

The reputation enjoyed by these companies both at home and abroad attests to their professionalism and originality.

## Cinema

Although relatively new, Canadian cinema has spawned some extremely profound works in recent years whose quality, universality and relevance have attracted the attention of critics.

International acclaim has been received by film-maker David Cronenberg's *Naked Lunch*, Denys Arcand's *Decline of the American Empire* and *Jesus of Montreal*, producer Léa Pool's *Anne Trister* and Jean-Claude Lauzon's *Léolo* and *Night Zoo*.

The National Film Board, and Norman McLaren in particular, have made Canada a force to be reckoned with in the world of animation. Frederick Back's 1987 Oscar-winning *The Man Who Planted Trees* is a brilliant continuation of this tradition. Computer image animation is now the imaginative focus of Canada's artists in this field.

## Visual Arts

From the landscapes of Cornelius Krieghoff and the portraits of Théophile Hamel, which marked the beginning of Canada's artistic tradition, to the multidisciplinary works of Michael Snow, visual arts in Canada have undergone numerous metamorphoses, which in turn attest to those undergone by Canadian society at large.

"Let there be room for magic, room for hope, room for imaginativeness," proclaimed French-Canadian painter Paul-Émile Borduas in 1948, introducing his *Refus global*. This manifesto, signed by 14 artists, called for the abandonment of academicism and the advent of a new social order; Borduas and his group, the

Automatists, advocated non-objectivity in art. The paintings of Jean-Paul Lemieux and Alfred Pellan nonetheless feature some figurative allusions, especially when depicting nature.

During the 1960s another style, leaning toward geometrical abstraction, was introduced by Canadian artists Guido Molinari, Yves Gaucher and Claude Tousignant. In Toronto, Painters Eleven was formed by Jock MacDonald, Jack Bush, William Ronald and eight other abstract painters. Earlier in the century, the Group of Seven had adopted nature as its primary theme, endeavouring to express on canvas the vastness and majesty of Canada's landscapes.

More recently, artists such as Paterson Ewen, "General Idea" and Jeff Wall have drawn international attention to Canadian art. These artists use various modern techniques, such as electronics and video, to relay their message. Today, new trails are being blazed by Canadian artists such as Geneviève Cadieux, Melvin Charney, Stan Douglas and Jana Sterbak who are advocating a new pictorial language in their art.

## Conclusion

Artistic expression in all its facets has long played a leading role in Canadian cultural life. Cultural activities are supported extensively by the various levels of government and by private businesses.

The originality of Canadian art stems from a variety of sources: the geography of Canada, its climate and its ethnocultural diversity, as well as its history, written by men and women from all over the world who have joined together determined to build a society based on freedom and respect for individual values. 

