

A LIVING ART

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The National Gallery of Canada, as a federal institution, does not have a regular education department comparable to those found in many Canadian museums and art galleries. Numerous galleries in this country are supported by provincial or municipal grants, in addition to private memberships, and thus are able to work closely with local education authorities. A close liaison between school and gallery often results in an enriched programme which supplements the standard school curriculum. The National Gallery's educational and extension programme, on the other hand, tends to be oriented towards the national rather than the local scene. Here the term 'education' must be used broadly and not merely to denote 'systematic instruction'. There are actually four phases of Gallery work which should be discussed and this excludes all the highly technical services which are available as well as systematic research projects which are carried out with and for leading educational institutions and galleries. These four categories are travelling exhibitions, touring lecturers, docent services and research on pilot projects, and the Gallery training programme.

STRUCTURE

At the present time the Department of Exhibition Extension Services co-ordinates all exhibition services as well as the internal docent services in Ottawa. The staff is composed of a director, two field officers, and an education officer assisted by four part-time docents.

The field officers, one for Western Canada and the other to cover Quebec and the Maritimes, will work closely with local galleries, ascertaining the types of exhibitions needed and will be ready to give expert advice on programming and the installation of exhibitions. They are available for general lectures and will attend the meetings of the various regional art circuits to evaluate criticism and suggestions and also to bring the views of the National Gallery to the direct attention of the circuits. These officers will also help scout for exhibition material and assist in various regional exhibitions. The education officer is in charge of the internal programme at the National Gallery and is responsible for developing an education programme which will be directly related to visitors to the National Gallery. The docents, who lecture in both English and French, are trained art educators and help to devise series of talks and lectures that make the permanent collection, as well as travelling displays in Ottawa, meaningful to the general public.

TRAVELLING EXHIBITIONS

For over twenty years the National Gallery has assembled travelling exhibitions for general circulation in Canada. The number of displays circulated annually has more or less kept pace with the demand or did until quite recently. Since 1945 there has been a prodigious growth in the field of art appreciation and dozens of small galleries and exhibiting centres have been organized from coast to coast. It is estimated that there are approximately eighty-five institutions in Canada where art exhibitions are shown on a more or less regular schedule. These include universities, libraries and art clubs in addition to galleries proper. In the Maritimes, Ontario and Western Canada, regional circulating agencies have evolved to help fill the demand for art exhibitions. All these circuits receive exhibitions from the National Gallery, which also supplies many galleries directly. During the 1958-59 season forty-five exhibitions, ranging from major European paintings to small displays of fine reproductions will be offered for general circulation -- the number for a given area generally determined by the demand. Fees, which range from \$10.00 to \$500.00 per exhibition, have been standardized throughout Canada and include all shipping, insurance and crating charges. Every exhibition is heavily underwritten and charges are kept as low as possible. At the present time a particular exhibition will be charged for at the same rate whether shown in Newfoundland or British Columbia.

LECTURERS

Regular lectures are given by internationally-known art historians, critics and artists at the National Gallery and many of these lecturers tour Canada under the auspices of the Gallery. It is impossible to stress the importance of these tours as many of the Canadian galleries are relatively isolated and need intellectual stimulation and impartial information on important art subjects by experts. The same speaker will address a large audience of many hundreds in Toronto and talk to an eager, vital group of seventy-five in Regina or Brandon. The provincial galleries are responsible only for the local hospitality of these speakers as fees and transportation costs are paid for by the National Gallery. Topics are diverse; scholarly outlines of significant developments in English Gothic art, an analysis of modern theories of aesthetics, an evaluation of certain aspects of contemporary art or perhaps a technical discussion on