

Group's role in Quebec art honoured

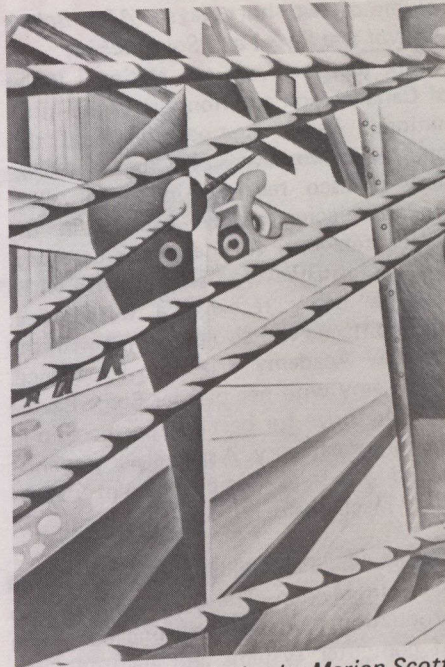
An exhibition, honouring the role of the Contemporary Arts Society in the formation of Quebec art, is on display at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The Montreal-based Contemporary Arts Society is not well-known outside of Quebec yet in the ten years (1939-1948) of its existence "it both directly and indirectly did more to champion the need and right for free artistic expression than any other Canadian arts organization before or since," writes Christopher Varley in the catalogue for the exhibition, which he organized for the Edmonton Art Gallery.

The society was opened to all artists of "non-academic tendencies which led to the formation of a large and heterogeneous organization that did not lend itself to myth making or populist historicism," he writes.

Non-academic artists

John Lyman, a critic, painter and art teacher, was the founder of the society. By the mid-1930s Lyman had established himself as the champion and principal spokesman of the non-academic artists working in Montreal and in 1937 assembled works by 11 painters, including his own, for an exhibition at the Montreal Arts Club. The other participants included: Prudence Heward, Alexander Bercovich, Mabel Lockerby, Sarah Robertson, Jack Humphrey, Fritz Brandtner, Gooderidge Roberts, Jean Palardy, Jori Smith and Marian Scott. All except Sarah Robertson later became



Harbour, an oil painting by Marion Scott, 1939, from the Edmonton Art Gallery.

members of the society.

Lyman, who was president of the society from its start until 1945, conceived of it as a body which would bring artists and collectors together and act as a lobby to counteract the influence of academics in art schools, galleries and other societies.

Twelve shows were eventually organized during the course of the society's existence from 1939 to 1948 and its members played a major role in organizing several outside exhibitions. Sixty-three member artists are recorded as having participated in these shows although many only exhibited on one or two occasions.

Artists such as Paul-Emile Borduas, A.Y. Jackson, David Milne, Henri Masson, F.H. Varley, Jacques de Tonnacour, Miller Brittain, Jack Humphrey, Anne Savage and Alfred Pellán exhibited paintings under the auspices of the society. Paul-Emile Borduas, also a prime mover in the formation of the society, later became its president following the resignation of Lyman.

Internal dissent

There was internal dissent in the society during its later years which eventually split it into several factions and led to the demise of the group in 1948.

The society "democratic and responsive to all forms of non-academic arts, ... subverted the repressive grip of the academic forces and sympathetically assisted in the birth of modern Quebec painting.

It created an environment of encouragement and self-help where new ideas were sympathetically received and in which artists, collectors and intellectuals mixed freely," writes Mr. Varley.

The exhibition has already appeared at the Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton; Glenbow Museum, Calgary; Art Gallery of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario; and Musée d'art contemporain, Montreal.

Command show in Toronto

The first command performance in Canada will be held this fall in Toronto.

The performance will be under the patronage of Governor-General Edward Schreyer and will be presented by the Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists.

The proceeds of the gala benefit, which will take place in Massey Hall on October 31 will go to the Actors Fund. Ticket prices are \$250 and \$100 each and include entrance to a party after the performance.

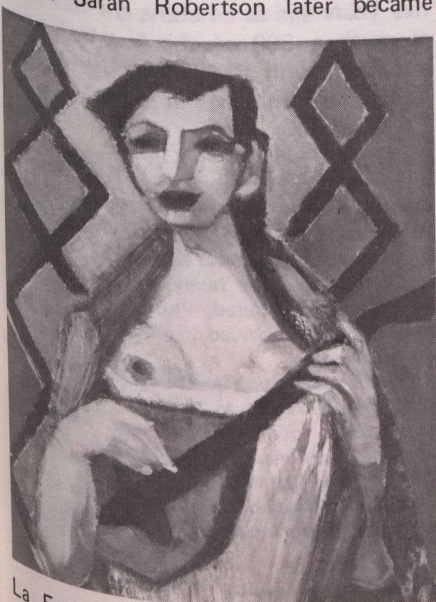
Betty Kennedy is acting as chairman of the performance, which will be produced by Elsa Franklin and directed by Brian Macdonald.

Arts briefs

A Buffalo, New York arts group is currently presenting works by Canadian artists. Media Study/Buffalo is presenting the works of Canadian filmmakers, video artists, an artist in electronic sculpture and a media group. The presentations, which will take place until October 8, include works by Norman White, General Idea, Bruce Elder, Al Razutis and Michael Snow. Media Study/Buffalo is a non-profit organization supported by the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Quebec author and playwright Michel Tremblay has been awarded the France-Quebec Jean Hamelin prize for his book, *Thérèse et Pierrette à l'école des saints anges*. The annual prize was created in 1965 by the Association of French-language Writers, the Quebec delegation in Paris and the Quebec cultural affairs department to promote works of Quebec writers in France.

The National Film Board sold 184 titles to television in 24 countries during the 1980-81 fiscal year. There were two major sales during the year: Qatar pur-



La Femme à la mandoline, Paul-Emile Borduas, oil on canvas, 1941.