

CREATING AN IMAGE OF CANADA

The DFAIT art collection

Prominently displayed in Canada's missions and official residences abroad are creative works by a broad spectrum of Canadian artists. They represent a spirit that transcends the words of policy making and negotiation.

Nearly 5,000 pieces make up the DFAIT fine art collection, managed by the Department's Valued Assets Management Program. Most of the collection was purchased over the years but it also includes works donated by former heads of mission and their families, corporations and private citizens—among them Maryon Pearson, wife of Lester B. Pearson.

The collection dates back to the 1930s, when some of the first donations were made, starting with works that had belonged to Peter Larkin, Canada's fifth High Commissioner to London (1922–1930). Significant acquisitions began in the 1940s but an important part of the collection dates from 1972, when over 200 works were purchased from the Canada Council.

The team of the Valued Assets Management Program consults with the DFAIT staff in a locality, as well as staff interior designers, to place works from the collection. It chooses art that is best suited to a particular architectural environment or that has a connection with the country where it will be displayed. When new facilities are built, the selection of artworks is an integral part of the design process.

In Warsaw, for example, the new Canadian Embassy has won awards (see p. 30). And making the building still more striking are 59 works of



Sunset, Lake Memphremagog (c. 1850s) (oil on canvas), by Cornelius Krieghoff—the jewel of the Warsaw Embassy Collection. A gift of the Honourable John D. Kearney.

art, including paintings, sculpture and photographs by 42 artists from Canada's different regions and cultures. The works share the theme of landscape—a focus of Canadian art since the time of the first European settlers in the 16th century. Included are sculpture and tapestries by Polish-Canadians Krystyna Sadowska (a gift of the Canadian Polish Congress) and Joanna Staniszki. Other works are by David Alexander, Terry Fenton and Greg Hardy (all of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan), Tom Hopkins

(Prince Edward Island), Bill Rose (Newfoundland), Stan Denniston (British Columbia), Marlene Creates (Newfoundland), and Michel Gaboury, the Groupe Agri-Culturel and Lorraine Gilbert (all of Quebec). The jewel is *Sunset, Lake Memphremagog*—a painting from the mid-19th century by Cornelius Krieghoff, one of the foremost recorders of traditional life in Quebec.

Krieghoff is among the earliest artists in the DFAIT collection. Also represented are figures active from the

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