sup>24</sup>

On the other hand was the Slade which opened in 1871. From the beginning the administrators of the Slade School of Art had wished to set the school apart as modern and in opposition to government-run art institutions such as the South Kensington School and to the staid traditions at the Royal Academy. Edward Poynter (1836-1919) was the first professor of art and he modelled the Slade on the French atelier system, where the life model was the basis of the curriculum. The study of the antique was secondary and was only used as a means of improving the student's draughtsmanship. Moreover, the Slade distinguished itself from the Royal Academy by admitting women from the beginning, and by the 1890s women students made up the majority of the student population. Women were able to draw the partially-draped figure (though not from the nude until 1898) and there was also a greater integration of the male and female students. While women had worked in separate classes when working from the draped model during the first year of operation, from the second year both sexes worked together from the draped model and in the Antique School.<sup>25</sup>

Helen McNicoll attended the Slade for two years from 1902 to 1904. While there she came into contact with the British approach to (Post) Impressionism which would characterize her mature painting style.<sup>26</sup> She found that the teaching methods that concentrated on drawing and painting from the living model, along with an understanding

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<sup>24</sup> Yeldman op. cit. 30. Space became less of an issue when the RA moved to Burlington House in 1870. It was not until 1903 that a life class was established for female students and all other classes were integrated.

<sup>25</sup> Yeldman op. cit. 32-33.

of art history as established under Poynter, the school's first director were still the central focuses of the school. The painters Frederick Brown (1851-1941), Henry Tonks (1862-1937) and Philip Wilson Steer had succeeded Poynter.<sup>27</sup> McNicoll would have found the teaching schedule demanding, as the day ran from ten until five with students dividing their time between the antique and the life drawing studio, with intermittent lectures on anatomy or perspective and the history of art.<sup>28</sup>

With its emphasis on strong draughtsmanship McNicoll must have found the grounding she had been given by Brymner at the AAM of great value. She was able to put her skills to use in capturing the life model. Tonks taught drawing based on his theory that lighting, not line, was the basis for good drawing, and used his own work as a teaching aid. In this way he taught his students that they must “observe the construction of the forms” and then explain it to the viewer.<sup>29</sup> The reminiscences of students reveal he was a demanding professor who thought that each student must prove their commitment. In doing so he could be as caustic as he was supportive. He had been known to tell female students they would be “better off at home doing ... sewing or cooking” or to ask a student why it was that “the fool of the family is put into the Church if it is a boy, but if it is a girl they send her to the Slade.”<sup>30</sup> In this and in other respects McNicoll would have found the Slade to be a significantly different experience from the AAM. At the Montreal school Brymner

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<sup>26</sup> Natalie Luckyj, Helen McNicoll: A Canadian Impressionist (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1999): 25 [Hereafter referred to as Luckyj 1999]

<sup>27</sup> Brown was at the school as Head Professor from 1893 until 1917. His assistant professor was Tonks who taught from early 1893, he later became Head Professor from 1918 to 1937. Wilson Steer began teaching in 1895 and was at the school until his death in 1942.

<sup>28</sup> Alison Thomas, Portraits of Women: Gwen John and her Forgotten Contemporaries (Cambridge and Oxford: Polity Press, 1994): 10-11.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas op. cit. 10.

had had a supportive attitude towards women students, and the number of them at the school had encouraged others to see painting as an activity for a woman. Thus while the Slade's policy had been one of acceptance from the outset, in many ways the opportunities and expectations for women and men were subtly different.<sup>31</sup>

According to the journalist Charlotte Weeks, the female population was significantly greater but the life rooms were segregated and the larger studio spaces were allocated to the men.<sup>32</sup> There were also different expectations for women with regard to drawing style, size, media, subject matter and the corresponding prizes. In addition, to gain admittance to the school potential female students needed to furnish a letter of introduction which proclaimed their respectability, and the issue of respectability reared its head whenever women's access to the nude was questioned. Allowing women to draw from the nude conflated the issues of class and sexuality. The subject of class lay in the unwelcome relationship between the working-class female model and the middle-class female student: a relationship that exacerbated contemporary debates on the viewing and representation of the female nude. Representation of the female body was structured around sexual desire and possession, and therefore the privileged male gaze.<sup>33</sup>

There is little doubt the women at the Slade operated within the confines of a patriarchal system, but they managed to create their own identity, spaces and community within the

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<sup>31</sup> Hilary Taylor, "if a Young Painter be not Fierce and Arrogant, God...Help Him...Some Women Art Students at The Slade c.1895-99," *Art History* 19 (June 1986): 234-235.

<sup>32</sup> Charlotte Weeks, "Women at Work: The Slade Girls," *Magazine of Art* 6 (1883): 325.

<sup>33</sup> Alicia Foster, "Gwen John's Self-Portrait: art, identity and women students at the Slade School," In David Peters Corbett and Lara Perry, *English Art 1860-1914 Modern Artists and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000): 172-173.

institution. Therese de Lauretis proposes that women's often unacknowledged activity is at the margins of any institution, and that women's performance within this marginal space may lead to a counter-practice and most importantly to new forms of community.<sup>34</sup>

Admittance to the Slade was in itself an important factor in developing women's personas as artists, as its training was viewed as modern and superior to that of other schools. The value of the Slade for McNicoll lay principally in the contact she had with the instructors who were affiliated with the modernist New English Art Club. Many of the teachers were members of the Club, a group that was founded in 1886 in reaction to the conservative attitudes of the Royal Academy.<sup>35</sup> At the time of her arrival in 1902, students and teachers were busy rejecting Victorian sentimentality in favour of a looser painting method and more contemporary subject matter painted from life – as had been initiated by the Impressionists in the 1870s. Painting *en plein air* was advocated, as was the use of tonal values to describe atmosphere and to evoke mood.<sup>36</sup> This interest in landscape, along with the school's emphasis on working from life, were very valuable to McNicoll as would be seen in her paintings of the figure in the landscape, such as Village Street (Private collection, Toronto) painted in 1904 and even more so in such a work of a few years later as The Little Worker (Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Figure 4) of 1907.

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<sup>34</sup> Foster, op. cit. 253 fn.13. The author references Teresa de Lauretis, "The Technology of Gender," in Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction (London: MacMillan, 1987): 265.

<sup>35</sup> Taylor, op. cit. 232. Members of the Club included George Clausen (1852-1944), John Singer Sargent (1856-1925) and Philip Wilson Steer. Around 50 members took part in the inaugural exhibition held at the Marlborough Gallery in April, 1886. By the turn of the century many of the students associated with the Slade in the 1890s were exhibiting at the NEAC. These artists included Augustus John, William Rothenstein (1872-1945) William Orpen and Gwen John among others.

<sup>36</sup> Luckyj, (1999) op. cit. 25.

As private schools continued to open in London from the 1870s through to the 1880s and 1890s many emulated the Slade's French, atelier-based training style with its emphasis on figure drawing and painting. And by 1880 many private schools welcomed women and allowed them unrestricted access to all studio programmes. In 1880 the St. John's Wood Art School opened for men and women, offering life classes, summer sketching trips, as well as special classes in black and white drawing.

It was almost certainly this school that Laura Muntz attended in 1887. (There is a disagreement among her biographers, but it seems most likely that Muntz would have enrolled in the St. John's Wood school as she would have had a greater opportunity to work from the figure there than she would at the South Kensington School of Art, the school that some scholars believe she attended.<sup>37</sup>) Life drawing classes were non-existent or very limited for women students at the South Kensington School in the late 1880s and that did not change until well into the 1890s. The South Kensington School's emphasis was on training designers and art teachers, and this was not Muntz's interest.<sup>38</sup> By the time she went to England she had already completed a year at the OSA in Toronto, where she had drawn from the (clothed) figure, and she dedicated herself to training in the fine arts with an emphasis on working from the figure. The St. John's Wood school may have been recommended to her or she might have found a fellow Torontonians there at that

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<sup>37</sup> Which school Muntz attended is divided in the biographical references to her. Julia Gualtieri, The Woman as Artist and Subject in Canadian Painting 1890-1930 (M.A. Dissertation, Queen's University, 1989): 156. Anne Newlands, Canadian Art: From its Beginnings to 2000 (Willowdale, Ontario: Firefly Books, 2000: 194) proposes that she attended the South Kensington School of Art. Nancy C. and Jules Heller, American Women Artists of the Twentieth Century: A Biographical Dictionary (New York: Garland Publishing: 352) and Paul Duval, Canadian Impressionism (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1990: 152), contend that Muntz attended the St John's Wood School of Art.

time. Muntz's contemporary, Harriet Ford, was in London at roughly the same period and she attended this school. Ford had become a student there based on the school's reputation as a preparatory school for the Royal Academy and indeed, she followed her time in St. John's Wood with two years at the Royal Academy Schools.<sup>39</sup> In contrast, Muntz's stay in London was relatively short. A three-month stay may have been her intention from the beginning, or there may have been other reasons, such as her financial situation, or she may have been called home unexpectedly.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless in that amount of time she came into contact with followers of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, such as John William Waterhouse (1849-1917) and George Frampton (1860-1928).<sup>41</sup>

The Westminster School of Art (WSA) was another of the private schools that began in the 1880s. It too, had an affiliation with the RA, for which it was a preparatory school. Emily Carr attended the WSA during her first two years abroad, in 1899 to 1901. Charlotte Yeldman suggests the WSA had slipped into conservative mediocrity in the early 1890s, after Frederick Brown left to teach at the Slade. Certainly the women worked in segregated studios, something Carr had not anticipated. She had not experienced divisions based on sex in her first art school experience in San Francisco. There, as in Toronto or Montreal, the number of students made segregated classes

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<sup>38</sup> Graeme Chalmers, "South Kensington and the Colonies II: The Influence of Walter Smith in Canada," The History of Art Education: Proceeding from the Penn State Conference (State College, Pennsylvania: Penn State University College of Arts and Architecture, School of Visual Arts, 1985): 108-112

<sup>39</sup> Jennifer C. Watson, "An Expatriate Rediscovered," In Tobi Bruce and Jennifer C. Watson, Harriet Ford (Hamilton: Art Gallery of Hamilton, 2001): 28. The dating of Ford's time abroad is sketchy, but she was in London at least two years before she went to Paris in 1890.

<sup>40</sup> Stuart MacCuaig, Climbing the Cold White Peaks A Survey of Artists in and from Hamilton, 1910-1950 (Hamilton: Hamilton Artists Inc, 1986): 42. MacCuaig states she ran out of money.

<sup>41</sup> Waterhouse and Frampton were among the second wave followers of the Pre-Raphaelites. Both men were on the Advisory Board of the St. John's Wood School of Art. Waterhouse combined his admiration of the work of Edward Burne Jones and French *plein air* painting. Frampton is best known for his sculpture of

unfeasible, but in London the practice was the result of a sense of propriety. However the school did allow the women access to the life class by the time Carr arrived in September, 1899. While she had avoided drawing the figure at the San Francisco School of Art and Design, she was enthralled with drawing from the nude from the first day in London and apparently spent six days a week in the life class.<sup>42</sup> She also met up with acquaintances from home during her first year in London. Sophie Pemberton and Theresa Wylde had left Victoria a number of years earlier. They were the first women from Victoria to travel to Europe to strengthen their artistic skills, and Carr had hoped to travel with them. Pemberton had left Victoria sometime in 1889-1890, and in London she entered the Pelham Street Studios, overseen by Arthur Stockdale Cope, A.R.A. and John Watson Nichol.<sup>43</sup> Pemberton later traveled to Paris, where she entered the Académie Julian. Wylde followed Pemberton to London in 1892 and enrolled at the South Kensington School of Art. She was there from 1892 to 1897. She followed her stint in South Kensington by attending the Slade in the late 1890s.<sup>44</sup>

Carr stayed in Britain until the early summer of 1904. She led a fairly peripatetic life during those five years. When London proved overwhelming she went into the English countryside, joining sketching classes in Berkshire and then in the autumn of 1901 to late winter of 1902 she enrolled at the Julius Olsson School of Landscape and Sea Painting in the Cornwall artists' colony at St. Ives. This artists' colony and the Olsson school also later attracted Helen McNicoll, who travelled to St. Ives in 1905 or early 1906, after a

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Peter Pan (1911) he work reflected his interest in Pre- Raphaelite subjects, such as King Arthur.  
(cited July 28, 2006)

<sup>42</sup> Paula Blanchard, The Life of Emily Carr (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1987): 79-80.

<sup>43</sup> Yeldman, op. cit. 36.

<sup>44</sup> Blanchard, op. cit. 59,303 fn.4.



brief period in France. There Carr came under the tutelage of Algernon Talmage (1871-1939), principal of the school who also taught its figure classes. Both Olsson and Talmage stressed the importance of *plein air* painting but Talmage was more accommodating. He was sympathetic to a student like Carr who preferred to explore the nuances of light in the woods near the village, rather than painting the seascapes. Talmage was a gentle and patient teacher who was able to convey his love of nature. It was his open-minded attitude to Carr's interest in painting the Tregrenna Woods that led to a breakthrough in her development as an artist.<sup>45</sup> Luckyj credits Talmage as also being instrumental in forming McNicoll's mature painting style, as it was under his instruction that she came to understand how light plays on the figure in the landscape.<sup>46</sup>

Artists had begun to arrive in significant numbers in St. Ives and the nearby village of Newlyn in the mid-1870s. The scenes of fishing life and the sea views were the main attractions. Artists from outside of Britain had begun to visit these two spots by the end of the 1880s, as schools were established in each community. Artists' colonies were a nineteenth-century phenomenon that could also be found in France (in Barbizon and Brittany), Germany, the Netherlands, and the Scandinavian countries. They came about as artists left the cities to "discover, appropriate and personalize a paintable place."<sup>47</sup> After visiting these rural sites during their European travels, many artists recreated their own versions on their return to their countries of origin.<sup>48</sup> A common characteristic of the

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<sup>45</sup> Tippet, op. cit. 54.

<sup>46</sup> Luckyj (1999), op. cit. 42.

<sup>47</sup> Sarah Burns, Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996): 124.

<sup>48</sup> Artists' colonies in the United States began to flourish in the late nineteenth century. Some of these included, Ogunquit, Maine (1898), Isles of Shoals, Maine (late nineteenth century), Cornish, New Hampshire (1885), Gloucester, Massachusetts (late nineteenth/early twentieth century), Rockport,

art colonies was the strong bonds of friendship that first brought the artists together to travel to the often remote sites and that then kept them there. Some colonies attracted more women artists than others. Two such were Risgoord in the Netherlands and St. Ives.<sup>49</sup> In these colonies the women found that the social interactions and the commonality of living with a group of like-minded people reinforced and sustained them and they were able to test new painting styles and experiment with their identities as artists.<sup>50</sup> In Cornwall, for example McNicoll met Dorothea Sharp (1874-1955). The two women developed a friendship and painting partnership that would last to the end of McNicoll's life. Alexander Stanhope Forbes (1857-1947), who would become a leading figure of the Newlyn 'school', arrived in 1884. His future wife, the Canadian-born Elizabeth Armstrong, arrived there the following year, in November, 1885. Both of these artists had visited Pont-Aven and Concarneau in Brittany, and Forbes later described the Cornish fishing village as "a sort of English Concarneau."<sup>51</sup>

In her discussion of women and travel Maria Frawley draws a parallel between the landscape and the horizon line because they can both empower the traveller; they offer both freedom and a boundary. However it is the horizon that she relates to the psychological need of the female traveller, because the horizon can act as both a limit and

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Massachusetts (early twentieth century), Provincetown, Massachusetts (1890s), Easthampton, Long Island (1890s). An early Canadian example could include Baie St. Paul, Charlevoix county, Quebec which the artists William Brymner, Maurice Cullen (1866-1934) and others began to visit in the early twentieth century.

<sup>49</sup> Nina Lubben, *Rural Artists' Colonies in Europe 1870-1910* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001):178 fn.3. States fifty-four percent of the artists who went to Risgoord were women. The German colonies such as Worpsede had the second highest number of women and at the two British colonies mentioned, about sixteen to nineteen per cent of the total number of artists who went there were women. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of Laura Muntz's association with Risgoord.

<sup>50</sup> Lubben, op. cit. 17.

<sup>51</sup> Lubben, op. cit. 171.

an unlimited demarcation. There is always the prospect of something new beyond the border. The woman traveller can control the boundary, because she can position herself within the socially acceptable limits, or she can occupy a decentred, marginal position.<sup>52</sup> In going to England and then making the journey to Cornwall, McNicoll and Carr made a break with Canada, with their families and their socially constructed lives as unmarried women. For McNicoll the experience of working in St. Ives was powerful because there she met Sharp, the friend who would help her expand her horizons as a professional artist. After her time in Cornwall, McNicoll began to exhibit her work more regularly and seek associations with professional art societies in Canada and in London. This was likely as a result of Sharp's professional outlook, as she (Sharp) regularly exhibited her work and was active in various art societies, including the Society of Women Artists.<sup>53</sup>

For Emily Carr, the time spent as an art student in London and was not completely successful. She found London overcrowded and oppressive and the Westminster School of Art did not provide the quality of teaching that she had anticipated. However, as Doris Shadbolt writes, while she had "not advanced her art" in London she did find there was a rationale for what she was doing.<sup>54</sup> For Carr a second trip abroad, to France in 1910 would prove to be a more successful experience. Her second trip abroad led to a transformation of her style of painting. There during a visit to another artists' colony, at Concarneau in France in 1911, where she worked with Frances Hodgkins (1869-1947), an artist from New Zealand. In pursuing her art career, Hodgkins had become estranged from her family and homeland, and rejected a fiancé. Hodgkins and the other two artists

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<sup>52</sup> Frawley, *op. cit.* 198-202.

<sup>53</sup> Luckyj, (1999) *op. cit.* 42.

Carr came into contact with in France, Henry Phelan Gibb (1870-1939) and John Duncan Ferguson (1870-1961), inspired her in their dedication to painting.<sup>55</sup>

For female art students one of the most significant differences between schools in London and Canada can be summed up in the degrees of separation that were enforced between men and women. Canadian women may not have experienced this in their Canadian training, and on arrival in England they had to adapt to a more segregated system. The most important thing the women could do was to make wise choices for themselves and to gravitate towards the more progressive schools. An ongoing concern for many of the heads of schools and for the women who entered them was the fine line that separated a fine arts training from the arts associated with traditional school-girl accomplishments. Maintaining the integrity of fine arts training meant that the institutions that admitted women were constantly on guard. The incursion of too many women was guarded against by limiting or curtailing their admittance. These attitudes allowed institutions like the RA to exclude or limit the number of women admitted into the RA schools until the early years of the twentieth century. Additionally, access to all aspects of art education was not available to women. Most importantly, women's opportunity to study from the human figure was often denied or handicapped.

Despite these ongoing challenges, by the end of the nineteenth century women who were determined to have professional careers had made inroads and with their demands they had broadened the art training available to their sex in London. Nevertheless many

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<sup>54</sup> Doris Shadbolt, Emily Carr (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1990): 30.

<sup>55</sup> Blanchard, op. cit. 123.

British women, like their Canadian and American counterparts, found they needed to travel to Paris to complete their art instruction. In France, while the ideal of female accomplishments did exist, there were generally greater prospects for women to take part in artistic life. The increased opportunities in Paris were due to two things. The first was the greater emphasis on, and accessibility to, the arts generally in French culture. More pragmatic was the widespread availability of the informal atelier system. Despite the early opportunities given to women in London, women and men from all over the world flocked to France because of art schools such as the académies Julian and Colarossi offered stimulating courses of instruction where women had ready and consistent access to the life figure and could expect to become professional artists.

## Chapter Four

### Canadian Women and the Parisian Académies

In an etching called At Montmartre, made around 1910, the American artist Anne Goldthwaite (1869-1944) illustrated the newfound freedom that women and men enjoyed as they sat together in a Parisian café watching exotic dancers (Figure 5). This image is emblematic of the changes that had taken place in North American women artists' experience of Paris over the previous thirty years. The scene depicts the New Year celebrations of a group of expatriate artists at the Café Versailles. The boisterous dancers perform in front of a group of drinkers that includes an artist with a goatee and his pipe-smoking friend, and the central female character, a woman artist whose cigarette dangles from her lip. This scene is in complete contrast to the genteel respectability that was expected of the first generation of women who traveled to Paris to expand their artistic horizons and further their art education.

In this chapter, I will explore the journey taken in this period by Canadian artists such as Laura Muntz, Florence McGillivray and Prudence Heward as they traveled to France to continue their art education. Of the artists discussed in Chapter Three, Helen McNicoll did not enroll in an art school in France although she did regularly travel to paint in the south at the artists' colony at Grèz-sur-Loing from about 1907 until 1914. The other three women all attended Parisian academies. Muntz lived and worked in Paris for seven years, during which time she was associated with the Académie Colarossi. McGillivray traveled to Europe in 1912 to 1913 and stayed for about two years. During those two years she attended the Académie de la Grande Chaumière and traveled in France, Italy, England and Scotland. Both

Muntz and McGillivray exhibited their work and made professional contacts with international art organizations while they were in Paris. Heward was in Paris twice in the 1920s. She attended the Académie Colarossi and at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts during her first visit. Her second trip was more successful, as she found an académie that suited her very well and allowed her to consolidate her painting style and her subject matter.

French Quebecers were the first Canadians to travel to France; artists such as Antoine Plamondon (1804-1895), for example, went there early in the nineteenth century. Napoléon Bourassa (1827-1916) was engaged in art studies in Paris in 1852-1855, and Charles Huot (1855-1930) was there in the 1870s. So was Wyatt Eaton (1849-1896), an English Quebecer. Generally, however, the English Canadians arrived slightly later; Brymner went to Paris in 1876, Robert Harris was there the following year and Paul Peel (1860-1892) was in Paris by 1880 after a stint in Philadelphia. Blair Bruce went to France in 1881 and except for short periods lived in Europe (mostly Sweden) for the rest of his life. By the end of the 1880s a second wave of Canadians had begun to go to Paris – inspired by Harris if they were from Toronto or by Brymner if they were from Montreal.<sup>1</sup> “By 1875... young art students in Canada again began to look to Paris and by 1890 virtually every artist of note under the age of thirty aspired to study in the French capital.”<sup>2</sup> Laurier Lacroix states that over two hundred Canadian artists lived in Paris between 1880 and 1914.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dennis Reid, *A Concise History of Canadian Painting* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1973): 99.

<sup>2</sup> Reid, op. cit. 91. See also Barbara Weinberg, *Lure of Paris: Nineteenth Century American Painters and their French Teachers* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991):7-8. Weinberg states twenty-two hundred Americans born before 1880 studied formally in Paris. About one-third of that them were women. Weinberg does not cite a source for this figure.

<sup>3</sup> Laurier Lacroix, “The Surprise of Today is the Commonplace of Tomorrow: How Impressionism was Received in Canada,” Carol Lowrey, *Visions of Light and Air: Canadian Impressionism 1885-1920* (New York: Americas Society Art Gallery, 1995): 46.

From the late 1870s onward Canadian women who aspired to professional careers were following this trend. In addition to those mentioned above, Mary Stobo (n.d.) was studying and exhibiting in Paris in 1879 and Ida Joy (1858-?) was exhibiting in France in the early 1880s. Other women who traveled to France at this time included Elizabeth Armstrong, who did not attend an académie in Paris but painted at the artists' colony at Pont-Aven in 1882. Sydney Strickland Tully was in Paris from 1886 to 1888 and again in 1890-1892, and Sarah Blackstone (n.d.) was there in the late 1880s. Mary A. Bell (later Eastlake) (1864-1951), Harriet Ford, Florence Carlyle, Mildred Peel (1856-1920) and Sophie Pemberton were all in Paris in the 1890s.<sup>4</sup> Pemberton had studied in London and then traveled to Paris, where she entered the Académie Julian. Carlyle traveled with Peel and her brother, Paul. Both siblings had been in Philadelphia with Eakins. Mildred Peel had worked as a portrait painter in Winnipeg around 1883, before going to France.<sup>5</sup> She continued to work as both a painter and a sculptor in her later career. Carlyle was in Paris for six years, during which time she studied with Bouguereau, at what was likely the Académie Julian.

The Salons and other major exhibition venues, as well as commercial galleries and world-class museum collections, were important aspects of life in Paris and as important as the academic experience. In the galleries and exhibition halls the students saw a range of art from the traditional to the contemporary. In the museums students could sketch and take inspiration from the works on display.<sup>6</sup> The Parisians themselves were also inspiring as they

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<sup>4</sup> David Wistow, Canadians in Paris 1867-1914 (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1979): 4. Wistow wrote that approximately 150 Canadian artists visited France between 1867 and 1914. Sylvain Allaire, "Les Canadiens au salon officiel de Paris entre 1870 et 1910: Sections Peinture et Dessin," The Journal of Canadian Art History Vol.4 (1977-1978): 141-153.

<sup>5</sup> J. Russell Harper, Painting in Canada, a history (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., 1978): 199.

<sup>6</sup> Kirsten Swinth, Painting Professionals: Women Artists and the Development of Modern American Art 1870-1930 (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001): 44.



had a high regard for art, especially in comparison to the situations that many North American art students had known at home.<sup>7</sup> By the 1870s Paris was considered the centre of the art world. The advent of the Impressionists and the widespread interest in painting modern life would soon have a profound effect on the North American art scene, and the continuing popularity of these artists would be an important incentive for North American artists to travel to Paris. As fresh art movements developed in the new century France continued to hold sway as the site of modern art and a destination for art students.

As North American art schools had sought to professionalize their training with a rigorous curriculum and a dedication to figure study, the artists who attended these schools saw Paris as a logical conclusion to their education. By going to Paris, North American art students could enhance their identities as aspiring professional artists. They did this by placing the demands of their education over everything else, making the financial and emotional commitment to living independently away from home and family. In going to Paris they positioned themselves as credible and qualified to compete in the North American art market when they returned home.

In Paris the art student found the options for an art training were far more extensive than was the case in Canada, as there was an established artistic milieu as well as a variety of schools of art, including ateliers and academies. Painting was popular and was taken seriously by a supportive public and by the government. Art education was widely and inexpensively available. The government-maintained *École des Beaux-Arts* offered subsidized spaces for

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<sup>7</sup> Cecilia Beaux, Background with Figures (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press, 1930): 174-75.

men from France and elsewhere, but women were not admitted until 1893.<sup>8</sup> However, from about 1860 onwards a number of private ateliers began to open, many established by artists, such as Marc-Charles-Gabriel Gleyre (1806-1874) and Jean-Paul Laurens (1838-1931), who were also associated with and offered training in accordance with the Ecole. Their general focus was on preparing students for the government school. Some private studios admitted women. Charles Carolus-Duran (1838-1917), Charles Chaplin (1825-1891), Edouard Krug (1829-1901) and Alfred Émile Stevens (1823–1906) were among some of those who accepted women as students in their studio.<sup>9</sup> The instruction was divided into three areas: elementary drawing, drawing and painting from the life model, and compositional study from sketches or copies. At the same time other private studios, the *académies payantes*, and other large academies, notably the Académies Julian and Colarossi, began to open. These resembled the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, except that they were more liberal in allowing students opportunities to work from the figure, draped and nude. Over time many students came solely for this training. By 1899, the number of students attending the *académies payantes* outnumbered those in the ateliers of the Ecole and in those run by artists in the independent ateliers.<sup>10</sup> While the académies Colarossi and Julian were the main competitors, there were many others in Paris.<sup>11</sup> Artists such as Thomas Couture (1815-1879) opened his studio to

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<sup>8</sup> David Wistow, op. cit. 5. states that between 1867 and 1914 only about fifteen Canadians were enrolled in the Ecole. These included Joseph St Charles, Maurice Cullen, Charles Huot and Wyatt Eaton, all of whom studied under Jean-Leon Gérôme. Most were from Quebec and presumably they all spoke French. Fluency in French was a requirement of the Ecole.

<sup>9</sup> Lois Marie Fink, *American Art at the Nineteenth Century Paris Salons* (New York: Cambridge University Press for the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1990): 136-37.

<sup>10</sup> Tamar Garb, *Sisters of the Brush: Women's Artistic Culture in Late Nineteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994): 80. The popularity of these academies probably increased as a result of stricter entry requirements to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in the 1880s.

<sup>11</sup> Gabriel P. Weisberg, "The Women of the Académie Julian: The Power of Professional Emulation," in Gabriel P. Weisberg and Jane R. Becker, *Overcoming All Obstacles: The Women of the Académie Julian* (New York: Dahesh Museum, 1999): 60 fn.7. Mentions a studio that welcomed women run by Henri Gervex, Hector Le Roux and Christian Krog, but their histories have not been substantially reconstructed. For brief mention see F.J., "Les Ateliers de femmes," *L'Art français*.no.318 (27 May 1893) cover page

students in Paris from 1846 until 1863 and later ran a studio outside Paris between 1869 and 1879. The latter attracted Mary Cassatt and her friend Eliza J. Haldeman, along with other the American students. Leon Bonnat (1833-1922) conducted an atelier in Paris from 1865 to 1882 his students included Thomas Eakins and Robert Harris.<sup>12</sup>

Private studios and the *académies payantes* balanced the academic style and more radical tendencies. It was the emphasis on painting from the model, rather than drawing from casts that gave these ateliers their reputation as modern or radical. In addition, according to the American artist Cecilia Beaux (1855-1942), Julian knew the Paris art world intimately and it was through his remarkable professional connections that he was able to engage the well-known and respected artists. Associated artists were William Bouguereau (1825-1905), Tony Robert-Fleury (1837-1912), Gustave Boulanger (1824-1888), Jean-Paul Laurens (who had also taught at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts) and Jules Lefebvre (1836-1912), all closely associated with traditional academic painting styles and subject matter and thus able to help make Julian's a success.

The private ateliers and the larger académies all followed a similar system, offering students the freedom to come and go as they wished (in terms of length of stay). Many students took advantage of this, and often studied at several different studios in a given period. In this way students were able to compare the studios and make the best choice based on their own abilities and inclinations. Even as late as 1929, Prudence Heward and Isabel McLaughlin (1903-2002) tried out a number of studios before they finally settled on one that suited their requirements. McLaughlin had come to Paris intending to work in the painter Andre Lhôte's

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<sup>12</sup> Weinberg, op. cit. 156-157.

atelier, but when she heard that he only turned out ‘little Lhôtés’ she and Heward went instead to the Académie Scandinave.<sup>13</sup>

In 1904, Clive Holland wrote a practical article for young women who were considering travelling to Paris.<sup>14</sup> He favoured this city over London as he believed there was a greater degree of respect for artists there, and he went on to say that in comparison “the English schools of painting do not appear to encourage individuality, and more particularly the individuality of women, in art, however good the technical instruction given may be.” Holland forthrightly went on to write: “A year or two at Julian’s, the Beaux Arts, or Colarossi’s is worth a cycle of South Kensington, with all its correctness and plaster casts.” He based this statement on his understanding that the female student would have far greater opportunities to study anatomy and to draw from the model in Paris than she would have in London.<sup>15</sup> Holland described Julian’s and the Colarossi as the two best academies and outlined what the female student might expect at each of these. He gave sage, though slightly patronizing advice. On the whole, however, the information provided would have been helpful, as it gave a good idea of what the course of study would entail: the makeup of the classes, how the work was critiqued, the competitions, and practical details such as vacation times and fees.

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<sup>13</sup> Joan Murray, *Isabel McLaughlin: Recollections* (Oshawa: Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 1983): 15.

<sup>14</sup> Clive Holland, “Lady Art Students’ Life in Paris,” *International Studio* 21, no.119, (1904): 225-233. [Hereafter referred to as Holland 1904] Clive Holland was a pseudonym of Charles James Hankinson (1866-1959). He wrote magazine articles and some books about his travels in Japan in c.1904-1907. There are two photographs of Thomas Hardy in the National Portrait Gallery, London taken by Holland.

<sup>15</sup> Clive Holland, “Student Life in the Quartier Latin,” *The Studio* 27, no.115 (1902): 33 and Holland (1904): 229.

According to artist-author May Alcott Nieriker in 1879, “Paris is apt to strike the newcomer as being but one vast studio, particularly if seeing it for the first time of a morning, either in summer or winter, between seven and eight o’clock, when students, bearing paint-box and *toile*, swarm in all directions, hurrying to their *cours*. ...”<sup>16</sup> Nieriker’s was yet another of the many advice books that helped American women make decisions regarding their intended study abroad. She wrote it after her own travels through Europe. Like Holland, Nieriker gave a general impression of the schools, the teachers, the necessary qualifications for each school, their shortcomings, and the fees. Her guide book described the choices available to the American student of art, warning that many schools were badly run, overcrowded and expensive. After surveying the choices she recommended her readers go to one of the two most popular private academies, the Julian or the Colarossi.<sup>17</sup>

At the schools run by Julian and Colarossi the fees were low, the curriculum was less structured than the one offered by the Ecole, and there was a greater emphasis on working from life. Students came into regular contact with some of the most fashionable artists of the day as these artists were hired as instructors or masters. The masters usually came to the studio once a week to critique the drawings that had been completed during the previous five days. The master-artist’s professional reputation added prestige to the académie and the association with a particular artist often drew students. The Académie Colarossi had been established in 1815 as the Académie Suisse,<sup>18</sup> and was run as a family business at two different locations, one on the left bank in the rue de la Grande Chaumière, the other on the

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<sup>16</sup> May Alcott Nieriker, Studying Art Abroad and How to do it Cheaply (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1879): 43.

<sup>17</sup> Nieriker, op. cit. 43-48.

right bank in the avenue Victor Hugo.<sup>19</sup> The Académie Julian had opened in 1868; originally founded as a preparatory school for the Ecole des Beaux-Arts by the mid-1870s it was fashionable alternative to that school. From the beginning Rodolph Julian (1839-1907) had admitted men and women into his académie. He was an astute businessman who understood that the requirements for a professional career - educational training and professional opportunities - were as important for women as they were for men. Julian recognized that he could provide a professional training not widely available to women elsewhere in Paris in the early 1870s and that making space for female students would, therefore be a wise economic move. The government-run Ecole des Beaux-Arts would not accept women into its *cours* until 1897. The admission of women to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts had in fact been an issue from the end of the eighteenth century. In 1790 Adelaide Labille-Guiard (1749-1803) called for the admission of women to the Académie Royale, which would allow them to benefit from the free art training given there. Her proposal was not accepted, but the one positive outcome was that women were given the right to exhibit at the Salon.<sup>20</sup>

Julian's however, had never excluded women.<sup>21</sup> In an article in the American periodical the Galaxy in July 1873 an author commented on the co-ed studio space at Julian's, and in

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<sup>18</sup> The name was changed after Filippo Colarossi (n.d), a minor Italian sculptor and model, took over the administration and the business. See Odile Ayrat – Clause, Camille Claudel: A Life (New York: Henry N. Abrams, 2002): 25.

<sup>19</sup> Virtually all archival documents relating to the Colarossi were destroyed by the irate spouse of one of the Colarossi men in 1928, according to Ayrat-Clause,: 27-28.

<sup>20</sup> Whitney Chadwick, Women, Art and Society (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990): 164.

<sup>21</sup> George Moore, Confessions of a Young Man edited Susan Dick, (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972): 57. "In the studio (at Académie Julian) were some eighteen or twenty young men, and among these were some four or five from whom I could learn; and there were also some eight or nine young English girls. We sat round in a circle, and drew from the model." On page 235 Dick noted the date of Moore's passage to France as March, 1873.

defence of the practice of women working from the nude model he quoted a young American woman working there:

Some of our countrymen find an impropriety in our working in a mixed atelier, and perhaps there is, according to society's code; but if a woman wants to be a painter, she must get over her squeamishness; if she wants to paint strong and well like a man, she must go through the same training. The trial to a modest young woman is at first great; but as soon as she is possessed of the art feeling, the first impression which she receives on entering the atelier quickly wears away, and she is soon absorbed in her work like those around her. There is no sex here; the students, men and women, are simply painters. In the atelier excessive modesty in a woman painter is a sign of mediocrity; only the woman who forgets the conventionalities of society in the pursuit of art stands a chance for distinction. If the woman has not a desire, an enthusiasm to profit by the advantages of the atelier, she had better never touch paint nor pencil. This is one of the best ateliers in Paris to learn to paint in, and this is sufficient reason for our coming here. Society can no more be governed by the rules of art, than the atelier can be governed by the rules of society.<sup>22</sup>

In the 1870s Julian's was one of the few places women could draw from the whole figure.

Elsewhere, in most drawing classes for women, only parts of the body were drawn.

According to a woman artist in 1876, "One studies the head, the arms, the feet, but rarely the nude torso, and the whole figure is absolutely prohibited."<sup>23</sup> For this reason the life studios at the Julian were highly sought after.

At Julian's women and men originally worked side by side drawing and painting from life until about 1876, when separate studios were established.<sup>24</sup> Despite the good common of the women cited in the article, it appears to have acted as a catalyst in causing Julian to take the precautionary measure of segregating the women from the men. He did not want the reputation of his studio brought into question or for him to be associated with any

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<sup>22</sup> Albert Rhodes, "Views Abroad: A Day with the French Painters," *Galaxy* 16, no.1 (July 1873), 13.

<sup>23</sup> Garb, op. cit: 81. Quoted Maria Deraismes, "Les Femmes au Salon," *L'Avenir des femmes* No.141(July 2 1876) : 103

impropriety. The separation of the studios meant that women were given a greater opportunity to draw from the figure, both nude and draped. Women were able to study from the nude figure during certain hours and beginning in 1880 they could work from the nude figure all day long. In an interview in the Sketch (1893), Julian outlined the history of the women's studios and his reasons for creating them.<sup>25</sup> He himself had come to Paris as a young man seeking an art education, and while he had never enrolled in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, he did train with artists who taught there. In the article he validated his interest in providing a space for women to work by saying his own student days made him sympathetic to the problems of students, especially those seeking change. He went on to say that women “were given none of the opportunities which each male artist claims as his right” and that “few artists,... cared to have the responsibility of taking young ladies into their ateliers, and if they did it, they, of course, expected to be paid accordingly.”<sup>26</sup> Julian actively promoted his women's atelier in the press and in the Salon. In the Salon of 1876 he presented his painting Un Académie de peinture in which he included women among the working students. In addition to the many newspaper and magazine articles that were written about him he was also prepared to have his students tout the school. In 1881 he proposed a competition that would showcase the abilities of his female students.

Julian could therefore maintain that his female programmes were serious and that their ultimate goal was to prepare women to compete professionally with men. In order to achieve this, entering work in the Salon was imperative. However, in making this proposal he was

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<sup>24</sup> Various years are identified as the date of the segregation of the sexes, ranging from 1873 to 1879. See Catherine Fehrer, “Women at the Academie Julian,” Burlington Magazine 136, no 1100 (November 1994): 752-753 and Weisberg, op. cit. 60 fn.4.

<sup>25</sup> Anonymous, “Julian's Studios – An Interview with the Creator,” Sketch (June 28 1893):473-474.



also trying to inform the public not only of the female students' proficiency and the high standards of the school but also the wide social cross-section of his female students.<sup>27</sup> He succeeded in his aims when he established a competition for a painting of the women's studios. Marie Bashkirtseff (1858-1884), his talented and aristocratic Ukrainian student ultimately won the competition. In her painting, the tightly packed group of women is depicted drawing a young male model. Jane Becker notes that Julian intervened in its composition when he insisted Bashkirtseff include some of the American students, as well as the fashionably dressed young woman from one of Paris' noble families, who stands to the left of the centre. Julian and the artist were rewarded when the painting was well received at the Salon and favourably commented upon in the press. The painting gave him a tangible piece of advertising when reference was made in the print media to the women depicted.<sup>28</sup>

There were few differences between the Académie Julian and the Académie Colarossi, the main exception being their fee structures, particularly in regard to the admission of women.<sup>29</sup> The fees at Colarossi's were more equitable, as men and women paid the same amount at the right bank studio, though they were slightly higher for women at the Colarossi's second atelier in the rue de la Grande Chaumière. There the charge was sixty francs a month for a half day, or one hundred francs for a full day of three classes per month. The sums paid by the men at this studio were just over half this amount. In addition, at the Colarossi not all classes were segregated. This school also allowed for a more flexible schedule. Students

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<sup>26</sup> Sketch, op. cit. 473.

<sup>27</sup> Jane R. Becker, "Nothing Like a Rival to Spur One On," In Gabriel P. Weisberg and Jane R. Becker, Overcoming All Obstacles: The Women of the Academie Julian (New York: The Dahesh Museum and Rutgers University Press, 1999): 103.

<sup>28</sup> Becker, op.cit. 105.

<sup>29</sup> Marie Adelaide Belloc, "Lady Artists in Paris," Murray's Magazine 8 (September 1890): 374-76.

could attend half-day, full day and evening classes, and the course length could vary from a week to a number of months. Students could even purchase individual drawing coupons that allowed for drop-in studio sessions. The Colarossi also regularly organized sketching trips in Brittany, giving students the opportunity to join their teachers in outdoor painting and drawing.<sup>30</sup> As discussed in Chapter Three, the Breton villages of Pont-Aven and Concarneau were very popular with artists. The art academies of Paris closed at the end of June as the city became too hot and stuffy. In the summer months students moved to the Barbizon forest or to the communities along the south-west coast of Brittany. Artists wrote of the “soft, pearly, luminous colour” that pervaded the landscape and which was “a joy to look at and an inspiration to the painter.”<sup>31</sup> The summer sketching classes had many subjects to choose from: the medieval architecture, the villagers in their distinctive wooden shoes going about their daily work and the views of the wooded hills that surrounded the towns. There are references in Wilhelmina Douglas Hawley’s (1860-1958) diaries to her summer activities with Laura Muntz, as they followed the example of other artists and art students. They left Paris and travelled to the French countryside, and to Holland and Italy. For several years they themselves held painting classes each summer in rural France.<sup>32</sup> Hawley’s diary entries show that they stayed in Moret-sur-Loing in the summer of 1893, Angers in the summer of 1894 (that same summer Muntz went with Hawley to Rijsoord), Varangeville-sur-mer near Dieppe in the summer of 1895, and Villefranche-sur-Mer in the summer of 1896. Muntz’s painting The Milkmaids (Art Gallery of Peterborough c.1894) was painted during the first painting trip she and Hawley took to the Dutch artists’ colony of Rijsoord. (Figure 6)

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<sup>30</sup> Ayral-Clause, op. cit. 27.

<sup>31</sup> Arthur Hocker, “A Summer in Brittany,” The Monthly Illustrator Vol.4, no.2 (1896) quoted in Tom Cross, Shining Sands: Artists in Newlyn and St. Ives 1880-1930 (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1994): 20-21.

The two women had developed a strong friendship after meeting at the Colarossi shortly after their arrival in France. Muntz had arrived in Paris in 1891 and Hawley in 1892. Hawley first enrolled at the Académie Julian and then at the Colarossi. At the latter she worked as a student and later taught watercolour painting.<sup>33</sup> Muntz had chosen the Académie Colarossi, as it was cheaper and could accommodate a flexible schedule. Muntz stayed in Paris for a period of seven years, financing her life abroad by working as the *massière* at the Colarossi. It was her job to hire the models, set the pose, settle in the new students and translate the professor's criticisms for those who spoke no French.<sup>34</sup> Apparently her work schedule allowed her to take classes at the school, as she later credited Paul Joseph Blanc (1846-1904), Gustave Courtois (1853-1923) and Louis-Auguste Girardot (1856-1933) as her art teachers.<sup>35</sup>

The relationship that developed between Muntz and Hawley, who worked together and shared an apartment-studio, allowed them to meet the challenges of living as single women in the large, cosmopolitan city. Through the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, magazines and other publications encouraged women to take advantage of the European experience, but cautioned them they would not have the same experiences as their male colleagues. Clive Holland and other writers gave advice to young women on how best to meet the challenges of Parisian life and listed the costs associated with a year's stay in their

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<sup>32</sup> Paul Duval, Canadian Impressionism (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990): 52. [Hereafter referred to as Duval 1990].

<sup>33</sup> Alexandra Gaba-Van Dongen, "With These Notes I will Remember," Linea: Journal of the Art Students League Vol.7, no.1 (Spring-Summer 2003):15. The Colarossi seems to have had at least two other women teachers, Madame Blanc (n.d.) and Mdme Jean Paul Laurens, nee Madeleine Willemsen (1848-1913).

<sup>34</sup> Maria Tippett, By a Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women (Toronto: Viking Penguin, 1992): 45.

<sup>35</sup> There are conflicting views as to how long Muntz was actually enrolled at the Colarossi. Paul Duval, (1990): 53 states that it was almost the whole time she was in France. Dorothy Farr and Natalie Luckyj, From Women's Eyes Women Painters in Canada (Kingston, Ontario: Agnes Etherington Art Center, Queens University, 1975): 28 state three months.

books. An expenditure of eight hundred to one thousand dollars would be a minimum.<sup>36</sup> The fees and costs associated with attending the académie ran from five to six hundred francs for half-day classes to nine hundred francs for full-day classes, based on attendance from September to May. In addition, the annual cost of painting materials would require a budget of one hundred twenty-five francs. Holland estimated that housing would cost thirty-five to one hundred francs per month; this was contingent on the location, and the quality of the furnishings. Engaging a woman to attend to one's needs could be done for five to fifteen francs per month. He suggested *une apartment au deuxième* (bedroom, sitting room and studio all in one with a tiny bathroom and kitchen) as it would be a more romantic, though more solitary, choice, as living independently would mean the woman's only social outlet would be her daily interactions at the académie.

Accordingly, the less bohemian or less emancipated young woman would be wise to consider taking accommodation at a *pension*, where she could expect more service and a greater social life. If a young woman could live quite frugally her day-to-day expenses would probably amount to a little over six to eight hundred francs for a year. Raising that amount of money often meant that only women from middle- or upper-class backgrounds could afford to study abroad. Consolidating the capital required meant that women often had to negotiate with family, become financially adept, find sources of revenue and ultimately make the sacrifices that would allow them to finance an extended period abroad.<sup>37</sup> Estelle Kerr (1879-1971),

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<sup>36</sup> Swinth, op. cit. 40 and <[www.bankofcanada.ca/en/dollar](http://www.bankofcanada.ca/en/dollar)> explain that the Canadian dollar and the US dollar were on par from 1868 until the beginning of WWI. According to Dr. Brian Taylor at [The Global History of Currencies](#) < > the exchange rate was 5.2 French francs to \$1.00 Canadian in 1890. (cited Sept. 7, 2006).

<sup>37</sup> Joan Murray, [Letters Home 1859-1906 The Letters of William Blair Bruce](#) (Moonbeam, Ontario: Penumbra Press, 1982) Bruce's correspondence home is filled with details regarding his financial status. He seems to be in perpetual need of money and was often indebted to his mother and his grandmother for the money they sent

herself both an artist and critic, wrote of Laura Muntz as the only artist she knew who had entirely supported herself while living in Paris, in Muntz's case by getting work within the académie itself.<sup>38</sup> Kerr went on to state that women had an easier time than did their brothers in convincing parents to endorse a trip to Paris, as families were more likely to support a daughter's desire to become an artist. She also stated that a young woman could live more comfortably on a meager income, and that many girls managed to stay in Paris for two years on money that had been allotted for one year abroad.<sup>39</sup>

Holland also warned his female readers that they would have less individual freedom than men would, although he added that Paris could be "sufficiently bohemian for the enterprising female."<sup>40</sup> Social conventions and notions of respectability meant there were limitations to the experiences of women visiting Paris, especially before the turn of the century. In 1877 Marie Bashkirtseff expressed her desire for more freedom when she wrote:

What I envy is the freedom to walk about alone, to come and go, to sit on the benches of the Tuileries and especially the Luxembourg gardens, to stop at artistic shop windows, to enter churches, museums, to stroll in the old streets in the evening; this is what I envy and this is the freedom without which one cannot become an artist.<sup>41</sup>

Holland corroborated this when he warned his reader that she would only occasionally visit cafes, restaurants, or theatres: only when an escort was available or when a relative came to

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him. In his letters to his father he wrote often of the need to sell this canvas or another, as his father acted as an agent for him, selling paintings and having his work sent to exhibitions.

<sup>38</sup> Estelle Kerr, "The Artist," *Saturday Night* 26, no.35 (June 7 1913): 27.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Holland, (1904): 225.

<sup>41</sup> Marie Bashkirtseff, Journal entry quoted in Ayrat-Clouse, op. cit. 25.

visit.<sup>42</sup> This was in complete contrast to the experience of young men, who sallied forth after the day's work in the studio to neighbourhood cafes for beer and conversation.<sup>43</sup>

Florence Carlyle was in Paris for six years in the 1890s and she later spoke of her time there as being one of hard work, of hurriedly dressing in unheated rooms, of dashing through the streets to the atelier, and of the sheer pleasure that came from a single word of praise from the master.<sup>44</sup> Letters and memoirs such as Carlyle's give a picture of the 'art experience'—both in class and in her daily life. Similarly, Cecilia Beaux's description of her life as a student in Paris in 1885 expresses the value of living each day totally devoted to producing art. She described it as a time of “working ... [and] storing up what could be used later, every step revealing secrets of vision [she wanted] to express...What peace, what space for deliberation, there was in being a student!”<sup>45</sup> These descriptions of student life reflected the aims of all art students, male or female. But what was implied by Beaux and other women was the fact that 'at home' for many women their time would be taken up with familial, domestic and social responsibilities. The physical separation of unmarried women from their parental homes was a new development in their lives. In previous generations young women generally only left the family home when they married. It was the pursuit of further education that gave women the opportunity to break out of the family sphere. During their time in Europe they had freedom to work from early morning until all hours of the night if they were so inclined. This was important as travel offered women (and men) the additional satisfaction of new experience.

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<sup>42</sup> Holland (1904): 226.

<sup>43</sup> Moore, *op. cit.* 58, 71.

<sup>44</sup> W. G. Trestain, “Art Study in Paris Hard Work, Wrote Florence Carlyle,” The London Free Press (November 18 1938): 8.

The dichotomy for women who aspired to a professional career was to reconcile the public and the personal. By focussing their training on Paris they hoped to position themselves to compete in the North American art market. On their return women artists had to find a way to resolve their identity as female and their professional identity as women artists as it was nearly impossible to escape gender ideologies because there would always be a conflict between their work as women and as artists. Anna Lea Merritt's "Letter to Artists, Especially Women Artists" discussed the obstacles of exhibiting and the draw-backs and merits of a professional career for women. She believed that members of her sex were "fairly treated" and "there was never any exclusion."<sup>46</sup> However she still had to resolve the conflict that she and other women faced in terms of their family responsibilities and their professional goals. In the end her ideal of the woman artist resembled the emerging New Women, as she was a person who comfortably occupied the public/professional sphere alongside men and deserved equal consideration, but at the same time maintained her femininity.<sup>47</sup>

While overseas the women were meeting other, similarly like-minded people who, if they so choose were free to direct the coming and going of their own lives. The other part of the experience of travel, as we have seen, was meeting and building mutually supportive relationships with new companions. To an extent these friendships replaced the missing familial ties while the women were abroad. But more importantly close friendships developed between like-minded women who had come to Paris with a common purpose. The women built on these friendships, privately and publicly, through artistic associations,

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<sup>45</sup> Beaux, op. cit. 124.

<sup>46</sup> Anna Lea Merritt, "A Letter to Artists: Especially Women Artists," Lippincott's Monthly Magazine 65, no.387 (March 1900): 463.

such as the Association of Women Artists, which was founded in Paris in 1889. Another club in Paris was the American Girls' Art Club, which offered living accommodation and a supportive environment, and which bustled with informal sketching classes, dances, artistic evenings and exhibition days to which "all artistic Paris, male and female" was invited.<sup>48</sup> Many of the friendships were strong and lasted long after the time abroad. Muntz and Hawley maintained contact with one another for many years after their years in Paris.

Montreal artist Prudence Heward was well on her way to establishing herself as a professional artist before her first study trip abroad; she had already exhibited and received favourable critical response to her work in Canada. She was typical of the women who went to France after the turn of the century. At that time women were more likely than before to arrive in Paris with established careers, and they tended to stay for shorter periods of time. She travelled to England in 1925, but except for the existence of a sketchbook, little is known of her time there. She travelled to Paris and made a short visit to Italy, she went to Venice and probably to Florence, in the same year. She stayed in Paris for a little over twelve months. While there she studied at the Académie Colarossi under Charles Guérin (1875-1939) and at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, where she studied drawing with Bernard Naudin (1876-1946).

Despite the artistic growth that came from these new experiences, André Biéler, who described meeting Heward at that time, was of the opinion that she was decidedly out of place and not making the most of what Paris could offer. He said she was alone and

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<sup>47</sup> Laura R. Prieto, *At Home in the Studio* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2001): 150.



ensconced in a hotel on the 'wrong' side of the Seine.<sup>49</sup> Heward's second visit to Paris, from late spring of 1929 until the spring of 1930, was a more successful one. At that time she took A. Y. Jackson's suggestion and met with an acquaintance of his: Isabel McLaughlin.

McLaughlin was well suited to Heward. They were from similarly privileged backgrounds and the two became lifelong friends.<sup>50</sup> Together they explored the museums, exhibitions and various ateliers of Paris, finally finding a school that suited them. According to McLaughlin the Académie Scandinavienne was "freer and more innovative" than the others they considered. This academy had only been in existence a few years. It was run by a Dane, Adam Fischer (1888-1958) and two Norwegian painters, Per Krogh (1889-1965) and Otte Skolde (1894-1958). Of the three artist-teachers associated with the Académie Scandinavienne, Per Krogh (1889-1965) had the greatest impact on Heward. Krogh had attended the Académie Julian and was a follower of Matisse. She found his portrayal of the female figure as monumental stylistically appealing. She also appreciated the emphasis he placed on modelling and his use of bold colour (Figures 7 and 8).

In the years between the arrivals of the first Canadians seeking a European art education, many changes had taken place in Paris. Women had been given access to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in the last years of the 1890s. New academies had opened since the 1870s, such as the Académie de la Grande Chaumière, which was founded by Martha Stettler (1870-1946) sometime around 1900. The painter-printmaker Caroline Armington (1875-1939) attended this school and the Académie Julian between 1905 and 1907. The Ontario artist

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<sup>48</sup> Swinth, *op. cit.* 53-54.

<sup>49</sup> André Bieler remembered Prudence Heward in Paris in a 1985 interview. Natalie Luckyj, *Expressions of Will: The Art of Prudence Heward* (Kingston, Ontario: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1986): 31.

<sup>50</sup> Barbara Meadowcroft, *Painting Friends* (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1999): 205.

Florence McGillivray, almost forty years old when she travelled to Paris (her first trip to Europe) also enrolled in the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. Both Julian's and the Colarossi carried on into the new century, but their legacy was in the many artists who had trained with them and had then gone on to open schools in their own names.<sup>51</sup> In the first three decades of the twentieth century Paris continued to reign as an international art centre, although much of the teaching that was done in the académies continued to be based on the academic tradition of drawing.

But the académies also kept up with the times as best they could. In this way they remained relevant to the Canadians who ventured to them in the early part of the new century. For example, one of the newer académie was the Atelier Blanche, also called La Palette, was run by Jacques-Émile Blanche (1861-1942) and John Duncan Fergusson, which introduced students to the colours and exuberant brushstrokes of Post-Impressionism and to new groups such as the Fauves. Emily Carr discovered the Post-Impressionists when she was in Paris from 1910 to 1912. While Carr initially attended the Académie Colarossi she soon left, as she felt her efforts were not being recognized by the masters. She went to work with Fergusson, first privately and then at the Atelier Blanche. There were many Americans and British students in this studio and they divided themselves into two camps: those who worked with Blanche, an old-school Impressionist, and the more progressive group who worked with Fergusson. Shortly after this time Carr's health forced her to seek a rural setting and she

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<sup>51</sup> The Colarossi closed in the late 1920s. The Académie Julian celebrated its centenary in 1968. The school was carried forward after Julian's death in 1907 by his brother. In time, on the site of the men's atelier in the rue du Dragon, the Ecole Supérieure d'Arts Graphiques replaced Julian's. Another atelier grew out of two of the Julian studios. André del Debbio took over the studio at 5, rue de Berri, the site of the women's studio, in 1974 and combined it with another site on blvd St Jacques. See Catherine Fehrer, "Introduction" in Weisberg and Becker, *op. cit.* 5-7, 9-10.

eventually began to study at Cressy-en-Brie and in St. Eflame in Brittany, where – as noted above - she worked with Frances Hodgkins. Carr spent the autumn months working with Hodgkins, during which time her interest in working outdoors was reinforced. Carr returned to Canada in November, 1911.

While the number of artists from English Canada who travelled to France diminished after the First World War, artists from Quebec (of both French and English origin – including as noted above – Prudence Heward-) continued to travel to there throughout the 1920s and beyond. After World War One there is more evidence than before of French-Canadian women traveling to Paris. Claire Fauteux (1890-1988) was a pupil of Brymner's at the AAM between 1914 and 1918, and had won the Women's Art Society Prize in 1916. English Montrealer Emily Coonan (1885-1971) was also awarded this prize that year. The two women were able to travel to France in 1920 or 1921.<sup>52</sup> Marguerite Lemieux (1899-1971) attended the Conseil des Arts et Manufactures in Montreal (in circa 1914-1920). She went to Paris at least five times in the 1920s, and attended the Académie Julian, La Grande Chaumière and the Académie Biloul l'Aquarelle as well as the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.<sup>53</sup> She was back in Montreal by 1927, and she began to exhibit her work regularly from that time.<sup>54</sup>

Quebec art students continued to travel to France despite the fact they had the opportunity to train at Montreal's and Quebec City's Écoles des Beaux-Arts. From its founding in 1923, the

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<sup>52</sup> Tippett, op. cit. 45. Fauteux was awarded the Women's Art Society Prize (\$1000.) in 1916 and she traveled with or at the same time as Emily Coonan did early in 1920-21. Karen Antaki, Emily Coonan (1885-1971) (Montreal: Concordia Art Gallery, 1987): 26.

<sup>53</sup> Stuart MacDonald, Dictionary of Canadian Artists Volume 3 (Ottawa: Canadian Paperbacks Publishing, 1967): 807.

<sup>54</sup> Laurier Lacroix, Peindre a Montreal 1915 – 1930 (Montreal : Galerie de L'UQAM, 1996):134.

Montreal Ecole offered a purely academic training, based on the training offered by the Paris Ecole des Beaux-Arts. When Charles Maillard became the school's second director, in 1925, he reiterated the strength of this connection and confirmed his commitment to the development of a regional and autonomous art style he believed suitable to Quebec artists.<sup>55</sup> The Montreal École was very conservative and anti-modernist in its teaching practices. As a result, Paris remained an important destination for artists from Quebec, so much so that the continued popularity led to the founding of the Maison des étudiants canadiens à Paris in 1926. The maison was built by the Canadian embassy in Paris to house Canadian students.<sup>56</sup> Increasingly – and especially for students from outside Quebec – the compulsion to study overseas decline somewhat.<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, anglophone Quebecers tended to feel as strongly drawn to Paris as the French counterparts. There were many other reasons for this but their greater knowledge of France and their seemingly greater interest in modernity continued to be a factor in their choice of travel destination.

For other Canadians, travelling to France became less of a priority. There were a number of reasons for this, one was a breaking away from the constraints of the past. For Canadians after World War One, breaking colonial ties and establishing Canada as a nation in its own right was politically essential. Within this notion it was implicit that Canadian artists should be able to find within Canada the necessary components for their art training and especially the subjects for their art production. For many artists, the advent of modernism in Canada as seen in the influence of the Group of Seven were responses to these ideas and placed the

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<sup>55</sup> Francois-Marc Gagnon, "Painting in Quebec in the Thirties," The Journal of Canadian Art History Vol.3, no.1 (1976): 6-7.

<sup>56</sup> Lacroix, op. cit. 62.

<sup>57</sup> Reid, op. cit. 135.

subject matter explored by artists within Canada's own borders.<sup>58</sup> An Ontario-based artist such as McGillivray for example, looked at her native landscape in a new way after her time abroad. Her time in France had been successful; she had had work accepted into the Salon, and she had been elected president of the International Art Union, a body of artists whose mandate was to promote French art.<sup>59</sup> She had painted the Brittany landscape and had seen the work of Gauguin and others of the Pont-Aven school in Paris, but on her return to Ontario she found new possibilities in the portrayal of the northern landscape, as she applied the modernist styles she had discovered in France. (Figure 9) Like Emily Carr, who also immersed herself deeply in Canadian themes, McGillivray never returned to Europe. On her return to Canada she attracted the notice of critics and other women artists who were also interested in painting the Canadian landscape from a new perspective.

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<sup>58</sup> William Colgate, Canadian Art: Its Origin and Development (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1943):143.

<sup>59</sup> Weinberg, op. cit. 69. The International Art Union had been in existence since 1850 and had mainly North American members.

### Conclusion

One of the difficulties with histories of art education is the lack of any explicit mention of the female student. There are few archival records for the early years of either the art school at the Art Association of Montreal or of the Ontario College of Art. This means there are no student or class lists, systematic records of awards or syllabi for the years of my research. In addition, in art pedagogy the student was almost always represented as male or as gender neutral; authors believed that what happened to him also applied to her.<sup>1</sup> As a result women's experience of art school is buried or excluded. When one is researching English Canadian women in late nineteenth-century art institutions one is doubly bound by a lack of documentation. The major histories of Canadian art, such as Dennis Reid's A Concise History of Canadian Painting from 1973 and Russell Harper's Painting in Canada: A History published in 1968, do not include much data on the history of art education to begin with, and additionally they were written at a time in which the contribution of women to the history of Canadian art was not seen as relevant to the larger picture.

Over the past thirty years, a number of Canadian art historians have sought to recover the lives and work of women artists. In many cases their research has resulted in exhibition catalogues rather than monographs. But piecing together the biographical material for Canadian women and finding information on their art training is often a challenge. To date there has been no comprehensive study of Muntz or McGillivray. On the other hand,

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<sup>1</sup> Pen Dalton, The Gendering of Art Education: Modernism, Identity and Critical Feminism (Buckingham and Philadelphia, Open University Press, 2001): 7.

Natalie Luckyj researched the lives of both Helen McNicoll and Prudence Heward in association with exhibitions of their work. Heward's life and career was also part of Barbara Meadowcroft's survey of the women of the Beaver Hall group.<sup>2</sup> Other one-woman exhibitions have been accompanied by catalogues for Emily Coonan (1888-1971), Mary Hiester Reid (1854-1921), Sophie Pemberton (1869-1959), Anne Savage (1896-1971) and Harriet Ford (1859-1938), the initiative for research into Ford's work having come from the artist's niece.<sup>3</sup> The most often written of Canadian woman is Emily Carr (1871-1945) with over thirty books and exhibition catalogues devoted to her life.<sup>4</sup>

The one broad survey of Canadian women's art, written in 1992 by Maria Tippett, By a Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women, offers a glimpse at the career and artistic production of many women and tries to bring these women back into history.<sup>5</sup> The strength of the book is its many illustrations. There have been many M.A. and Doctoral dissertations written in recent years that were of great value in my research

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<sup>2</sup> Barbara Meadowcroft, Painting Friends : The Beaver Hall Women Painters (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Karen Antaki and Sandra Paikowsky, Emily Coonan 1885-1971 (Montreal: Concordia University Art Gallery, 1987), Tobi Bruce and Jennifer C. Watson, Harriet Ford (Hamilton: Art Gallery of Hamilton, 2001), Natalie Luckyj, Helen McNicoll: A Canadian Impressionist (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1999), Natalie Luckyj, Expressions of Will: The Art of Prudence Heward (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1986), Brian Foss and Janice Anderson, Quiet Harmony: The Art of Mary Hiester Reid (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 2000), Nicolas Tuele, Sophia Theresa Pemberton (1869-1959) (Victoria: Art Gallery of Victoria, 1978) and Janet Braide, Anne Savage: Her Expression of Beauty (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1979).

<sup>4</sup> Charles C. Hill, Johanne Lamoureux, Ian M. Thom, Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2006). Doris Shadbolt, Seven Journeys: The Sketchbooks of Emily Carr (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2002). Doris Shadbolt, The Complete Writings of Emily Carr (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1997). Anne Newlands, Emily Carr: An Introduction to her Life and Art (Willowdale: Firefly Books, 1996). Iann Thom, Emily Carr in France (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, June 22 to September 22 1991).

<sup>5</sup> Maria Tippett, By a Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women (Toronto: Viking Penguin, 1992).

and added to my understanding of the topic. Maura Broadhurst's survey of the development of women artists' groups in Canada and Heather Haskin's research into the Montreal branch of the Women's Art Association provide key pieces of information for any student investigating the development of women's role in the arts in Canada at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Anne Mandely Page and Julia Gualtieri's theses on women, such as Helen McNicoll, Florence Carlyle and Laura Muntz, Mary Ella Dignam and Mary Hiester Reid who pursued professional careers in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth- century are both abundant sources of information. What is now needed is a comprehensive study of women artists in the period 1880 to 1930 as the number of scholars studying, working and writing about art, artists and women's place in society makes this a very rich period. Ultimately a comprehensive study of art education in Canada is needed; especially one that includes both men and women would allow this important development in Canadian history to be re-inserted into Canadian art history.

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<sup>6</sup> Maura Lesley Broadhurst, "Strategic Spaces" Towards a Genealogy of Women Artists' Groups in Canada" M.A. Dissertation, Montreal: Concordia University, 1997. Heather Victoria Haskins, "Bending the Rules: The Montreal Branch of the Women's Art Association of Canada, 1894-1900" M.A. Dissertation, Montreal: Concordia University, 1995.



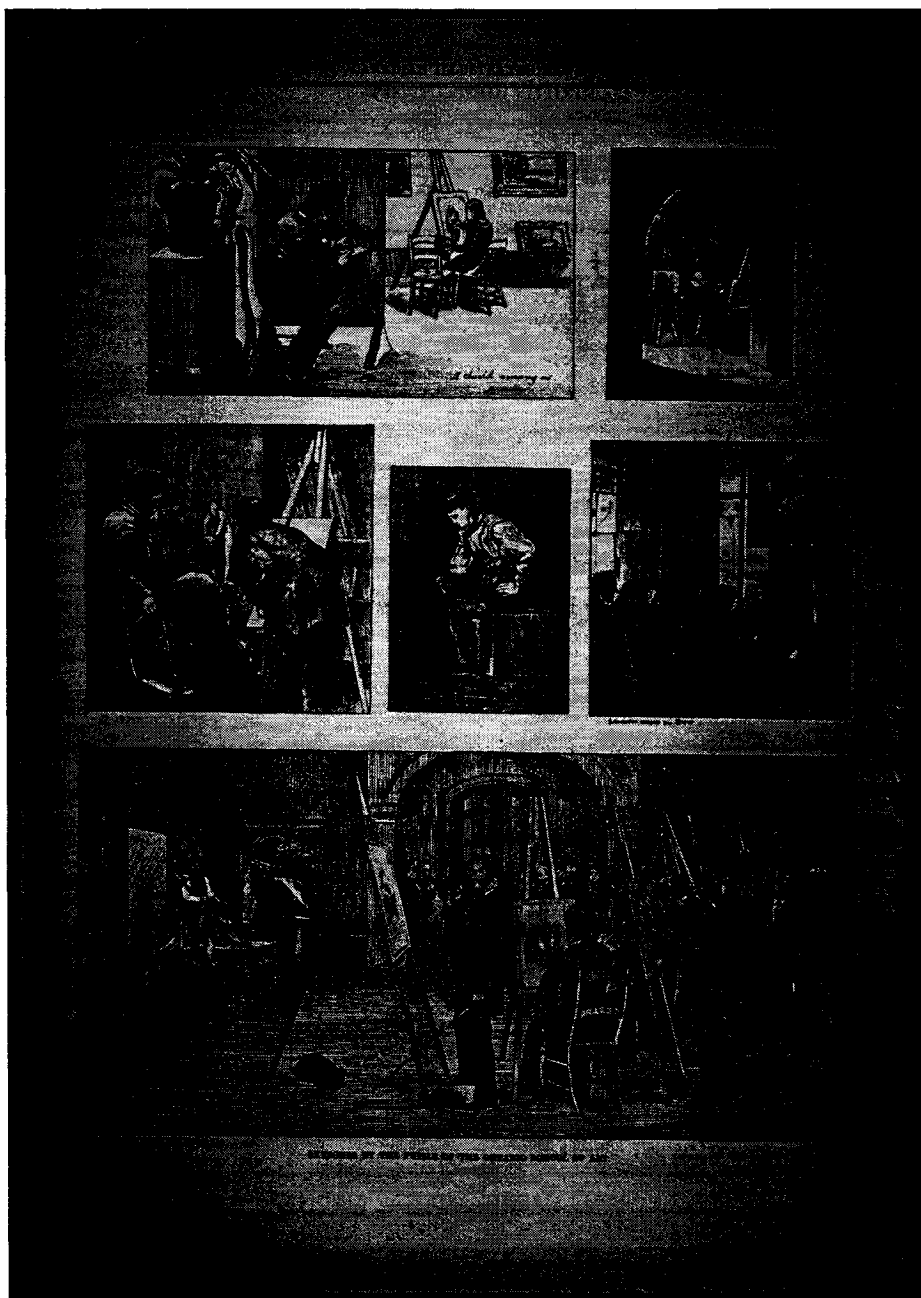
Illustrations

Figure 1

“Sketches by the Pupils of the Ontario School of Art” Canadian Illustrated News Vol. 21, no.20 (May 15 1880): 309.

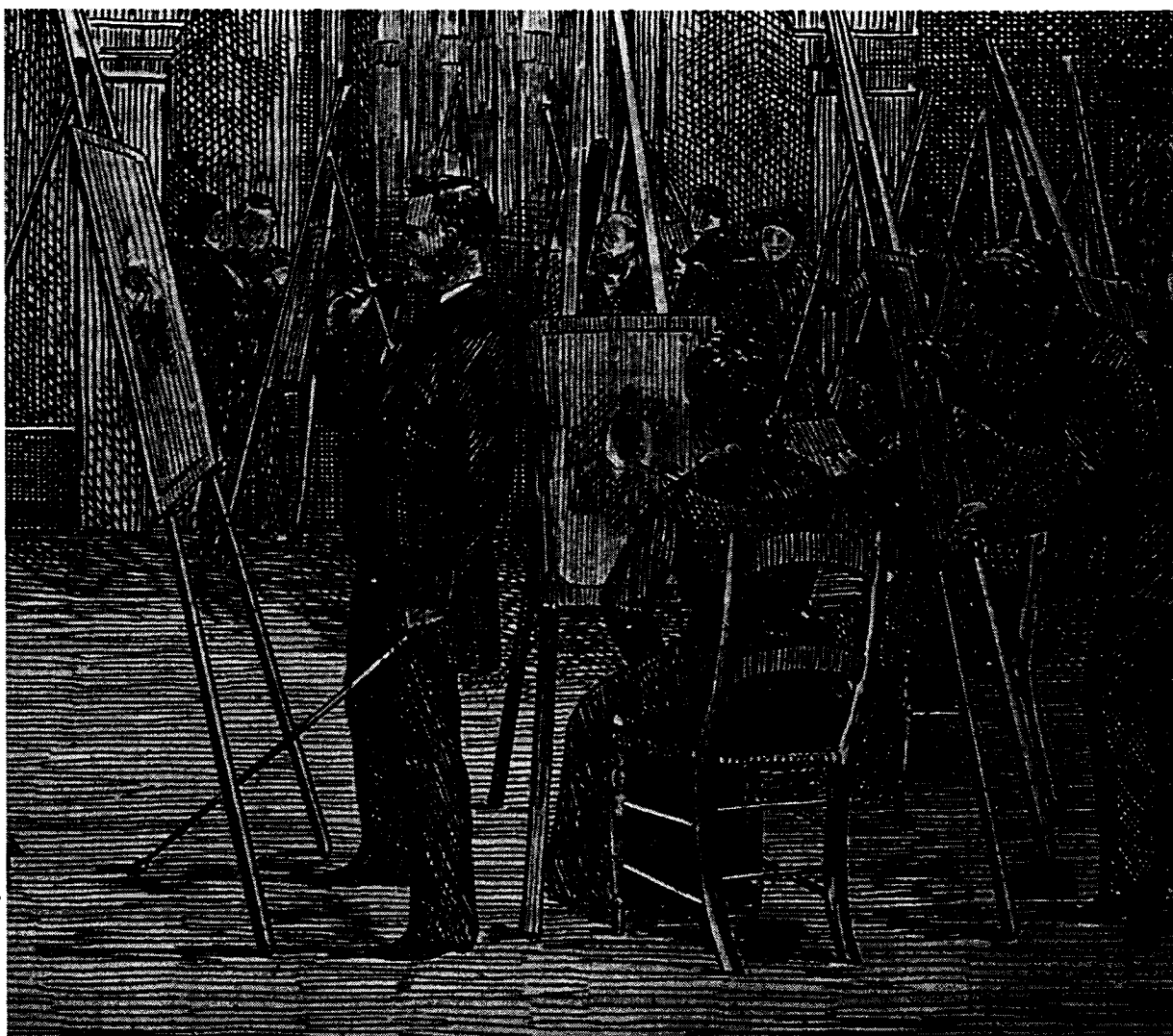


Fig 1.-a

Detail of Figure 1.

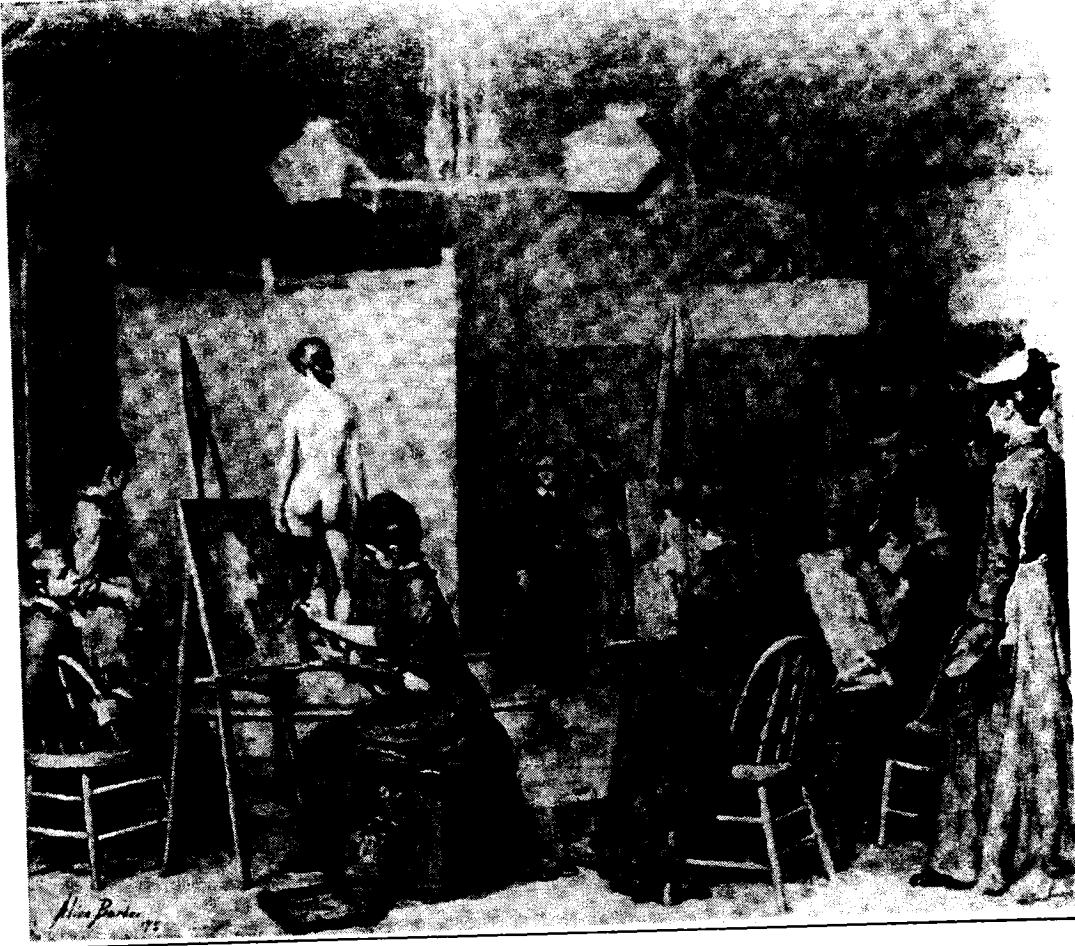


Figure 2

Alice Barber Stephens Female Life Class 1879 (oil on board, 31x 36 cm, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts). Reprinted in Pennsylvania Academy and its Women 1850 to 1920 [Catalogue of an exhibition held May 3-June 16, 1973 at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Pa] (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1973): 17.

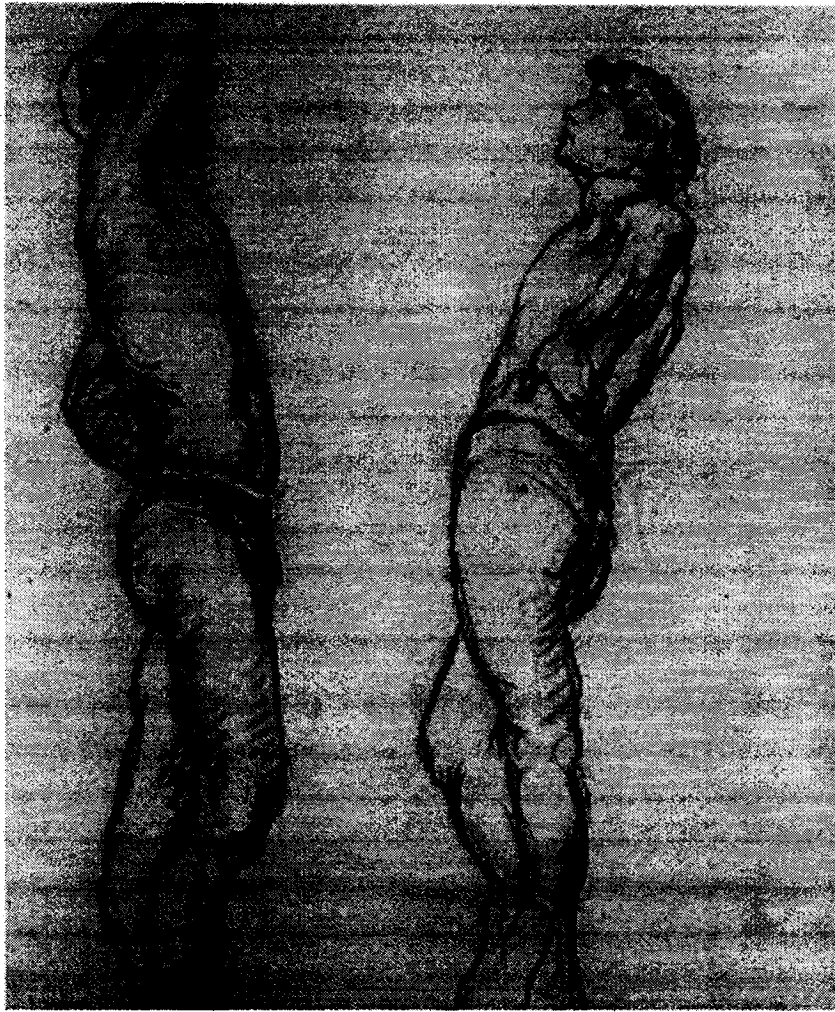


Figure 3

Helen McNicoll, Academic Nude, Male Studies 1902 (pencil on wove paper, 17.5x 12.4 cm Private Collection, Toronto). Reprinted in Natalie Luckyj, Helen McNicoll A Canadian Impressionist (Toronto. Art Gallery of Ontario, 1999): 24.

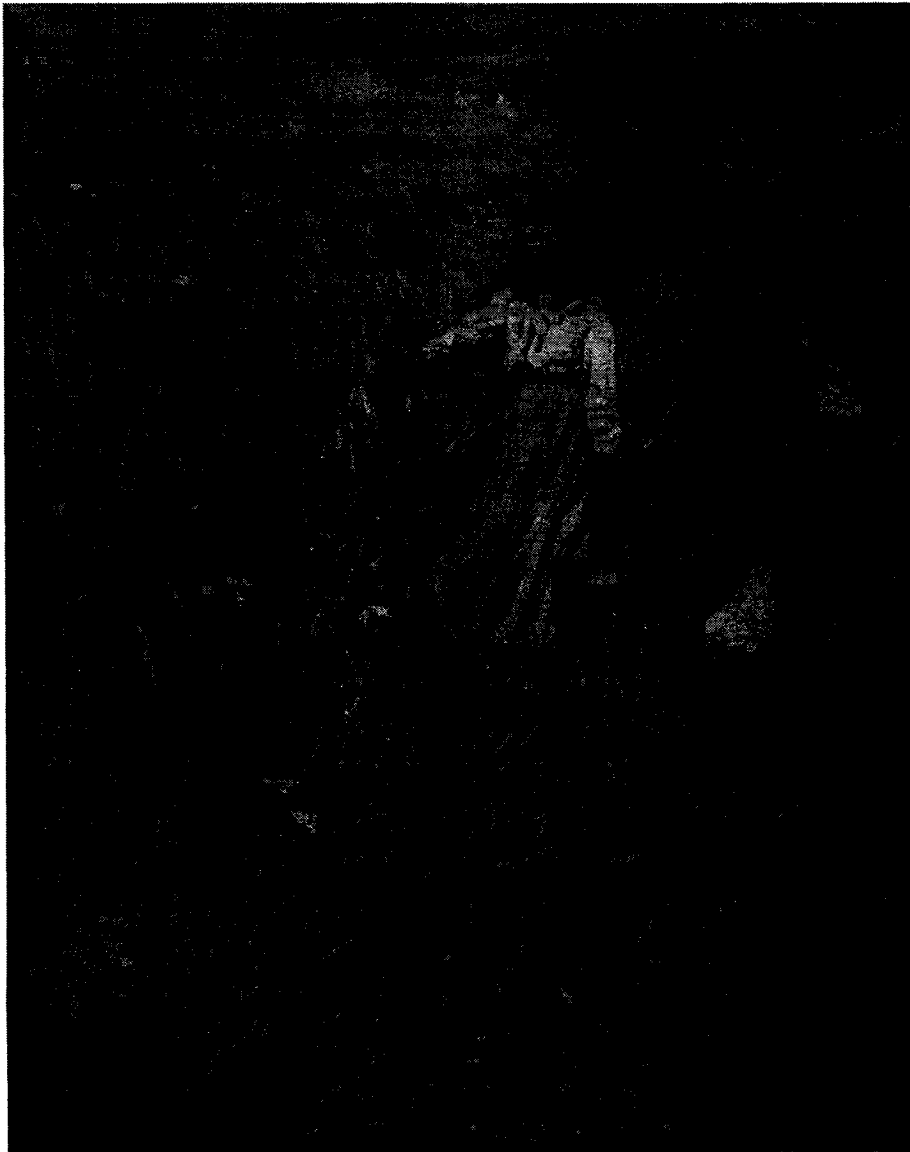


Figure 4

Helen McNicoll, Little Worker c.1907 (oil on canvas, 61x51.3 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario). Reprinted in Natalie Luckyj, Helen McNicoll A Canadian Impressionist (Toronto. Art Gallery of Ontario, 1999): 51.

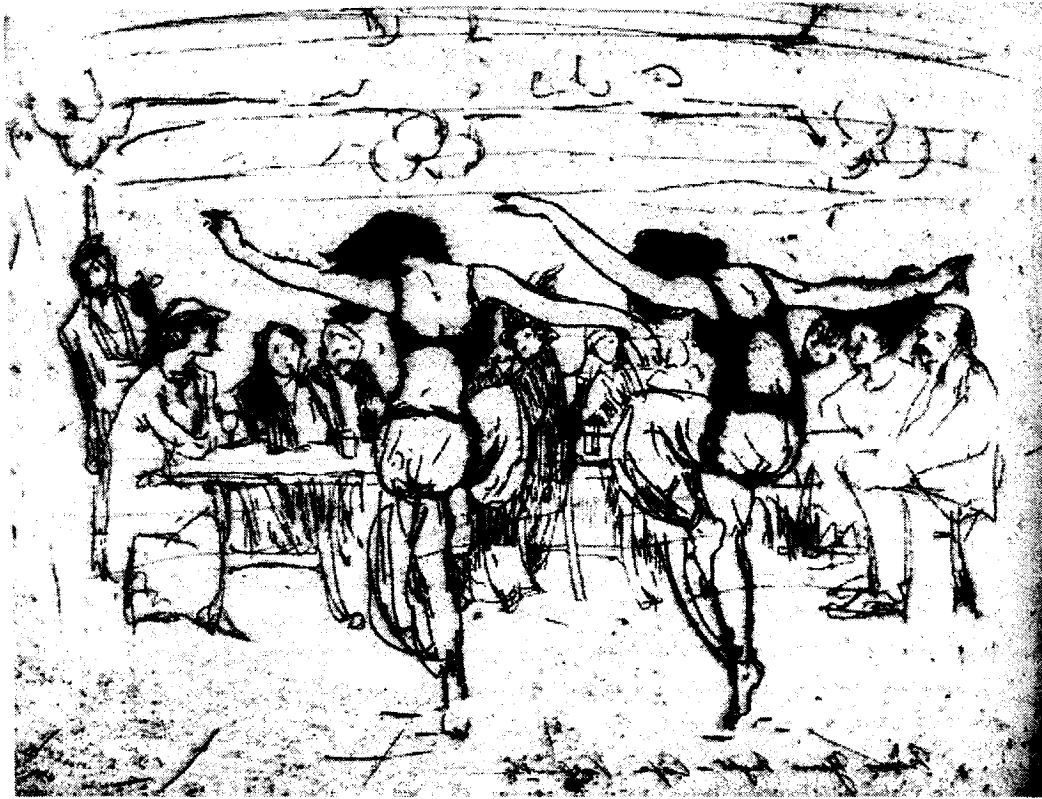


Figure 5

Anne Goldthwaite At Montmartre c.1910 (etching on paper, 20.2 x 17.7 cm  
Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Montgomery, Alabama). Reprinted in Kirsten  
Swinth, Painting Professionals: Women Artists and the Development of Modern  
American Art, 1870-1930 (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2001): 174.



Figure 6

Laura Muntz, The Milkmaids - On the River, Holland c.1894, oil on canvas, 69.8x 90.2 cm, Collection of the Art Gallery of Peterborough, Peterborough, Ontario.)

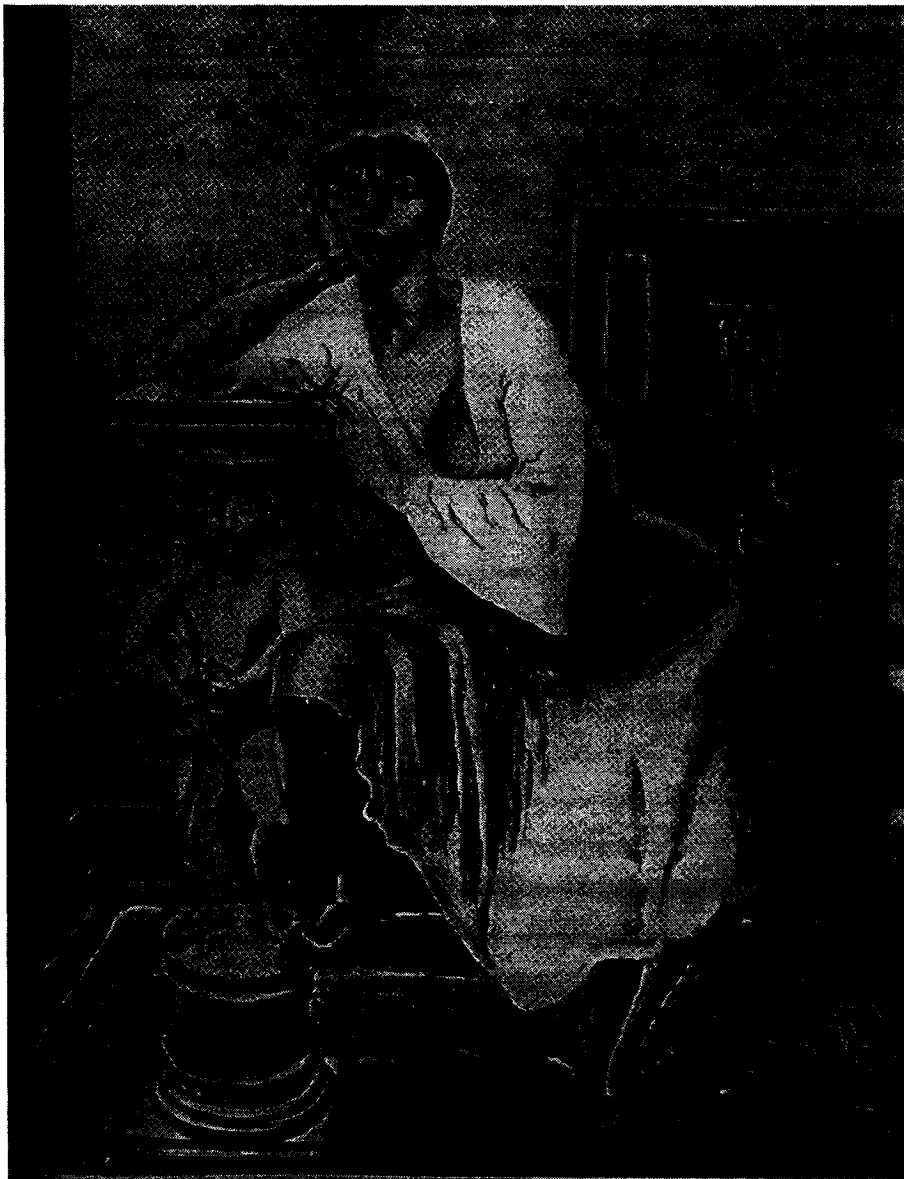


Figure 7

Per Krogh Kiki c.1929 (dimensions and whereabouts unknown). Reprinted in Kiki's Memoirs (Paris, Edward W. Titus, 1930): 27.



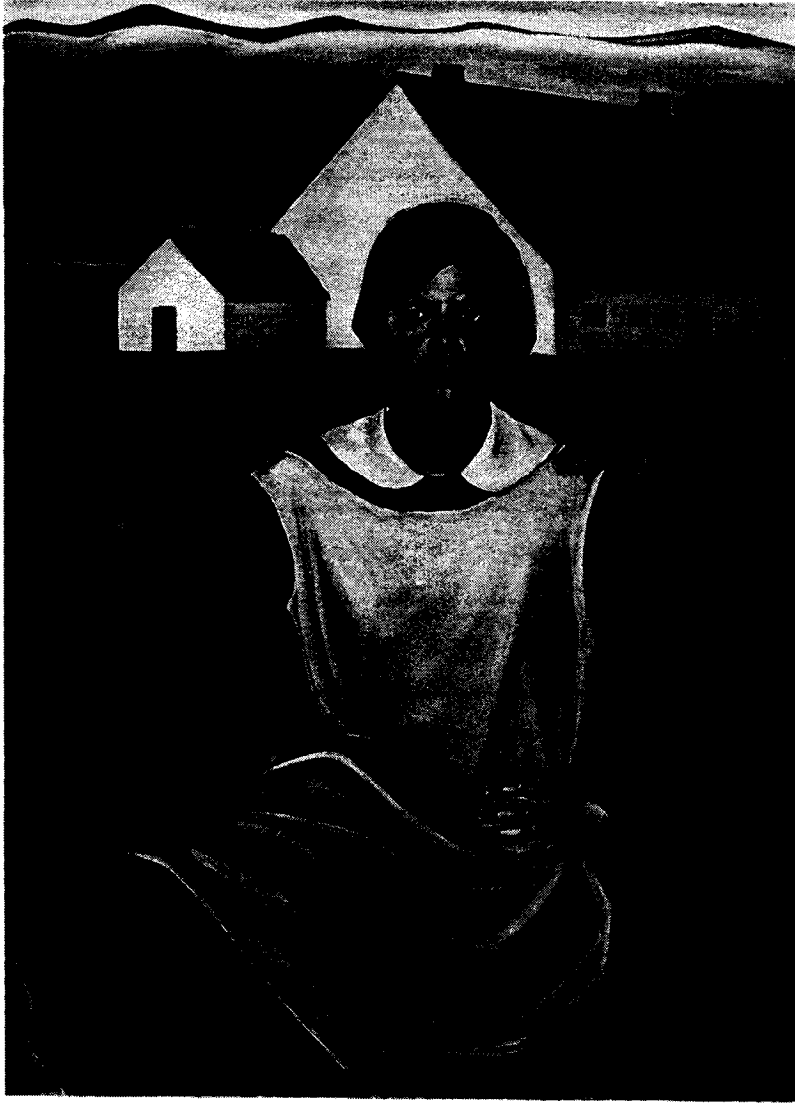


Figure 8

Prudence Heward, Rollande, 1929 (oil on canvas, 139.9 x 101.7 cm, National Gallery of Canada). Reprinted in Natalie Luchyj, *Expressions of Will. The Art of Prudence Heward* [Catalogue of an exhibition organized and circulated by the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, Ontario, 1986-1987] (Kingston, Ontario: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1986): 90



Figure 9

Florence McGillivray Afterglow c.1914-1915 (oil on paperboard, 42 x 54.5 cm, National Gallery, Canada). Reprinted in Maria Tippett, By A Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women (Toronto: Penguin, 1992): 56.

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