

The Group of Seven saw their role as fundamental to a sense of identity. They believed that the art societies of the period, with their basically elitist European-oriented view of the painter's profession, were doing little or nothing to foster a true cultural awareness in Canada. "It is bad enough to have to live in this country without having pictures of it in your home", one Canadian collector is said to have pronounced in 1925. The Group was dedicated to a direct and unaffected mode of painting derived from an experience of the Canadian land that all Canadians could recognize. "The great purpose of Canadian art", said A. Y. Jackson, senior member of the Group, "is to make us feel at home in our own country". From their many sketching trips to the northlands, these artists brought views of the brilliant colours and the drama of the Canadian woodlands which were romantic and revolutionary statements of "the true north strong and free". Their styles varied, but the artists shared a common dependence upon the inspirational quality of the landscape. Their works became accepted, and purchased by enthusiasts in Canada (among them Robert McMichael) and in the U.K. The Tate Gallery in London bought one of A. Y. Jackson's paintings following the Group's showing at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924. The Group of Seven approach to nature in art established a unique style of landscape painting that has made an indelible impression on the Canadian consciousness and sense of national pride.

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