

Major art exhibit links North American and Scandinavian landscape

Falls (1920) by Canadian artist J E H MacDonald



Photo: Courtesy Art Gallery of Ontario

Forest Clearing (1892) by Swedish artist Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde



Photo: Courtesy Art Gallery of Ontario

Study in Movement (1938) by Canadian painter Emily Carr

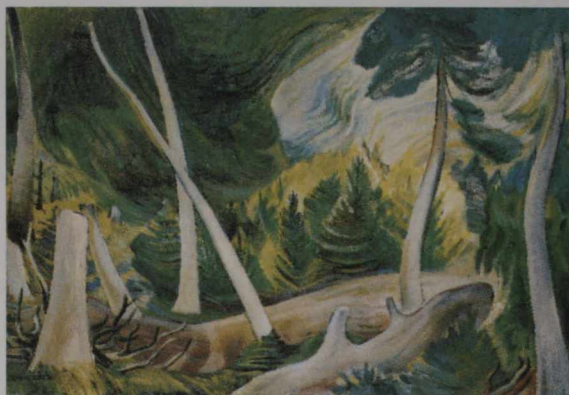


Photo: Courtesy Art Gallery of Ontario

Melancholy, The Yellow Boat (1891-92) by Edward Munch



Photo: Courtesy Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo

A major exhibition, showing for the first time the striking parallels of style and subject in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century northern landscape art, opened earlier this year at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) in Toronto and then moved on to Cincinnati Art Museum.

The exhibit, *The Mystic North; Symbolist Landscape Painting in Northern Europe and North America, 1890-1940*, offers the public a first opportunity to see the work of Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven alongside the work of the Scandinavians who directly or indirectly influenced them.

Organized by Dr Roald Nasgaard, chief curator at the AGO, the exhibition has broad international perspective. It proposes a definable category of symbolist landscape painting practised between 1890 and 1940 throughout the north, on both sides of the Atlantic. It is based on a shared interest in wilderness and subject matter, on a common desire to find transcendent meaning in it, and on a similar decorative and expressive stylistic approach.

The Mystic North includes 129 works by 31 artists from Scandinavia, northern Europe, Canada and the United States. Several artists are celebrated internationally – Edward Munch, Piet Mondrian, Ferdinand Hodler, Georgia O'Keeffe and Marsden

Hartley. Others, such as Canadians Tom Thomson, Emily Carr and Lawren Harris, are known primarily in their own countries. The first phase of the exhibition between 1890 and 1910, is European, confined to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland and Switzerland. The second phase, from 1910 to 1940, is almost entirely North American.

The exhibition title is drawn from a lecture given by Canadian Group of Seven artist J E H MacDonald at the AGO in 1931. He recounted a visit he and fellow artist Lawren Harris made to Buffalo in 1913 to see an exhibition of contemporary Scandinavian art at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery. Mr MacDonald said the paintings 'seemed to us true souvenirs of that mystic north round which we all resolve'.

In addition to a number of lectures, a series of 18 films including early German and Scandinavian works relating to the subject, are being shown in conjunction with the exhibition. Also, a 264-page book by Dr Nasgaard, co-published by the AGO and the University of Toronto Press, is available in two editions at \$47.50 (cloth) and \$19.95 (paper). It includes 120 black and white and 40 colour reproductions.

Front Cover

In porthole: C&C 35, Challenge Canada Edition, designed for the 10 Canadian provincial teams. Clockwise from upper left: Ontario Place, Toronto; Glacier Creek, Nahanni National Park, NWT; riding in a caleche in Montreal, Quebec; seafood at Yarmouth, ns.