

Réseau d'étude sur l'histoire des artistes canadiennes



Canadian Women Artists History Initiative

Developing Resources for Canadian
Visual History

What I will talk about.....



- Historical Context
 - Women artist and Art History

- Resources
 - Artists bio-bibliographic database
 - Vertical file collection
 - Exhibition reviews database

Women Artists & Art History



- 1971 Linda Nochlin wrote in *ArtNews* magazine:
 - “Why have there been no great women artists?”
- 1976 exhibition: *Women Artists, 1550-1950*
- From mid-70s courses on women artists have been included in the curriculum of many Art History departments
- Rewriting women into art history
 - Increased number of publications
 - 1980 - *Woman’s Art Journal* and others
- 1986 National Museum of Women Artists established in Washington
 - Numerous women artists centres and galleries had been set up

Canadian Art History & Women Artists



- Most Canadian Art History courses until the 90s used two texts for survey courses – they both included approximately 50 women artists:
 - 1966 - Russell Harper. *Painting in Canada, A History*. (1977) 2nd edition.
 - 1966 - Dennis Reid. *A Concise History of Canadian Painting*. (1988) 2nd edition.
- 1975 Nathalie Luckyj wrote: *From Women's Eyes: Women Painters in Canada*.
- 1992 Maria Tippett wrote: *By a Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women*.
- 2008 A.K. Prakash wrote: *Independent Spirit: Early Canadian Women Artists*.
- Women's art spaces, centres and galleries created
 - 1973 La Centrale Powerhouse in Montreal
 - 1984 WARC Women's Art Resource Centre created.
 - 1990- 1998 *Matriart* – journal published by WARC.
- Since late 1970s growing number of books, exhibition catalogues, and theses.

CWAHI: Canadian Women Artists History Initiative



- 2001-6 Developed Women Artists in Canada bio-bibliographic web database
 - Janice Anderson, Visual Resources Curator and I inventory artists and begin researching
 - With Library Research grant hire Peter Page to design a web database
 - Ongoing research for bio-bibliographies
 - presented bio-bibliographic project at ARLIS/NA Annual Conference poster session

- 2007 CWAHI created
 - Discussions with Kristina Huneault, Research Chair in Art History, to consider forming a research group
 - reviewed other national projects (US, UK, Australia)
 - [cwahi web site](#) was set up

- 2008 Inaugural CWAHI conference, database officially launched, and new project exhibition reviews

Resource: Artists Bio-bibliographic Database



- Create a reference resource to facilitate research on women artists who worked in Canada
 - Bring together information that is spread through numerous publications
 - Integrate other art media (crafts, photography, textiles,...) as well as First Nations women artists generally not covered in most other sources
 - Include primary sources
- Provide a representation of the range work of historical women artists (born before 1925).

Drawing on Existing Reference Sources



- Canadian art reference sources used:

- *Artists in Canada Database* (CHIN)
- *Art and Architecture in Canada* (Lerner & Williamson)
- *Biographical Index of Artists in Canada* (McMann)
- *Dictionary of Canadian Artists* (McDonald)

(Gaps - few primary sources, few publications after 1980s, and coverage of art media.)

- International resources on women artists checked:

- *Biographical Dictionary of Women Artists in Europe and America since 1850* (1990)
- *North American Women Artists of the Twentieth Century: A Biographical Dictionary* (1995)
- *Dictionary of Women Artists* (1997)
- Clara's Database of Women Artists NMWA (begun 2004 and ongoing)

(Gaps - little Canadian coverage)

Resource: Artist Bio-bibliography Database



- Identifying artists
 - Initially women born between 1850-1950; later changed to before 1925.
 - Over 1000 artists were identified.
 - 210 artists actually in database now; approximately 40 being researched.
- Researching & building bio-bibliographies
 - initially Janice & myself.
 - Student researchers & volunteers.
- Designing & Building the database
 - Peter Page
- Currently Discussions about redesigning the search interface and also editing.
- Informal talks of links from the Artists in Canada database (CHIN)
- [Canadian Women Artists History Initiative : Artist Database](#)

Resource: Vertical File Collection



- Over 900 files covering artists and architects
- Donated by following researchers:
 - Annmarie Adams, McGill University
 - Charles C. Hill, National Gallery of Canada
 - Kristina Huneault, Concordia University
 - Laurier Lacroix, UQAM
 - Peta Tancred, McGill University
 - Esther Trépanier, Musee des Beaux Arts du Quebec
- Available for students & researchers to consult in Documentation Centre (EV Building, Department of Art History)

Resource: Exhibition Reviews Database



- Provide reviews published in newspaper articles (1880-1940):
 - Art Association of Montreal Spring Exhibitions
 - Royal Canadian Artists Annual exhibitions
- Collaborative project with:
 - National Gallery of Canada
 - Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
 - They provide newspaper clippings & we provide a digitized copy
- Covers women and men artists
- Link to bibliographies in Artists Bio-bibliography Database

Exhibition Reviews Database

Inventorizing the Content

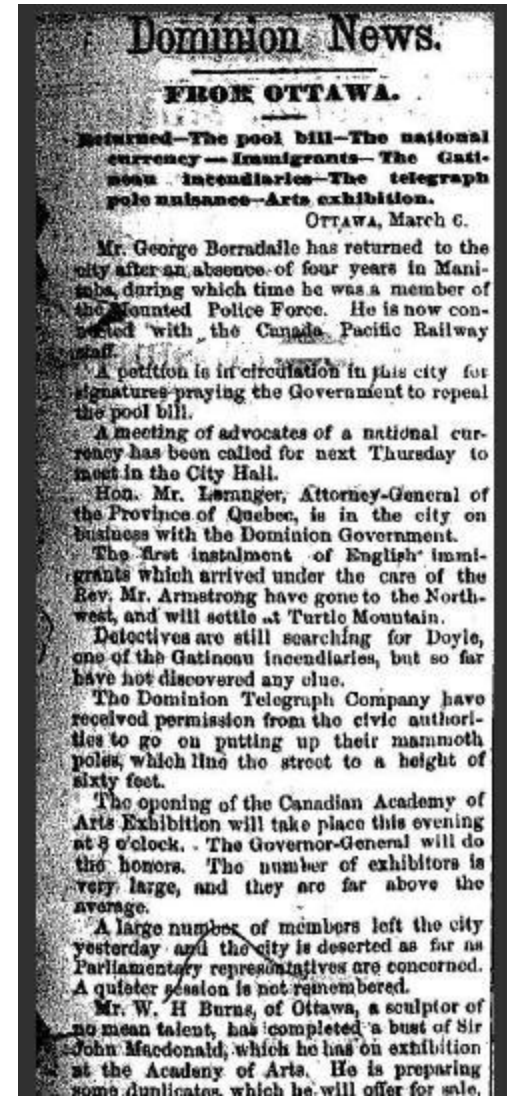


- National Gallery of Canada : Reviewed vertical files
 - Files organized by year and exhibition title
 - Includes all major Canadian exhibitions
 - Created spreadsheet of newspapers, dates. Example:
 - 1880 : AAM 10 articles RCA 29 articles
 - Approximately 850 articles
- MMFA Scrapbooks (articles covering all events related to the MMFA)
 - Scrapbooks at MMFA were digitized by company
- Files are incomplete: necessary to verify dates and page numbers

Scanning Articles



- Initially planned to scan NGC articles directly from photocopies in files; majority were illegible
- After testing, decided to scan from microfilm
- Question
 - Outsource or hire a student to scan



Verifying Copyright



- 38 newspaper titles – many name changes; some no longer published. Examples:
 - Major dailies including: Montreal Star, The Gazette, Globe and Mail, Toronto Star and others
 - *Montreal Herald* (*Herald, Montreal Daily Herald,*) (1811-1957)
 - *Ottawa Evening Journal* (*Journal, Evening Journal,*...) (1885-1980)
 - *La Patrie* (1879-1978)
- Where articles are not in the public domain requested rights to copy and distribute

Designing Database



- Peter Page, who developed Artist Bio-bibliography database,
- Major decision
 - full-text searching or index searching
- Allow for searching by:
 - Artist
 - Specific exhibition of association
 - Dates
 - Location
- Testing of database backend recently completed

Exhibition Reviews Database: Things to do



- Design user search interface & display
- Populate Database
 - Upload digitized articles
 - Input data
- Add other exhibition groups:
 - OSA Ontario Society of Artists
 - International Exhibitions

ANDREWS, Sybil (1898 - 1992) ARMINGTON, Caroline Helena (1875 - 1939) BANNERMAN, Frances Jones (1855 - 1940) BAYFIELD, Fanny (1814 - 1891) BERLIN, Eugenia (1905 -) BROWN, Annora (1899 - 1987) BULLER, Cecil Tremayne (1888 - 1974) CANN, Elizabeth (1901 - 1977) CARLYLE, Florence (1864 - 1923) CARR, Emily (1871 - 1945) CHAPLIN, Millicent Mary (1790 - 1858) CHENEY, Nan Lawson (Anna Gertrude Lawson (1897 - 1985) CLARK, Paraskeva (Paraskeva Plistik) (1898 - 1986) COLLYER, Nora (1898 - 1979) COOMBS, Edith Grace (1890 - 1986) COONAN, Emily (1885 - 1971) COURTICE, Rody Kenny (1891 - 1973) DALY, Kathleen (1898 - 1994) DAOUST, Sylvia (Marie Emilienne Sylvia

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HOÛSSER, Yvonne McKague (1898 - 1996) JANES, Phyllis Hipwell (1905 - 1990) JONES, (Phyllis) Jacobine (1897 - 1976) KALVAK, Helen; Kalvakadlak; Kralvak (1901 - 1984) KERR, Estelle Muriel (1897 - 1971) KNOWLES, Elizabeth Anne McGillivray (1866 - 1928) LEFORT, Agnes (1895 - 1973) LENNIE, Beatrice (1905 - 1987) LEWIS, Maude (1903 - 1970) LOCKERBY, Mabel (1882 - 1976) LONG, Marion (1882 - 1970) LORING, Frances (1887 - 1968) LUKE, Alexandra (1901 - 1967) LYALL, Laura Muntz (1860 - 1930) MacLEOD, Peggy Nicol (1904 - 1949) MAYNARD, Hannah Hatherly (1834 - 1918) McGEOGH, Lillian Jean (1903 -) McLAUGHLIN, Isabel (1903 - 2002) PEMBERTON-SMITH, Freda (Frederica A.) (1902 - 1991) PETERSON, Margaret (1902 - 1997) PIGOTT, Marjorie (1904 - 1990) PINGWARTOK, Ulayu (1904 - 1978) REID, Mary Hiester (1854 - 1921) SCHNEIDER, Mary (1900 - 1962) SCHREIBER, Charlotte Mount Brock Morrell (1834 - 1922) SIMCOE, Elizabeth (1762? - 1850) WAINWRIGHT, Ruth Salter (1902 - 1984) WOOD, Elizabeth Wyn (1903 - 1966)