7. The Eastern Group and the Contemporary Arts Society
In response to an article lamenting the decline of the Group of Seven, there appeared a letter in The Canadian Forum. It read, in part, ‘This extreme interest in landscape for its sentimental geography is psychologically of the same essence as the popular predilection for anecdotal and souvenir painting...’ The emphasis has been misplaced, has been put on the objective rather than the subjective element of artistic creation. The real adventure takes place in the sensibility and imagination of the individual. 

This new voice on the Canadian art scene was that of John Lyman, who, within ten years, was to be largely instrumental in totally transforming the face of art in Canada.

John Lyman first studied art in Paris at the Académie Julian with Jean-Paul Laurens, at which time he came to know James W. Ison M'orrie, for whom he retained a life-long respect. Two years later, during the summer of 1909, he met the British artist M'athew Smith at Étaples and that autumn the two attended the Académie Matisse, a school run by Matisse's students in Paris. M'athew Smith remained at the school for two months and saw Matisse only three times; however, John Lyman appears to have stayed the entire winter. These contacts with M'orrie and Matisse were crucial to John Lyman's art. Their devotion to a pure art of colour, line, and form, an art devoid of all anecdotal details or ‘non-artistic’ concepts, remained with Lyman throughout his life.

His first exhibition in Canada at the Atelier associations gathered there grew a core of people familiar with and supportive of contemporary European art. Association with Charles Maillard, director of the École des Beaux-Arts. Maillard called for the removal from libraries of all literature hindering the true appreciation of art, and Lyman stressed the necessity of exposure to all new developments.

From 1936 to 1940 John Lyman wrote a monthly art column for The Montrealer commenting on developments in Canadian art, linking these with international trends, and offering some of the most intelligent writing on art in Canada at that time. He was especially instrumental in stressing the importance of annual exhibitions of contemporary French art held at the galleries of W. Scott & Sons. These exhibitions, organized in conjunction with A. Reid & Lefevre Limited in London and brought to Montreal by John Heaton, offered Montrealers some of the first works by Matisse, M. Modigliani, Léger, Braque, Derain, Dufy, and Picasso seen in that city. These exhibitions played an important role in developing an interest in international developments in painting and determining future trends in Montreal.

John Lyman's own painting during the thirties developed in a sure and logical manner. Having by the Lake (1933, cat. no. 88) is one of a series of landscapes painted at Saint-Jovite which he entitled 'Variations on the Lake.' Confronted by the wilder aspects of the Canadian terrain, he organizes its shapes so that it has almost the aspect of a...
classical landscape. There is no hint of the more romantic moods of the Group of Seven, but a serene vision of light-modulated forms.

It was above all the human figure, in all its multiplicity of moods and forms, that interested Lyman. The smoothly flowing brush-work and glowing colour asserts the plastic qualities of the forms in The Card Game (c. 1935, cat. no. 89). The sombre tones and vibrating colour of Jori Smith in Costume (1936, cat. no. 90) contrasts with the severe verticals and horizontals of the patrician Woman With White Collar (c. 1936, cat. no. 91). The same, broad, horizontal brushstroke is used in Lassitude (c. 1937, cat. no. 92) accentuating the essentially architectonic quality of Lyman's art which is saved from stiffness by the vibrating bronze of the skin.

John Lyman's painting is not easily appreciated. His colour has an almost puritan reticence, his subjects are serious and detached. At times an awkward stiffness does appear in his work; yet at its best, his is an art of sobriety, order, and measure. He builds a solid construction which is made to last.

John Lyman recognized that there were newer artists working in Montreal who were cut off from the 'Canadian scene' painting that dominated in Toronto and who found no support from public institutions. In contrast to the apparent xenophobia of the Group, he found among the newer artists an openness to European art. As he commented, 'In Quebec and generally in the east, possibly because we are accustomed to contacts, painters have never been greatly disturbed by the danger of influence. They have willingly recognized alien qualities and have hoped the example might be of use to them. They have tried to assimilate its fundamental lessons but they have not been inclined to imitation. What they have learned, they have made their own.'

Some of these artists were European-born and recent arrivals in Canada. Others had studied in Europe or the United States and were producing work unrelated to the Group tradition.

One of the first artists John Lyman championed was Goodridge Roberts. On visiting an exhibition of Roberts's watercolours at The Arts Club in Montreal, John Lyman wrote him, 'I knew by my elation that I had seen real stuff. I like your work immensely for its terse characterization in drawing and particularly for your rare ability to see colour, not merely use it illustratively or as a schematic ornament.' This was important praise for an artist who had been working almost completely unknown and in total poverty for the last two years.

Roberts, nephew of the poet Sir Charles G.D. Roberts and cousin of the poet Bliss Carman, was raised in New Brunswick, except for a period during the First World War when the family moved to England. He entered the École des Beaux-Arts in Montreal in 1923 and in the fall of 1926 went to New York to study at the Art Students League. Boardman Robinson, John Sloan, and Max Weber introduced him to Cézanne, Giotto, and Masaccio. In the galleries for the first time he saw the works of Matisse and Picasso.

Returning to Canada, Roberts worked for a year in Fredericton and in the summer of 1930 moved to Ottawa. He taught that winter at the Ottawa Art School and the following summer, with two friends, conducted a school at W akefield near Hull.

It was in the summer of 1932, working at Kingsmere, near Wakefield, that Roberts 'got beyond the tentative stage of experiment and suddenly found [himself] doing one watercolour after another with feverish speed.' The rapid assessment and simplification demanded by the five-minute sketches in John Sloan's classes now paid off. These watercolours were exhibited later that fall at The Arts Club in Montreal where they attracted the attention of Cleveland Morgan and John Lyman. He invited him to participate in the Atelier exhibition the following spring. The exhibition resulted in some of his first sales and brought his work to the attention of a small though interested and knowledgeable public.

These few years in Ottawa were difficult ones for Goodridge Roberts. Living on $1.50 a week left no money for oils, so he confined himself to watercolour. At times, while painting, he would be too weak to continue and would have to lie down in the fields to recoup his strength. However, as Jacques de Tonnancour has written: 'He lost five teeth, his strength for several months...and survived. He had supported his painting and had been able to give it life. That had been enough for him and had carried him through. He was a painter; that was his strength.'

During the summer of 1933 he worked just east of Ottawa. The watercolours he produced, such as Ottawa Valley (1933, cat. no. 93), are more intricate than those of the previous year. He builds up the space with layers of colour, purples, greens, browns, and blacks so that even the sky becomes a plastic entity. The watercolour suffuses the open landscape with a unity of mood through carefully coordinated tones.

In November 1933, through the assistance of Harry McCurry, Assistant Director of The National Gallery, and with a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, Roberts was appointed resident artist at Queen's University in Kingston and was able to marry. He disliked teaching and had little time to paint. Afer three years, the Carnegie grant was discontinued and the Robertses moved to Montreal.
At Saint Jovite, Quebec, 1939.
Left to right: John Lyman, Goodridge Roberts, Fritz Brandtner.
where Goodridge opened a school with Ernst Neumann, whom he had known since his days at the École des Beaux-Arts. Though pupils were few, the school survived two or three winters.

From 1932 to 1940 Goodridge Roberts had twelve solo exhibitions in Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto and participated in numerous group exhibitions, yet sales were almost non-existent. He had difficulty raising the money even for framing and shipping. In the fall of 1940 he returned to institutional teaching, this time at the Art Association of Montreal.

With the temporary security of money saved while at Queen’s, Roberts returned to oil painting with an ever-increasing surety. In Ontario Landscape in a Red Light (1936, cat. no. 94), painted on the outskirts of Ottawa in September 1936, he simplifies the shapes of the trees and receding fields and hills, concentrating on the relationship of the forms. As in the earlier watercolours, a single dominant tone pervades the whole picture, creating a feeling of rich melancholy.45

As in the work of Giotto, whom he so much admired, Roberts’s figures are solemn and monumental. In Marian (1937, cat. no. 95) the strongly sculptural quality of the figure is reinforced by the verticals and horizontals of the background playing against the Matisse-like pattern of the dress. The strong division between shadows and light on the face, perhaps derived from John Lyman’s work, asserts its plastic solidity.

The silhouette of the Standing Nude (1938, cat. no. 96) is less simplified, formed of more subtle curves. The strong contrasts of darks and lights, and of freely brushed forms with flat solid planes, creates dynamic tensions in this complex figure. Comparing this work with John Lyman’s Jori Smith in Costume (cat. no. 90) opposes intuition and reason. The latter is surely and intelligently constructed with utmost control. Roberts paints with freedom and passion. The shadows are sombre, almost mysterious and, at the same time, beautifully sensuous. A sense of contemplation has remarked, ‘In Lyman, one’s eye is directed by the drawing to follow the arabesque of line as it encloses mass or limits colour. In Roberts, one is tossed from mass to mass. The one is all grace and certainty; the other is all imminence and indefiniteness. Lyman leaves little to chance, Roberts everything.’46

The sombre mood of Roberts’s work take on a quite different character in the paintings of Philip Surrey. Surrey left Vancouver in October 1936 to study anatomical drawing at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore; however, unable to enter the class, he went to the Art Students League in New York where he studied three months with Frank Vincent Dumond and painting techniques with Alexander A bels. He moved to Montreal that spring, doing freelance commercial work for a year until he found employment with the Montreal Standard as photograph editor.49

Philip Surrey’s painting in Montreal changed considerably from his earlier Vancouver work. The Boardwalk (c. 1938, cat. no. 97) still retains much of the Varley lyricism with its misty blues and greens. The solidly painted shadows on the boardwalk, abruptly projecting from the foreground, similar to the mast of Varley’s Night Ferry, Vancouver (cat. no. 40), catches some of the menacing quality of his later work.

Surrey’s New York experience, the Depression, and his contacts in Montreal, pulled him away from lyrical painting to more socially involved themes. With Jean Paul Lemieux and Jori Smith he shared a concern for political developments both in Quebec and Spain. His recognition of a growing malaise and the imminence of conflict is reflected in his art. The gaunt and awkward figures in Sunday Afternoon (1939, cat. no. 98), painted from memory of a ville in Saint-Hilaire which he attended with the Palardy’s, are isolated, each caught in his or her own tragic situation. He paints with less fluidity and more concern for structure, accentuating the macabre reality of the individual sitters.

In The Red Portrait (1939, cat. no. 99), a Gothic arch of light emanates from the window framing the sitter. The rough texture of the paint, the isolation of the figure, and the hollow space of the empty room express the feeling of dislocation and tension felt by many on the eve of war. The simplified forms of the buildings and increased solidity of the forms reflect Surrey’s debt to Goodridge Roberts.

Fritz Brandtner, born and educated in Danzig, emigrated to Canada in 1928. In Winnipeg he first worked as a house-painter but soon found employment with the T. Eaton Co. and from there with Brigden’s of Winnipeg Limited working on the Eaton’s catalogues. With his savings and the sponsorship of LeMoine FitzGerald he was able to bring out his fiancée the following year.50

While Winnipeg offered steady employment, Brandtner found few outlets for his work. Being paid so little, he couldn’t afford the cost of framing and shipping his work east for exhibition.51 FitzGerald recommended he go to Montreal recognizing that Montreal would be more open to experimental art than Toronto which was still so strongly tied to the Group of Seven.52

The Brandtners arrived in Montreal in March 1934 and he soon found work in window display for the T. Eaton Co.54 FitzGerald had given him an introduction to Robert Ayre, art critic for the Montreal Gazette and,
through the A yres, Fritz met many of the newer M ontreal artists.55

The first work Fritz Brandtner exhibited in M ontreal was purchased by N orman Bethune;56 he made contact with the artist and from there developed a close friendship. Brandtner for several years had been doing drawings and watercolours, similar to M en of 1939 (1939, cat. no. 100), in a style often reminiscent of George Grosz. Drawings in vivid coloured inks of unemployed men on park benches, blind fiddlers, workers locked out of factories, families in gas masks, victims of chemical warfare - all these appealed to Bethune, both in their subject matter and their intensity of expression. He arranged an exhibition of Brandtner's work at M organ's department store in February 1936 under the sponsorship of T he Canadian League A gainst W ar and Fascism.57 The exhibition received a mixed reaction. Robert A yre in T he Gazette praised his inventive- ness and strength.58 H enri Girard in L e C anada called Brandtner, 'one of the most remarkable artists, the artists worthy of our respect, who have ever lived in M ontreal.'59 However, Reynald of L a Presse, in a long article entitled 'T he Nightmares of F. Brandtner,' raised a cry of horror: 'Brandtner rejects the canons of drawing, the rules of colouring, conventions and fixed laws. For him the world exists only in the image and as a resemblance of nightmares and hallucinations.'60 Fritz Brandtner had arrived.

Brandtner's work at this time shows a great variety both in subject matter and style with an intensity of colour and line that is very personal. Much of it is small in format, as he had little money for materials and drew continuously. However, it is often these small works that are most successful, for they retain the directness of expression and strength of line sometimes lost in larger works. He absorbed, reproduced and transformed themes and styles of many different artists, mostly from artists whose work he knew in Germany, such as George Grosz, Erich W aske, H einrich N aven, or W ilhelm M orgener.61 The gas-masked figures from D iego Rivera's D etroit Institute murals re-appear in his drawings.

H is familiarity with modern European art as well as the speed of execution and inventiveness, which he also incorporated into his commercial art, gave his work a great freedom and strength. In his representational works, such as T he Riders (1939, cat. no. 101), as well as in A bstraction (1936, cat. no. 102), totally devoid of all figura- tive references, he organizes flat planes, geometric patterns, and Expressionist line into a dynamically integrated whole.

T his same daring and freedom he passed on to the children in his classes. Late in the summer of 1936 N orman Bethune invited Fritz Brandtner to set up children's classes in his apartment on Beaver H all Square.62 Bethune paid for the materials and the Children's A rt Centre was opened. H owever, Bethune soon left for Spain;63 the Brandtners moved into the apartment, and Fritz supported the Centre himself. H e conducted classes for children from the poorer areas of the city and in the hospitals,64 offering them their first opportunity to work with freedom, breaking away from mechanical reproduction.

M arian Scott taught with Fritz Brandtner at the Children's A rt Centre for two years.65 She had studied at the École des Beaux-A rts in M ontreal for one year and then for a term at the Slade School of A rt in London. R eturning to Canada in 1928 she married Frank Scott. T he birth of a son the following year prevented her from devoting herself to her art.66 It was only after the mid-thirties that she had time to paint.

M arian Scott's earliest works consisted of geometrically organized landscapes. T hese were followed by formal studies of plants and buds in various stages of growth, inspired by the work of G eorgia O'K eeffe. T hrough the exhibitions at W . Scott & S ons and periodicals she developed an interest in the linear stylization of M odigliani's figures and the ambiguous, spatial relationships of J uan Gris' cubist works.

A t the same time, M arian Scott, like so many other artists in the thirties, felt a need somehow to relate her work to the social issues of the day, to break down the barrier between contemporary art and the people and be integrated with the society at large.67 She turned away from landscape and organic subjects to urban scenes, ships in harbour, people on escalators, and workers in the streets. In Eescalator (1937, cat. no. 103) the environment is mechanized, the people shifted on conveyor belts. T he concern for the movement of figures in space and differing spatial relationships is also seen in J enants (c. 1940, cat. no. 104) where the figures retain a greater individuality, even in their anonymity. Just as in the work of O skar Schlemmer, the human figure becomes a symbol of a humanist philosophy within a rational environment.

If M arian Scott's reaction to her urban environment was based on a rationalist faith, Louis M ulhstock's derived from a more immediate sensuous and romantic iden- tification. B orn in the province of Galicia in Poland, Louis M ulhstock came to Canada with his family in 1911 at the age of seven. H e first took drawing lessons in evening courses at the M onument N ational in M ontreal under Eedm ond D yonnet and later at the École des Beaux-A rts, all this time working for his family's fruit importing firm, saving money to enable him to study in P aris. H e spent three years in France, from 1928 to 1931, studying with Louis François Biloul in P aris, with summers in B brittany
Y.W.H.A. are always present but also an enduring faith in life. and pride in the face of destruction. Death and suffering transforms their suffering into symbols of human dignity. Interpreted with compassion and love, Louis Muhlstock of hospitals drawing patients with incurable diseases.69 For a period around 1932 he frequented the public wards of streets, men sleeping in the parks or ill or elderly people. Having little money for materials, he drew during his confinement and monumentality of the figures. The forceful plastic and Expressionist qualities of Muhlstock's work contrasts with the gentle romanticism of Eric Goldberg's paintings. Born in Berlin, Goldberg studied first with Lovis Corinth and later at the Académie Julian in Paris from 1906 to 1910, at the same time as John Lyman, A.Y. Jackson, and Randolph Hewton.70 He returned to Berlin and after the war travelled and painted in France, Spain, and Palestine. In 1928 he married the Montreal artist Regina Seiden and for the next eight years alternated between Montreal and Europe.

Eric Goldberg's painting has a very lyrical quality, reminiscent of Jules Pascin. In Tossa del Mar (c. 1934, cat. no. 108) all is suggestion rather than statement. Reducing the elements to their basic shapes, he creates a colour poem of misty forms and spacious landscapes.

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Despite the high quality of their work, these artists had little chance to exhibit. Their paintings were consistently rejected by the juries for Montreal exhibitions, the Royal Canadian Academy, and the Spring Exhibition at the Art Association, and, unlike the Toronto community, there was little cooperative effort among Montreal artists.

John Lyman first brought the newer artists together in an exhibition at The Arts Club in February 1937.79 That autumn Fritz Brandtner arranged another Salon des Indépendants at the annual Produced in Canada Exhibition.80 In the spring of 1938, the Eastern Group of Painters was formed, the first exhibition being held at the galleries of W. Scott & Sons in November.81 The members of the new group included John Lyman, Alexandre Bercovitch, Eric Goldberg, Goodridge Roberts, Jack Humphrey,82 and Jori Smith. A s John Lyman had stated in his column in The Montrealer, what characterized the ‘eastern’ artists was their openness to European influence. At the same time there is a pervasive mood in the work of all these artists, be it the colour-saturated landscapes of Roberts and Goldberg or the moody figure studies and portraits by Lyman, Bercovitch, Humphrey, Smith, and Roberts. A similar tone pervades the work of Philip Surrey who replaced Jack Humphrey as the sixth member of the group the following year.83 John Lyman was not alone in supporting more inter-
national developments in Canada. Maurice Gagnon, Ottawa-born and graduate of the University of Paris and the École du Louvre, returned to teach in Montreal in 1935. In La Revue Moderne and in lectures he outlined and publicized the development of contemporary French art. He began teaching art history at the École du Meuble in 1937, joining Marcel Parizeau, also Paris-trained and professor of architecture, and Paul-Émile Borduas, the newly appointed instructor of drawing and decoration.

Born in Saint-Hilaire near Montreal, Paul-Émile Borduas first discovered the world of art through the decorations of Oziès Leduc in the village church. In 1920, at the age of fifteen, he apprenticed himself to Oziès Leduc and for the next seven years assisted him in his work, at the same time attending the École des Beaux-Arts in Ottawa. Graduating in 1927, he taught for a year and, in November 1928, with financial assistance from M. Oziès Leduc, returned to Montreal. Teaching long hours left little time for his own work.

In Paris he studied five months at the École des Arts Sacrés, the school directed by Maurice Denis and Georges Desvallières, and, in April 1929, left Paris to travel in Brittany, Alsace, and Lorraine. After a winter assisting in various church decorations, including the installations of the windows by the Dominican Marie-Aîn Cotenturier at Chaillot, he returned to Montreal in June 1930.

For two years of fruitless attempts to obtain commissions for church decorations, he returned to teaching at the Collège André Grasset and for the Catholic School Commission. In 1937 he sought a teaching position at the École des Beaux-Arts in Quebec. However, Jean Paul Lemieux obtained the post and Borduas replaced him at the École du Meuble.

Teaching long hours left little time for his own work. Of his painting in the thirties, Borduas wrote, 'Studio work is soul-destroying. Out of six years of determined work only ten canvases are worth a thing. And I recognize that those ten are happy accidents impossible to repeat.' His early work shows a strong influence of Maurice Denis, very decorative with a gentle romanticism. However by 1937 there is greater concern for structure and for the plastic qualities of paint. In the Portrait of Maurice Gagnon (1937, cat. no. 109), the structure of the vest and broad lapels, and the richness of brown becoming sensuous texture in the background, show Borduas slowly progressing to a more personal and studied expression.

Teaching children guided Borduas to the freedom of creative painting. At the same time, with John Lyman, Marcel Parizeau, and Maurice Gagnon he studied the history of art, seeking the principles and forms that unite the art of the past to the present. In his own work to 1941 there occurs a form of rattrapage ('catching up') from Maurice Denis to Cézanne to Picasso and Braque and finally to Surrealism. However, it is only with the arrival of Pellan in 1940 that Borduas was to accelerate his development leading to the gouaches of 1941–1942.

With the increasing artistic activity in Montreal and the large number of artists excluded from the Eastern Group, it was apparent that a larger society was needed to incorporate progressive artists of divergent trends and to further the cause of modern art.

John Lyman first mentioned the idea for such an organization in an article published in the fall of 1938 in which he lamented the lack of financial and moral support given the finest contemporary artists. In the unpublished closing line, he wrote, 'We badly need active organizations in support of creative art such as the Contemporary Arts Society in England and numerous ones in the United States.'

The British Contemporary Arts Society had been formed in 1910 to bring to light young and rising talent...; to purchase, for the benefit of the public, works by artists of acknowledged power who are not properly represented in the public galleries; and by its loan and presentations to spread throughout the country the knowledge and appreciation of modern art. John Lyman recognized that a similar organization in Montreal could further the cause of contemporary art and financially assist the artists.

In January 1939 the Contemporary Arts Society was formed and by May had twenty-six artist members. John Lyman was president, Paul-Émile Borduas, vice-president, Fritz Brandtner, secretary, and Philip Surrey, treasurer. All the artist members were from Montreal except for Jack Humprey, though Fritz Brandtner did invite André Biéler, Paraskeva Clark, and Lemoine FitzGerald to join. All refused.

The Contemporary Arts Society was not solely an artists' organization. It also sought to foster the development of a living, progressive art alive to contemporary life. It took exactly the position of an anti-academy, putting emphasis on the living quality of art – on imagination, sensitivity, intuition, and spontaneity as opposed to conventional proficiency, regarding membership in an academy as merely a consolation for having died during one's own lifetime. An associate membership was created for non-artists to give support to contemporary trends in art and to further the artistic interests of its members. To encourage sales of works, a discount was available to members and a picture-loan system organized.

To fulfill its educational rôle, the first exhibition ar-
ranged by the Contemporary Arts Society was entitled Art of Our Day and consisted of non-Canadian modern works borrowed from Montreal collectors. The works in the exhibition reflected Lyman's preferences in contemporary art – Derain, Dufy, Frances Hodgkins, Modigliani, and Matthew Smith – as well as the limitations of local collections. While not the first adequate representation in Canada of modern work by leading foreign artists, it did signal the beginnings of a united effort for contemporary art and the invasion of the conservative halls of the Art Association.

The following autumn an exhibition of paintings by artist-members of the Contemporary Arts Society was held at the Stevens Art Gallery, and in November 1940 a third exhibition of works by members of the Canadian Group of Painters and Contemporary Arts Society. However, the battle was not to be fought without some token opposition. Even before the opening of Art of Our Day Clarence Gagnon lashed out in a talk entitled 'The Grand Bluff – Modernistic Art' given to the conservative Pen and Pencil Club, drawing an assertive reply from John Lyman full of references to heavy-weight supporters of contemporary art and a more reasoned response from Marcel Parizeau. Most of the journalistic response, however, was extremely favourable.

A part from Robert Ayre, most of the coverage and interest in the development of the Contemporary Arts Society was coming from French-language writers, who soon commented on the lack of French-Canadian artists in the group. Of all the members only four were French-speaking: Paul-Émile Borduas, Stanley Cosgrove, Louise Gadbois, and Jean Palardy. However, political, literary, and artistic developments were eventually to transform the Contemporary Arts Society into one of the leading forces in French-Canadian cultural life.

Jean-Charles Harvey founded the newspaper Le Jour in 1937 with a nationalist ideology designed to bring the culture of Quebec out of its provincialism into the mainstream of world developments. He denounced the soul-destroying education of the École des Beaux-Arts and the isolationism of its director, Charles Maillard, calling upon the artists to break away from regionalist clichés to discover 'a Paris enriched by centuries of refinement.' To the critics of internationalism, Jean Paul Lemieux wrote, 'Pellan is reproached for being an internationalist, for not having remained Canadian. Why should he be content with folklore images when he could go further? Why confine art within petty limits? Is not art universal?'

To find the universal through subjective expression, to link the intellectual life of Quebec to the source of twentieth-century ideas in France, not in colonial servitude but in an alliance of spirit, this was the direction of the forties. With the arrival of Père Marie-Alain Couturier in March 1940 and Alfred Pellan in May the stage was set.

In contrast to the 'lack of audacity, of personality, and genuine sensitivity' of the Anciens de l'École des Beaux-Arts, was Alfred Pellan, a rising Quebec star in France. In the two years before his return from France, large Pellan exhibitions were periodically predicted. Here was not only a local boy who made good, but a Quebecker who had left behind regionalist clichés to discover 'a Paris enriched by centuries of refinement.' To the critics of internationalism, Jean Paul Lemieux wrote, 'Pellan is reproached for being an internationalist, for not having remained Canadian. Why should he be content with folklore images when he could go further? Why confine art within petty limits? Is not art universal?'

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NOTES TO CHAPTER 7


8. Montreal, Art Association of Montreal, 7 March 1913, [R.S. Hewson and A. Y. Jackson].


10. They had also bitterly denounced John Lyman's works included in the Annual Spring Exhibition the previous month. For excerpts from the critical reaction, see Edward P. Lawson, op. cit.; also Paul Dumas, 'Lyman,' Le Quat'ier Latin, vol. XXVI, no. 11 (17 December 1943), p. III.


12. Montreal, the Johnson Art Galleries Ltd., 1–15 October 1927, Exhibition of Recent Paintings and Drawings by John Lyman.


15. Montreal, W. Scott & Sons, [February 1931], Exhibition of Paintings by John Lyman.


17. Among others attending these weekly gatherings were Frank and Mariant Scott, Jeanette and A. ndré Bélèr, H. azen Sise, Elizabeth Frost, Ronald M. C. All, Cleveland Morgan, John and Florence Byrd, Jacques Bélèr, and John Humphrey.

18. School of Art Is Formed by Group, Montreal Gazette (17 November 1943).


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21. School of Art Is Formed by Group, Montreal Gazette (17 November 1943).


27. This melancholia appears in Roberts's poetry also. 'Beneath my feet the spring of life is gushing. A bone may keep the head of death is winging.' (Goodridge Roberts, op. cit., p. 189.)


29. Interview with Janet L. Budd, Montreal, 14 September 1973.


32. Interview with Mrs. M. Lea Brandt, Montreal, 12 September 1973.


53. Fritz Brandtner, M ontreal, to L.L. FitzGerald, Winnipeg, 4 April 1934; private property.

54. Interview with Mrs Mieze Brandtner, Montreal, 12 September 1973.

55. Fritz Brandtner, M ontreal, to L.L. FitzGerald, Winnipeg, 4 April 1934; private property.

56. Interview with Mrs Mieze Brandtner, Montreal, 12 September 1973. The painting was Sunflower and was exhibited at the A rt Association of Montreal, 19 April – 13 May 1934, 51st Spring Exhibition, no. 38. It is presently in the possession of M r Edward Schneer, M ontreal.


60. Reynald [E.R. Bertrand], ‘Les cauchemars de F. Brandtner,’ La Presse (22 February 1936).

61. Fritz Brandtner brought with him to Canada a series of monograph booklets on modern German and French artists through which he continually refamiliarized himself with their work. There was no contemporary German art being exhibited in Canada at this time.


63. [M ontreal, Sun Life Building, N ational Produced in Canada Exhibit, N ovember 1937], A rt Exhibit. The catalogue lists the following artists: A lexandre Bercovitch, Sam Borenstein, Fritz Brandtner, M arian Scott, A lan H arrison, Prudence Heward, Jack H umphey, J ohn Lyman, C arl M angold, Louis M uhstrock, Goodridge Roberts, Sarah Robertson, J oin Smith, and Philippe Sillery.


65. Jack H umphey had contacted the M ontreal artists during his stay in 1933. It is also possible he visited M ontreal in 1937. (Interview with J oin Smith, M ontreal, 16 January 1974.)

66. John Lyman, M ontreal, to H. O. M cCurry, Ottawa, 29 November 1939; in The N ational Gallery of Canada. J ack H umphey, who felt he was at a material disadvantage, compared with the other members, on account of living so far away, has, on our advice, dropped out, and has been replaced by Philippe Sillery.


70. Ibid., p. 261, n. 45.


73. Paul-Émile Borduas, op. cit., p. 258.


75. Ibid., pp. 261 – 263.

76. Ibid., p. 260.

77. In 1937, the year the portrait was painted, Maurice Gagnon published the first article on Borduas. See Maurice Gagnon, Paul-Emile Borduas / Peintre montrealais / La Revue Moderne, vol. XVIII, no. 11 (September 1937), pp. 10 – 11.


80. Maurice Gagnon published Peinture Moderne (M ontreal: Éditeurs Bernard V aliquette) in 1940, in which he traced the development of art, predominantly French, from the Renaissance to the present day with its manifestations in the contemporary art of Quebec.

81. It is probably not coincidental that Maurice Gagnon published Pablo Picasso’s F emme à la mandoline in Peinture Moderne in 1940 (fig. 29), and that in 1941 Borduas was to paint a similar work with the same title (oil on canvas; 32 x 26 in., 81.3 x 66.1 cm, M usee d’art contemporain, M ontreal, repr. in colour in Guy Robert, op. cit., p. 250). George Braque’s N ature morte reproduced in Peinture Moderne (fig. 30) bears many similarities to Borduas’ still lifes of 1941, not-
ably Nature morte aux ananas et poires (oil on canvas; 19-5/8 x 23-5/8 in., 49.8 x 59.9 cm, The National Gallery of Canada)


100. John Lyman, 'A rt,' The Montrealer (1 October 1938).

101. John Lyman, 'Five T ons,' Typescript for 'A rt' in The Montrealer (1 October 1938); in the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, Montreal. In a letter to H.O. McCurry, Ottawa, 8 October 1938; in The National Gallery of Canada, John Lyman quoted the omitted line as, 'We in Canada badly need something in the nature of a Contemporary Arts [sic] Society which would give encouragement to artists who have not the material advantages given by regimentation.'

102. An exhibition of works loaned by the Contemporary Art Society was exhibited at the Art Association of Montreal, 15 – 30 April 1938. See A rt Association of Montreal, Annual Report 1938, p. 26.


105. The English name of the organization was originally Contemporary Arts Society, though by 1946 the Society's letterhead read 'Contemporary Art Society.' In French the singular Société d'art contemporain, or abbreviation C.A.S., was used.


108. Fritz Brandtner, M ontréal, to André Bélier, Kingston, 6 March 1939; property of A ndré Bélier. As one of the conditions of membership was that artists not participate in the activities of any academy, A ndré Bélier refused membership in the C.A.S., feeling it to be useless to revive the conflict with the Royal Canadian Academy. See A ndré Bélier, Kingston, to Fritz Brandtner, M ontréal, 21 April 1939; copy property of A ndré Bélier. M y thanks to Frances Smith for bringing these letters to my attention.


110. Fritz Brandtner, M ontréal, to L.L. FitzGerald, Saint James (Manitoba), 8 March 1939; private property.


112. Contemporary Arts Society Constitution, [1939], paragraph 2; private property.

113. [Foreword], Contemporary Arts Society / Exhibition of Paintings by M embers (exhibition catalogue) [M ontréal: Frank Stevens Gallery, December 1939].

114. M ontréal, A rt A ssociation of M ontréal, 13 – 28 M ay 1939, Loan E xhibition / A rt of O ur Day. T he exhibition's title was probably chosen with one eye on the opening exhibition at the new (1939) M useum of M odern A rt in N ew Y ork, A rt in O ur T ime.

115. The collectors included friends of John Lyman who had purchased works from the exhibitions at W. Scott & Sons, Jewish refugees from Europe, Europeans working in Montreal, and artist members of the Contemporary Arts Society.

116. T his exhibition was shown with deletions and additions from Toronto and Buffalo collections at The A rt GALLERY of T oronto the following autumn. See T oronto, T he A rt GALLERY of T oronto, N ovember – December 1939, 20th C entury E uropean P aintings.

117. [Foreword], Contemporary Arts Society Exhibition of Paintings By M embers (exhibition catalogue) [M ontreal: Frank Stevens Gallery, December 1939]. Toronto had had more consistent exposure to contemporary art including the Société A nonyme exhibition in 1927 and a large surrealist exhibition at the Canadian National Exhibition in 1938 (T oronto: C anadian N ational Exhibition, 26 A ugust – 10 September 1938, S urealist A rt).

118. Sam Borenstein, Charles Fainmel, Eldon Grier, Jack Humphrey, Jean Palardy, M arguerite Paquette, A nne Savage, Regina Seiden, and Campbell T inning were not included in this exhibition. Three new members were added: Mabel Lockerby, Ethel Seath, and Piercy Younger.


122. Especially from 1940 these included Marcel Parizeau and Henri Girard in L e C anada; Charles Doyon, É milie-Charles Hamel, and Jean-Charles Harvey in L e Jour; and Jacques de Tonnancour in L e Quartier Latin.


129. Jean Paul Lemieux, ibid.

130. Idem.


*88.  
JOHN LYMAN  
Haying by the Lake  1933

89.  
JOHN LYMAN  
The Card Game  c. 1935
90.

JOHN LYMAN

Jori Smith in Costume 1936
91. 
JOHN LYMAN
Woman with White Collar  c. 1936

*92. 
JOHN LYMAN
Lassitude  c. 1937
93. GOODRIDGE ROBERTS
Ottawa Valley 1933

94. GOODRIDGE ROBERTS
Ontario Landscape in a Red Light 1936
*95. GOODRIDGE ROBERTS
Marian 1937

96. GOODRIDGE ROBERTS
Standing Nude 1938
99. PHILIP SURREY
The Red Portrait  1939

100. FRITZ BRANDTNER
Men of 1939  1939
*101.  
FRITZ BRANDTNER  
The Riders  1939

*102.  
FRITZ BRANDTNER  
Abstraction  1936
103. MARIAN SCOTT
Escalator 1937

104. MARIAN SCOTT
Tenants c. 1940
*105.
LOUIS MULSTOCK
Sainte-Famille Street 1939
106. Louis Muhlstock
Open Door of Third House, Groubert Lane, Montreal  c. 1939

107. Alexandre Bercovitch
The Artist's Family  1934
108. 
ERIC GOLDBERG  
Tossa del Mar  c. 1934

109. 
PAUL-ÉMILE BORDUAS  
Portrait of Maurice Gagnon  1937
49. DAVID MILNE, Palgrave (I) (1931)