

## □ THE DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS FINE ARTS COLLECTION □

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Maureen Enns, *Plane Paint Series: Top Spot*.

The Collection had its rather obscure beginnings in 1937 when the Department, in co-operation with the National Gallery of Canada, began acquiring artworks for display at Canadian missions. On July 3, 1947, Prime Minister Mackenzie King supported the idea of Canadian art at missions abroad and approved art acquisition funds through the National Gallery which was responsible for assembling, documenting, storing and shipping the works. Over the next eleven years the Gallery gradually withdrew their physical support as they had neither means, mandate nor infrastructure to handle an internationally displayed Collection.

From the scant history and documentation which exists, it appears the Collection continued to grow primarily because of the enthusiasm of several individuals in the Department.

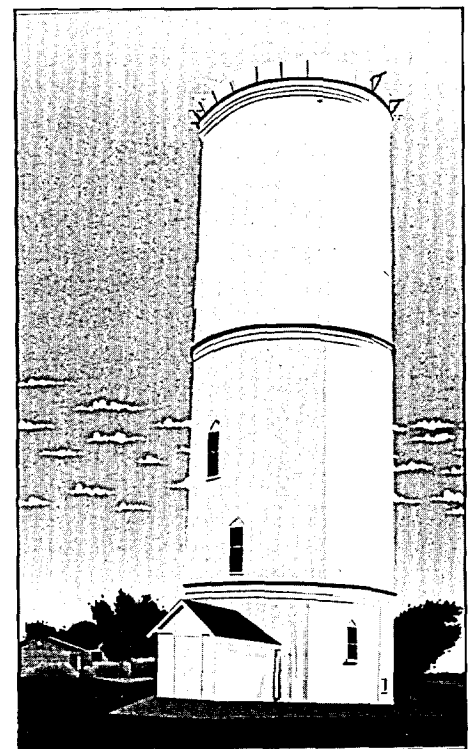
On occasion the program to supply art to missions has verged on cancellation, but there has always been a rally of activity to renew and support it. Finally in 1982, the then chair of the Department's Fine Arts Committee, Mr. W. T. Delworth, the National Gallery and the Bureau of Physical Resources hired a professional curator and several months later the Fine Arts Program was established to administer the Department's permanently displayed artwork at headquarters and abroad.

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The primary objective of the Fine Arts Program is to promote an awareness of Canadian visual arts and artists through the collection and preservation of Canadian artworks and their display in the public and representational areas of Official Residences and Chanceries abroad. In 1984, the Treasury Board approved the Department's fine arts policy for "...the effective presentation of contemporary Canadian artistic production for the

enhancement of the Canadian "image" and the appreciation of foreign audiences." These policies are intended to protect and support a Collection which is considered by many to be one of the best small collections of Canadian art. It consists of over 3 000 artworks at 119 missions and includes paintings, prints, drawings, sculptures, fabric arts (e.g. tapestries), and works of mixed media. There are approximately 350 Inuit sculptures and prints as well as many valuable donations including artworks from Mrs. Maryon Pearson, and the Honourable John D. Kearney. The latter donations are currently displayed at 7 Rideau Gate in Ottawa.

In the 1970's the Department conducted an in-house survey to assess the attitude towards its Collection at headquarters. It revealed the personal and diverse perspective the Foreign Service had about artwork. Everyone had a dif-



David Thauberger, *Water Tower 1985*.