

PAINTING IN MONTREAL, 1915-1930

The Painters of the Montée Saint-Michel and their contemporaries

GALERIE DE L'UQAM – MUSÉE DU QUÉBEC

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Note to the Reader

*This publication brings together the texts published in the catalogue
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*Due to publication costs,
we are compelled to publish the English version of these texts without illustrations.
To view the reproductions of works included in the show
or otherwise relevant to the texts,
readers are asked to refer to the French edition.*

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Laurier Lacroix
Curator

PAINTING IN MONTREAL BETWEEN 1915 AND 1930

Laurier Lacroix

Our knowledge of the art produced in Montreal and Quebec during the 1920s is practically nonexistent, and our perceptions of it are based on commonplaces. With respect to the 1930s, studies have focused on the existence of a certain number of ideologies connected with regionalism and internationalism, with catching up with modernity, determining the contributions of Jewish artists, and with the constitution of a more developed critical discourse.¹ On the other hand, the 1920s in Canada were dominated by the presence of the Group of Seven. The development of the visual arts field appears to have derived from this one reality, and seems to have paid scant attention to Quebec art. The ubiquity of this Toronto-based group has caused us to forget about the existence of artists who were not in line with this movement which defined the artistic landscape for close to ten years.

In our history books, the end of the 19th century coincides with the beginning of World War I. Thus, the 20th century arrived late. It would be characterized by the dominance of European academicism, and by the sudden apparition of a few "independent" luminaries like James Wilson Morrice (1865-1924), M.-A. Suzor-Côté (1869-1937), Ozias Leduc (1864-1955) and Adrien Hébert (1890-1967), all of whom were associated with the advent of modernity. This reading sacrifices the generation of 1890, that is, those painters who arrived on the scene during World War I and who were active in painting throughout the 1920s. Above and beyond a nostalgic desire to exhume this stratum of unrecognized artists, a number of reasons prompt us to show their works and to set down a few markers that will help us to reconstitute the environment that made such works possible.

A significant number of events and ideas justify revising the periodization of the early 20th century, and prompt us to more precisely divide the period before the 1940s, a decade that is traditionally perceived as having singlehandedly brought modernity to Quebec. There were new phenomena that, in conjunction with various activities, gave the years prior to 1940 particular features which are worthy of study in themselves. Such events included the 1913 Spring Exhibition at the

Art Association of Montreal (AAM), in which works described as Postimpressionist were shown;² the opening of the Bibliothèque Saint-Sulpice in the autumn of 1915,³ and of its exhibition space in March of the following year; the publication, in 1918, of the magazine *Le Nigog*, by a group of young intellectuals recently back from France;⁴ the provincial government's acquisition, in 1920, of the nucleus of a national art collection.⁵ The creation and expansion of the Montreal and Quebec City Écoles des beaux-arts in 1922 and 1923 punctuated these years of development, which were brought to a temporary halt by the Depression. On one level, Suzor-Côté's departure from the arts scene and the death of Edmond-J. Massicotte⁶ signalled the decline of an art based on rural values and the advent of urban iconography exemplifying a more modern handling. At another level, a marked rise in the number of works produced by women and by Francophone artists,⁷ the increasing recognition of the socio-professional status of painters, the proliferation of commercial galleries, the expansion of the network of periodicals dealing with visual arts issues, the relative "democratization" of the visual arts in the illustrated press—all these factors enable us to see how significant changes took place over time, and not by spontaneous generation; they also show that the impact which the fine arts had in Quebec during the 1930s and 1940s rests on foundations developed over a much longer period.

A more in-depth analysis of these factors remains to be undertaken. Our initial task here will be to recover some of the hidden richness that gradually came to be silenced in the production of painters active between 1915 and 1930, that is, painters who were caught between the Great War and the Great Depression, in a period when divergent nationalist and economical discourses seemed to dominate ideological thinking. This exhibition, which focuses on work produced by Francophone artists who came together under the name of the "Peintres de la Montée Saint-Michel", will serve as a framework for recalling some of the conditions of painting at that time. More specifically, it will be concerned mainly with the conditions governing the train-

ing of artists and the establishment of the art market; alongside this concern, however, will emerge a picture of the art discourse that developed in the various periodicals.⁸

Catholicism still constituted one of the dominant ideological and sociocultural forces. It was marked by intellectualism,⁹ but especially by an ideology of preservation that emphasized the value of the French language and tradition within a rural culture.¹⁰ Catholicism committed itself to protecting and developing these values and practices against modernism, individualism, Americanism and industrial technology. In this endeavour, France was perceived as a model. Although it was, obviously, the home of various avant-gardes, these were deemed to be on the way out, and were seen to carry very little weight historically. So, it was particularly its role as the centre and repository of the classical tradition that made France a worthwhile model. "Let us not forget," harangued Emmanuel Fougerat, "that the art of France has a mission to accomplish among our people. Since we keep turning to French thought for nourishment for our intellectual life, we certainly cannot ignore French art; for this is one of its finest manifestations, and has done so much to make our former mother country one of the most civilized countries in the modern world."¹¹

The tendencies toward an art inspired by Art Nouveau¹² and Symbolism were opposed on behalf of an art based on rural values.¹³ This was the program outlined by Marius Barbeau: "The history of Canadian art will turn over a new leaf the day that our artists, having become humble and sincere, send their stubborn Pegasus packing and walk with heads held high amid the luminous and fragrant paths of their native land."¹⁴

This conservative movement had to try to impose itself, for it was thwarted daily by mass culture and by economic, demographic and cultural forces that brought changes to Quebec. "National" feeling, regionalism and the land as a theme in literature and art were denounced and opposed by active elements of the population, which refused to define themselves in such terms.¹⁵ Berthelot Brunet wrote: "We detest clichés and banality, and nothing horrifies more than confining ourselves to a single genre [...] Let the "regionalists" refrain, for just a few years, from proclaiming their theories to be the only true ones, or at least the truest ones, and they will soon see many "exotics" returning to the fold to paint our Canada. [...] Young people are fed up with this parade-ground patriotism and political literature."¹⁶

The aesthetic that prevailed during the 1920s was dominated by colour.¹⁷ The subjective treatment of colour proposed a personal reading of the subject and would become a first step toward the deconstruction of representation. Here we are not talking about the pure colours of Fauvism, but about the light and luminous

colours that Impressionism and Postimpressionism exploited by contrasting complementary colours. While drawing would assume special importance during this period, it was subsumed under the work being done on colour. In a general manner, forms were defined via the mass of their respective contours, not by means of line. The palette knife enjoyed widespread use and, even when artists took up the brush, they applied the paint in large swaths that structured forms through the juxtaposition of coloured planes.

Landscape remained the dominant genre, although the bourgeoisie still commissioned many portraits¹⁸ and painters continued making figurative work. The Montreal painters espoused a vision that focused on the architecture of the old city and on those areas of Montreal that still possessed a rural character. The preferred type of landscape was one that offered an idyllic vision of the countryside with its effects of atmosphere and light.¹⁹ Activities related to urban and modern life began to appear as subjects of art works. In fact, the period that interests us here would see the beginnings of what one could call a local pictorial tradition, one marked by the influence of several artists who succeeded in imposing a manner, style and subject matter that would be transmitted to the youngest artists. The models would no longer be only European and academic, but a landscape tradition influenced by Maurice Cullen (cat. 32-33), Suzor-Côté (cat. 107-108) and Albert H. Robinson (cat. 102) would develop.

The Training of Artists

Between 1915 and 1930, the traditional formula of artist and apprentice was modified and disappeared once and for all, to be replaced by academic training, information sharing and criticism among peers. Apprenticeship with a master, which had been the dominant model up to 1880, was to be transformed by the establishment of the art schools (the Art Association of Montreal, the Council of Arts and Manufactures, the École des beaux-arts de Montréal) and the proliferation of free public and private courses.

Occasionally, one finds situations in which young painters sought advice from seasoned artists, but the collective studios gave rise to a new tendency conducive to the formation of small discussion groups that were not meant to replace basic training but to provide opportunities for continuing education. While young artists like Rodolphe Duguay²⁰ and Narcisse Poirier sought advice from Suzor-Côté and honed their craft by executing copies or other types of work for the master (fig. 7), collective studios such as L'Arche (fig. 8) and the group of young artists that met in a building on Beaver Hall Hill (cat. 31, 49, 50-52, 77, 80, 106) provided vibrant venues for artistic creation and in-

formal spaces for professional development.²¹ Alfred Laliberté's establishment of a series of apartment studios on Sainte-Famille Street after 1917 was intended to promote such contacts among artists, while providing the sculptor with a source of revenue. The creation of voluntary associations founded on personal and aesthetic affinities is one of the characteristics of this period, which also witnessed the proliferation of clubs and groups frequented by artists working in the same medium.

The School of the Art Association of Montreal (or AAM, which later became the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts) had been established in 1882. This was a private school that offered instruction in English. William Brymner (cat. 27) served as its headmaster, sharing, with a few invited colleagues, the three courses that were offered: elementary studio, drawing from live models and from antique statuary, and painting (fig. 9). This was, then, a professional drawing and painting school that reproduced, on a reduced scale, the formula developed in the European *beaux-arts* institutions. Serious students generally remained there from three to four years. According to the students, the environment in these studio courses was composed of a sense of discipline and rigour combined with the sense of innovation that characterized Brymner's art (cat. 81). After they had completed their courses, students from the Council of Arts and Manufactures came to the AAM to finish their training in an atmosphere more conducive to artistic creation.

To supplement its usual program, the AAM sometimes offered summer courses in painting in the countryside. The Eastern Townships (Sweetsburg) and the regions of Berthier (cat. 38-39) and Saint-Eustache²² (cat. 28, 29) were among the most popular places. This practice would continue throughout the two decades leading up to the 1930s. In the summer of 1917, the same formula would be repeated by Ivan Jobin, who worked in conjunction with the Université Laval in Montreal.²³ Maurice Cullen did likewise in North Hatley in June 1923,²⁴ and Marguerite Lemieux gave outdoor classes at Pointe-Claire in 1929 (*Le Devoir*, August 2). Thus, the opportunity to work directly from nature was provided by means of organized activities, and numerous young artists like Marc-Aurèle Fortin (cat. 40-41) and Ernest Aubin (i.e. 12, 20, 21) would continue this practice to the point where it became the main subject of their art.

The Council of Arts and Manufactures (CAM), the successor to the Mechanics' Institute, was incorporated in 1872. As a Francophone institution that offered its courses free of charge, the Council of Arts and Manufactures served as an alternative to the Art Association of Montreal throughout the 1880s. Among its students were Alfred Laliberté, Suzor-Côté, Joseph Saint-Charles, Charles Gill and Joseph-Charles Franchère. Upon their

return from Europe, they lent this school the prestige of their reputations.²⁵ In 1893, the art courses section moved into the Monument national at 296 Saint Lawrence Boulevard, where it would reach the full extent of its influence. The goal of CAM courses was not, however, to train artists: "The main purpose of the school is to teach drawing and its many useful applications to industry. [...] the intention is not to produce expert draughtsmen, but to provide workers with the opportunity to obtain an in-depth knowledge of drawing, which is essential to the success of all branches [of industry]." However the classes themselves reproduced the model of traditional academic training.

Among the courses offered at the school was freehand drawing. The elementary level, given on Monday and Wednesday evenings, was intended for beginners. It was a prerequisite for drawing from life, which introduced students to the study of form by means of geometric figures. Its aim was to familiarize them with the concepts of outline, perspective, chiaroscuro and tonal value. "After a year or two years in the elementary class, the pupil who has made sufficient progress, will be promoted to the advanced class." This was offered on Tuesday and Friday evenings and focused on figure studies based on plaster casts. Finally, the life drawing course, with a draped model, was "of special interest for designers of newspapers and reviews." The painting course, given on Monday and Thursday mornings (fig. 10), was "open to pupils who are sufficiently advanced in Freehand Drawing... The pupil is given more difficult combinations with reflected lights and values, such as are found in richly colored objects of metal or other material." The modelling courses (Monday and Wednesday evenings) (fig. 11) were intended mainly for "pupils who have a knowledge of drawing, and particularly to sculptors in different specialties, painters and draughtsmen."

The school possessed a collection of drawings and engravings, geometric shapes in plaster and wood, and models of sculptures from Antiquity, the Renaissance and the 19th century. It even boasted a number of Alfred Laliberté's large sculptures (*Le Ber* and *La Paysanne*). The reports drawn up by the instructors at the end of each session show that it was not unusual for students to begin attending these classes when they were fifteen or younger. The school viewed instruction as a process of continuing education and professional upgrading, as one can see from the fact that some students were enrolled there at various points throughout their careers.²⁶ The end of the year was marked by an exhibition of student work and the awarding of prizes to the best students.²⁷

In 1915, the freehand drawing courses were given by Edmond Dyonnet (cat. 39), Joseph Saint-Charles (cat. 104-105) and Joseph-Charles Franchère (cat. 43).

Charles Gill²⁸ taught drawing and painting, while Alfred Laliberté provided instruction in modelling. He would be replaced by J.Y. Johnstone (cat. 54). In September 1923, when the École des beaux-arts was created, Saint-Charles was named director of the school of freehand drawing and painting (*Le Canada*, September 6, 1923) and Adrien Hébert (cat. 45-48) professor of freehand drawing (*La Patrie*, October 19, 1923). With the opening of the École des beaux-arts, the Council of Arts and Manufactures gradually became a preparatory school for it, changing its name for École des arts et métiers. In 1929, most of its professors, with the exception of Hébert, would be replaced by graduates from the École des beaux-arts: Elzéar Soucy, Léopold Dufresne, Sylvia Daoust, Frank Iacurto, Fred Barry and Raymond Pellus.

An examination of the portfolios of the artists who frequented the Council of Arts and Manufactures suggests the atmosphere of conviviality that prevailed in the classes; it also shows that, although attendance was irregular, a network of friendships and exchanges between artists of different generations did develop. Drawings of the same models in comparable poses indicate that professors and students worked side by side. Comparisons of a drawing by Joseph-Onésime Legault (fig. 12) with a work by his teacher, Edmond Dyonnet,²⁹ or of a study by Narcisse Poirier (fig. 13) with a drawing by Joseph Saint-Charles (MQ), or of the works of Duguay (fig. 14), Aubin (cat. 10), Poirier (priv. coll.) and Saint-Charles (MQ), reveal the emulation that developed in these work sessions, where the professors taught by example. Aubin turned to his painting class colleagues for recruits to accompany him on his excursions to the Montée Saint-Michel.

The creation, in 1923, of the École des beaux-arts de Montréal (at 628 Saint-Urbain, corner of Sherbrooke Street) was to profoundly modify the academic situation.³⁰ It would systematize the training offered at the Art Association of Montreal and the Council of Arts and Manufactures, creating a structured three-year course. It would also define new conditions of eligibility for admission to the status of artist, and formalized aesthetic thinking by means of more rigorous academic practices. This project was one of the "great works" of the Taschereau government, which, at the urging of the Secretary General of the province, Athanase David, instituted a wide range of measures (the Provincial Archives, the Historic Monuments Commission, a technical school, a national art collection, etc.) designed to consolidate the province's cultural foundations.

The directorship of Montreal's École des beaux-arts was entrusted to Emmanuel Fougerat (cat. 42). Fougerat, who was the director of the École des beaux-arts at Nantes, was on loan from France's Ministry of Fine Arts, which also oversaw fine arts education in the

Province. Jean Bailleul headed the Quebec City École des beaux-arts, which had been inaugurated the preceding year.

Montreal's École des beaux-arts, which offered courses from mid-October until the end of May, took children from the age of thirteen.³¹ The drawing, painting and pastel courses were given at three levels (elementary, intermediate and advanced), and were taught by Emmanuel Fougerat, Charles Maillard (cat. 72) and Edmond Dyonnet. The watercolour and gouache courses, as well as those in ornamental modelling, statuary, decorative composition and practical decorative painting³² were entrusted to Robert Mahias, while the courses in perspective, anatomy and art history were the responsibility of Jean-Baptiste Lagacé.³³ Finally, Alfred Laliberté taught model-making.³⁴ After Fougerat and Mahias left in 1925, Maillard took over the leadership of the school, and Henri Charpentier, Joseph Saint-Charles and Maurice Félix joined the professional teaching staff already in place. Starting in 1927, Edwin Holgate gave a course in wood engraving, while courses in stagglassworking were added in May 1930.

At its initial registration period in October 1923, the school admitted 460 students,³⁵ 125 of which were enrolled in regular courses. The edition of *La Presse* for February 28, 1925 provides some statistics: "There are 766 students, and this number includes 378 French Canadians, 258 English language speakers, 119 Israelites, 8 Italians, 2 Spaniards, 2 Germans and 1 Greek."³⁶ According to Maillard, the École des beaux-arts recruited and trained three categories of students with very different objectives. "The first category is composed of artists who will practice art professionally. These are the ones who, in a few years, will give expression to the province of Quebec and its people either on canvas, in sculpture or in architecture. Next are the artisans, who study the arts in relation to commercial decoration. Finally, the third category is made up mainly of young women who study the arts as a way of becoming more cultivated. They would later have a positive influence within the family and society."³⁷ Professors who received their degrees from the École des beaux-arts formed an association in 1928, and an association of graduating students saw the light in 1929.³⁸

The school year was punctuated by regular exams, the annual masked ball,³⁹ and end-of-year student exhibitions at which prizes were awarded.⁴⁰ In 1929 and 1930, the school's exhibition rooms housed several retrospectives. The works of Horatio Walker⁴¹, Suzor-Côté and Maurice Cullen succeeded each other on the walls, providing young people with models of local artists who had earned a reputation and celebrated their country's landscapes and shaped its values.

One of the most important changes attributed to the École des beaux-arts was its transformation of the con-

cept of drawing, and of the place it occupied in the process of art-making. While the school of the Council of Arts and Manufactures was not primarily mandated to provide a context conducive to the expression of artistic talent, and ascribed an important role to technical drawing, the *École des beaux-arts* began reinforcing this tendency, emphasizing the capacity of drawing to represent the visible world and to create useful forms.⁴² The development of technical drawing skills at the expense of creativity and artistic expression seemed to be a response to a wider desire to see art assume a practical role in a society intent on industrializing and on taking control of its industries. Commentators remarked on this tendency,⁴³ which was also confirmed by the school's director, Charles Maillard. "In the anarchy (more apparent than real) of recent years, [...] bold innovators have sought to break with the past, to readjust the artistic impulse to the rhythm of our modern life, which has been revolutionized by the discoveries of science, particularly by the use of new materials. Their search for a new aesthetic has led, as we might expect, to a revamping of the trade applications of the arts. [...] Drawing has been the chief resource in this endeavour, the bridge between different graphic modes. [...] Drawing has turned students not into professionals, but into art workers capable of conceiving of and creating beauty."⁴⁴

The tradition of sojourns abroad, considered so important before the war, resumed on a more modest scale. Young artists now felt less compelled to perfect their training in Europe. With the opening of the *École des beaux-arts*, they seemed confident that local instruction had attained a sufficient level of development and that artists no longer needed the European stamp of approval to be accepted in their home country. Yet there were still a few who, through their own resources, made the trip to France, the main centre of interest. This was the case, for example, with Robert Pilot, Edwin Holgate, Octave Bélanger (cat. 23), Narcisse Poirier (cat. 93), Marguerite Lemieux (cat. 69), Alfred Pellán, Louis Muhlstock and Rodolphe Duguay.⁴⁵ The construction of the *Maison des étudiants canadiens* in Paris in 1926, and the establishment of a number of scholarships in 1928, would encourage these voyages. Artists like Marc-Aurèle Fortin, Goodridge Roberts⁴⁶ and Joseph-Octave Proulx began travelling more frequently to the United States, a direction that several other painters would adopt down through the 1930s.

The Expansion of Distribution Networks

The proliferation of exhibition venues was one of the conditions promoting the increased visibility of the fine arts during this period. Each spring, the new exhibition rooms of the AAM were given over to an exhibition of the artists' recent work, and every two years they housed a comparable exhibition prepared by the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts. However, the permanent collection of Canadian art was still very modest, and the opportunities for seeing contemporary Canadian works were confined to a few temporary exhibitions. The *Bibliothèque Saint-Sulpice*, for its part, began mounting one-person shows in 1916. Its program made room for young artists like the Hébert brothers, Narcisse Poirier, Claire Fauteux, Rita Mount and Marguerite Lemieux, as well as for recognized artists like Ozias Leduc, Joseph-Charles Franchère and Edmond J. Massicotte. The art schools mounted annual exhibitions of works by both graduating students and undergraduates, while the store windows that had accommodated artists during the second half of the 19th century continued to discharge their function. After 1927, the department stores, particularly T. Eaton and Company, organized large group exhibitions of works by Quebec artists.⁴⁷ The painters themselves devised new strategies for exhibiting in as many public places as possible, and even invited the public into their studios.⁴⁸

A number of commercial galleries that had come on the scene some years earlier continued their activities. Galleries such as Scott and Sons and Watson and Johnson alternated European art with the work of certain well-established artists then active in Montreal. Cullen and Suzor-Côté were regulars, exhibiting annually. *Maison Morency Frères Limitée*, owned by Louis-Alfred, Odilon and Joseph-A. Morency, had been set up in 1906 as a framing studio on Saint Catherine Street East near Berri. In the fall of 1920, it opened a gallery at 346 Saint Catherine Street East, and in 1927 opened another space at 1258 McGill College.⁴⁹ The *Maison Morency* was to promote the work of Franco-phone artists, championing seasoned players such as Dyonnet and Delfosse (cat. 34-36) along with younger artists such as Bélanger, Poirier and Duguay.

Professional art venues were set up. The Arts Club of Montreal was founded in 1912 at 51 Victoria Street by a group of artists, architects and critics.⁵⁰ It organized regular exhibitions for its members and selected guest artists,⁵¹ in addition to mounting a large group exhibition in December of each year. The rooms of the *Cercle universitaire* also served as exhibition spaces; for example, Delfosse and Adrien Hébert showed their work there in March 1921. Also, a number of private

exhibition spaces, such as the salons of Sidney Carter and Mrs. Chowne, held exhibitions of recent painting on a less regular basis.⁵²

At the turn of the 1920s, the project of a national museum in Montreal had been foremost in people's minds. The idea had originated with the Society for the Encouragement of Art and Science in Canada, which was succeeded by the Comité France-Amérique. The museum in question was to be a mixed institution, whose purpose was to bring together a certain number of masterpieces of French art (particularly sculptures) alongside works by Canadian artists. In addition to showing models of works housed in the Louvre, the museum sought pieces by Canadian artists, thereby providing people with opportunities to see permanent collections of locally produced work. Housed in the Municipal Library, the museum was inaugurated in 1917 by Sir Lomer Gouin.⁵³ But the war put a damper on enthusiasm. The desired copies arrived only in 1921, when they were finally integrated into the teaching collections of the École des beaux-arts.⁵⁴

The increased distribution opportunities did not, however, ensure that artists' revenues from their paintings would be sufficient to live on. A few painters, like Cullen, de Belle and Suzor-Côté, who came from more well-off social backgrounds or who enjoyed an excellent standing in the art market, managed to make a living from their art and the commissions they received; yet most artists had to work in related trades or take up lesser jobs.⁵⁵ Teaching and illustration were two of the main activities. A number of artists derived regular incomes from private courses, or by teaching the drawing classes that had been organized at the Montreal School Board under the control of Jean-Baptiste Lagacé.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, the more prestigious courses of the Council of Arts and Manufactures and the École des beaux-arts brought greater visibility and an annual salary to a number of other artists.

Contests spurred on a highly competitive market and furnished worthwhile models in a milieu that was, all things considered, rather limited. Posters responded to the new needs created by the marketing of manufactured products and the profusion of leisure activities. Improvements in roads and in railway and ferry services led to the accelerated development of the tourism industry. Advertising brochures and billboards touted the virtues of getting away from it all, of liberty and vast open spaces. The large movie posters of the time were often hand-painted, and lasted as long as the weather permitted. The colourful and often bright face of the city was regularly condemned as a threat to urban aesthetics.⁵⁷ Poster competitions sought to restore the rules and principles of art to a type of work that was deemed to be too commercial.⁵⁸

Illustration made significant breakthroughs in the world of publishing. Illustrated periodicals had appeared at

the beginning of the 1880s, showcasing ink drawings reproduced by means of wood engraving and steel plates.⁵⁹ Technological progress made it possible to incorporate photographs and reproduce works realized in a variety of media. The mid 1920s saw the appearance of colour illustrations; these were soon put to profitable use by the mass circulation newspapers, which churned them out in lavishly illustrated supplements.⁶⁰ Illustrated books, which began to be produced in the mid 1890s, would also become more widespread during the 1920s. Numerous artists, like Ulric Lamarche⁶¹, provided this sector of activity with works that were both technically and stylistically original. The initiative taken by the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, which, between 1916 and 1919, published collections of illustrated stories, was followed in 1919 by the publication of historical tales illustrated with drawings by O.-A. Léger, J.-B. Lagacé, M. Lebel and A.S. Brodeur. This comic-book presentation would enjoy great success. In its supplements, *La Presse* began retelling the exploits of the heroes of the French Régime.⁶²

The churches continued to provide painters with a regular market, and a number of major building sites extended the repertory of works in this area. Church paintings, including those of Ozias Leduc for the Église Saint-Enfant-Jésus-du-Mile-End (1919-1920), those of Georges Delfosse for the Très-Saint-Nom-de-Jésus (1917) and Saint-Louis de France, of C.A. Pellus for the Église Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (1928), and finally, those of Guido Nincheri for Saint-Michel (1920) and Saint-Viateur of Outremont (1930), serve as indicators of the stylistic variety and various approaches in this domain.⁶³ By studying at the École des beaux-arts, the members of the clergy and the religious communities tried, however, to maintain a certain degree of autonomy in the teaching and production of religious art.⁶⁴

The 1920s also saw the continuation of efforts aimed at making art more accessible by means of murals. In 1923, RCA held a mural-painting competition. A number of Montreal artists took part in this project, which called upon artists to submit their ideas for a mural to decorate the interior of the Parliament building.⁶⁵ Since this competition did not lead anywhere, in 1924 and 1925 RCA proposed that artists integrate their work with already existing buildings. As a result, five murals were executed in schools and public buildings in Montreal.⁶⁶

Over the course of the 1920s, the increase in the number of pictorial works seems to have largely exceeded the capacity of the market. The majority of artists found only temporary or limited outlets for their work. Parallel markets, made up of friends and acquaintances, were set up, but a number of painters never managed to attain the degree of visibility afforded by an exhibition in a commercial gallery. For example, several women artists, who had been trained at the Art Asso-

ciation of Montreal and the École des beaux-arts, continued, after their marriage, to paint for their families' pleasure, while numerous graduates practised their art only sporadically. And the critics, even if they were more vigilant, were unable to give an account of all the efforts which artists had unsuccessfully undertaken to ensure that their works got distributed. Yet these little-known works exist, and it seems essential that we take them into account if we are to arrive at a more coherent and complex historical discourse. The Painters of the Montée Saint-Michel constitute a representative sample of the work of Francophone artists, and illustrate the difficulties they had in integrating into a context without necessarily mastering all of its rules.

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It was the Sulpician Olivier Maurault, who, in 1941, penned the first and only published history of this group.⁶⁸ His official history identifies eight painters as members: Élisée Martel (1881-1965), Jean-Onésime Legault (1882-1944), Narcisse Poirier (1883-1984), Joseph-Octave Proulx (1890-1965), Ernest Aubin (1892-1963), Joseph Jutras (1894-1972), Jean-Paul Pépin (1897-1983). The name of Onésime-Aimé Léger (1881-1924)⁶⁹ is associated with the group, but more as a friend, however, and with the purpose perhaps of supplying a founding figure for the artists of this association, which had its one and only exhibition in 1941. This was, then, not so much a well-structured organization as an informal grouping of friends who, as circumstances would have it, joined together in order to paint. They

did not share a common aesthetic, unless one factors in a certain commonality in the paucity of material resources at their disposal. This is what led them to band together to share their love of painting and their desire to work directly from nature, but also to give each other advice and encouragement and to offset the reduced means that forced them to paint their small, bright canvases on makeshift, recycled materials.

Ernest Aubin shared a studio located at 22 Notre-Dame East, near Place Jacques-Cartier (cat. 56, fig. 20, 21). Dubbed *L'Arche*, and originally occupied by writers, this space had been converted to a studio by the painter, illustrator and writer, Émile Vézina. Aubin and his friends worked there until around 1917.⁷⁰ "Hidden away deep within Old Montreal, on Notre-Dame East, *L'Arche* is situated on the top floor immediately below the roof of a building dating from the time of Ville-Marie. [...] To reach this sanctuary, [...] one must climb a long, winding stairway in darkness illumined only by the light of a single candle [...] The mansard roof, the skylights and the old copper door knocker take one back to an earlier period. The furnishings consist of a few bookshelves, a piano in a corner, some stuffed chairs, tambourins and wooden benches. The walls are completely covered by a profusion of paintings and engravings."⁷¹

All of these artists would preserve their individuality, pursuing courses that reflected their own concerns. Their commercial association was short-lived, however, and their popularity with collectors (recruited from the liberal professions) was long in coming, picking up momentum only in the 1960s. One must think, therefore, in terms of individual careers, which crossed paths through the Montée Saint-Michel. Most of these artists fit the stereotype of the bohemian artist, eking out a living and eschewing conventional morality. If painting was their main interest and, indeed, their *raison d'être*, they nonetheless had to resign themselves to devoting considerable time to other activities in order to pursue their passion for colour.

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Ernest Aubin has been described as having a timid character. He worked independently, living close to his family up to 1940 and keeping his material needs to a minimum so that he could use his income to purchase the equipment he needed to practise his art. It was he who drew the other artists toward the Montée Saint-Michel, identifying this patch of country amid the city, this rustic suburb, as a source of iconography that would become important to Montreal down through the 1920s. The transitional space of the Montée seemed characteristic of the ideological transformations that Montreal society was undergoing in this period of rural migration toward this urban centre. Aubin painted the Montée as fragments of pure landscape. The ebullience of his studies of sunsets and clouds is unique (cat. 12, 16, 20), as is his interest in the original views afforded by the city itself. The transformations in the architectural face of Montreal changed

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Encouraged by E.J. Massicotte and N. Poirier, Joseph Jutras devoted all of his leisure time to painting. The perfumery he established in 1918 took up most of his time and energy, as did his twelve children from two marriages. His landscapes show an ability to harmonize contrasting colours, and a varied palette. Like his colleagues of the Montée, Jutras would remain faithful to his way of painting throughout his career, combining his search for new local subjects with the brilliance of particular effects of light (cat. 62, 63). He also developed an interest in history, writing biographies of several of his painter friends.

Jean-Paul Pépin was the youngest of this group of painters. His artistic career was late in starting, because of his father's objections to it. He was influenced by Aubin and Fortin. An individual of many talents, he served as the group's archivist and animator, in addition to finding buyers for its works. Curious by nature, a jack-of-all-trades, he had a passionate interest in heritage matters, particularly architecture, and executed a series of works that attempted to preserve the charm and mystery of old edifices. Pépin's art—like, on occasion, that of Martel, Jutras and Proulx—combined elements familiar from the conventions of populist art; yet it was not always possible to say whether these effects were intentional or fortuitous. The direct, intuitive nature of their works, in terms of both drawing and colour, ran counter to the mimetic conception of art. Their paintings point to the limitations of their academic training, but they also represent a break with academic art (which they did not identify with), and a desire to render their vision of nature perceived in a vital, intense manner.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the Montée Saint-Michel was the only place favoured by the group, since all of these artists set down their easels in various corners of the Island of Montreal (fig. 22) and its surroundings, venturing even as far as the Laurentians and the banks of the Saint Lawrence.⁷² Reviewing the works of Joseph Jutras, Albert Laberge describes these artists' usual manner of painting. In most cases, the only difference between them was the mode of transport—i.e., on foot or bicycle—used to reach the places to be depicted. "On Sundays or holidays, those days on which he could get away and forget about business matters, Joseph Jutras would head off in a car with a friend (fig. 23). Arriving at some picturesque spot or discovering an engaging prospect, they would stop the car, get out their paints and canvases and do a few quick sketches. Once these studies were finished, they would continue on their way, stopping whenever a new site appealed to their artistic imaginations. They would return in the evenings with a rich yield of studies and impressions. Some of these subjects would later be

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worked up into magnificent landscape paintings, while a host of others remained as studies."⁷³

The Montée Saint-Michel intersected what was then called the Domain of Saint-Sulpice, a tract of land bordered by Crémazie, Saint-Hubert and Papineau streets.⁷⁴ In 1941, Maurault described it as follows: "This property was covered by a very fine wood, a few specimens of which remain; and its marshy areas, which were more protected than now against the wind and sun, were transformed into lakes for a rather lengthy period. The large farm, which is still standing, was shaded by magnificent trees; and the small farm with its three buildings, which then housed the Laurin family, occupied what is today the corner of Saint-Hubert and Crémazie streets. All that remains of it is the way-side cross, which now marks the entrance to the classical day school of Saint-Sulpice. From the Chemin de Liesse, where it terminated, a fine row of elms ran in a straight line up to the large farmhouse, which was occupied by Monseigneur Emmanuel Deschamps and his family. Off to the left were the marsh and the oak forest, while to the right stretched the cultivated fields." (p. 51) The variety, beauty and proximity of the site, the change of scenery it offered visitors and the warm welcome to be had from the Laurin family, which allowed artists to set up their easels wherever they wanted—all of these factors undoubtedly played a role in the attachment painters felt toward the Montée.

Ernest Aubin was deemed to be the "founding father" of the movement (fig. 24). He was the one who first discovered the site and pointed it out to his teachers and fellow students (Proulx, Martel, Poirier, Jutras, Pépin and Legault) at the Council of Arts and Manufactures.⁷⁵ The artists' desire to gather under this banner seems to go back a long way. But it was only in 1941 that they had their first group exhibition, a selection of 211 works shown at the Galerie Morency (fig. 25).⁷⁶ At that time, attention was focused on the breakthrough made by non-figurative painting, a development signalled by the creation of the Contemporary Art Society in 1939, and by Alfred Pellon's return from Europe. Thus it was too late for these artists to successfully embark on new careers. Their memory would be perpetuated by Jean-Paul Pépin. Toward the end of the 1950s, he harangued the members of the liberal professions in their offices on Saint-Jacques Street, offering them series of paintings produced by the Peintres de la Montée.⁷⁷ This commercial success did not lead to more official recognition, and without the confidence shown in them by the followers and collectors who preserved their works, a part of Montreal's artistic heritage would have been completely lost to us.

As we will see from this exhibition and the texts brought together for the occasion, the 1920s were not a monolithic period of our history, and do not deserve the neglect into which they have fallen. Whether looked at

from an ideological, sociological, intellectual or artistic perspective, this period was a time of profound and often opposing viewpoints. The art world of Montreal was populous with Francophone, Anglophone and neo-Québécois artists who, through their cultural backgrounds and their ideas and influences, gave rise to very different art practices. The new ways in which artists were trained, as well as the changes that took place in the distribution and marketing of art, would give these years a particular character, as would the practice of painting from nature using a bright and individualized palette. By focusing on this period and on the works of artists who had been considered marginal, we wanted to expand the terms of the debate on art in Canada and Quebec. In the search for our identity and modernity, we may have forgotten about the work of artists who had the misfortune to give us images that did not correspond to the desired canons. This somewhat cursory survey of the conditions that governed the exercise of painting in Montreal reveals, once again, how the constitution of historical discourse remains changing and conjectural.

Notes

1. On this period see Charles C. Hill's exhibition catalogue *Canadian Painting in the Thirties* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1975); Esther Trépanier, thesis, "Peinture et modernité au Québec 1919-1939" (Paris: Université de Paris I, 1991) and her catalogue essay, *Jewish Painters and Modernity, Montreal 1930-1945* (Montreal: Centre Saidye Bronfman, 1987); and André Comeau's thesis, "Institutions artistiques de l'entre-deux-guerres (1919-1939)" (Paris: Université de Paris I, 1983).

2. The works of John Lyman, Randolph S. Hewton and A.Y. Jackson caused an outcry in the AAM's new building, which had been inaugurated the preceding year on Sherbrooke Street West.

3. On this important achievement, see "La Bibliothèque de Saint-Sulpice sera une des plus complètes sur ce continent," *La Presse*, August 28, 1915; "La Bibliothèque de Saint-Sulpice," *La Patrie*, September 11, 1915; "Manifestation d'intellectuels," *La Patrie*, September 13, 1915; "Les bibliothèques de Montréal," *La Revue moderne*, June 15, 1922. For the list of exhibitions as well as their respective dates, see the Chronology and Jean-René Lassonde, *La Bibliothèque Saint-Sulpice, 1910-1931* (Montreal: Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, 1986), pp. 282-284.

4. *Le Nigog*, Archives des lettres canadiennes, vol. VII, C.R.C.C.F., Université d'Ottawa (Montreal: Fides, 1987).

5. In April 1920, the Province of Quebec purchased four paintings that were meant to form the nucleus of a state collection. These works, which were sent off to the Musée de la Province du Québec in 1933, were *Noon-time, Longue Pointe Village* by Albert H. Robinson (fig. 26), *Après-midi d'avril* by Suzor-Côté, *Old Court Yard, Saint-Vincent Street* by John Johnstone (fig. 27), *Marché Bonsecours* by Alice DesClayes (cat. 37). This purchase also included two engravings by Herbert Raine. See: "On a acheté six tableaux aux peintres," *La Presse*, April 7, 1920; "Govt. Buys Six Can. Paintings," *The Montreal Star*, April 7, 1920; "Notes d'art: L'idée d'un musée national," *La Patrie*, November 27, 1920. In 1922, the government bought *La vieille maison d'Henri IV* by Narcisse Poirier and, in 1923, three works by Fougère, including *L'inspiration* (cat. 42), were added to the original acquisition. To help young

artists during the war, the National Gallery of Canada had already purchased twenty works from among those shown in RCA's 1915 Annual Exhibition in Montreal. See "Une exposition d'art canadien," *La Presse*, November 20, 1915. More than half of these works were by Montreal artists.

6. Suzor-Côté withdrew from the arts scene after becoming paralysed in 1927. Regarding Massicotte, who died in 1929, see L.D. [Louis Dupire], "Edmond-J. Massicotte," *Le Devoir*, March 4, 1929.

7. Anglophone women artists, some of whom were members of the Beaver Hall Hill Group, arrived on the scene during the 1920s. Francophone artists, who attended Montreal's École des beaux-arts, would make their mark mainly after the end of the 1920s. The increasing presence of Francophone artists corresponded to the establishment of cultural institutions east of Saint Lawrence Boulevard in the late 19th century and during the 20th. Such establishments included the Monument national, the school of the Council of Arts and Manufactures, Université Laval à Montréal, the Bibliothèque Saint-Sulpice, the Bibliothèque municipale, the École des beaux-arts and various bookstores. See the special issue of *Le Devoir* devoted to the east side of Montreal, published on the sixtieth anniversary of Dupuis et Frères Stores, March 10, 1928.

8. The text by Esther Trépanier deals mainly with the development of criticism during this period. It is worth noting that, at the beginning of this period, the role of critic was partially filled by artists—for example, the painters Charles Gill, Henri Fabien, and Émile Vézina. Also, musician Léo-Pol Morin and architect Fernand Préfontaine wrote occasionally for *La Patrie* between 1926 and 1928. Among the critics, one finds mainly writers (Albert Laberge) and dilettantes from the liberal professions (Jean Chauvin). See: Esther Trépanier, "Deux portraits de la critique d'art des années vingt," Albert Laberge et Jean Chauvin, *The Journal of Canadian Art History*, vol. XII, no. 2, 1989, pp. 141-173. On the art of Vézina, see Jean-René de Cotret, "Les peintures de M. Émile Vézina," *La Presse*, March 10, 1924. "The place of honour in the room is occupied by three elegant portraits of young women: Mademoiselle Antoinette Giroux who is presently studying drama in Paris; her sister, Mademoiselle Alzire Giroux (fig. 34); and another young woman whose name is not given in the catalogue."

9. Speaking before the members of the Association catholique de la jeunesse canadienne-française (ACJC), the Abbé Georges Courchesne, principal of the École Normale in Nicolet, took up this often-repeated theme. "Furthermore, he said, the fact of safeguarding our heritage, of preserving our preference for the classical models we have been taught to admire, is already, in itself, intellectual action according to Bonald [...] Does this mean, then, that the Church is the agency best suited to training great minds? [...] One must be more intelligent in order to think more clearly, and one must think more clearly in order to believe more firmly." "Ceux qui ont mérité les prix d'action intellectuelle," *Le Canada*, February 23, 1923. Hélène Boily's essay demonstrates the importance of the intellectualist movement.

10. "Are not the ideas of God and country a kind of common hearth which give off all the warmth and fecundity of human existence? [...] One must, therefore, be unstinting in one's praise of those who tried, with such great clear-sightedness, to shore up or to revive patriotic feeling, even as something that has a general function in the economy of our intellectual life. [...] Mankind is not an abstraction. It looks for support in whatever surrounds it, whether in ethnic influences or in old or recent memories that kindle the reactions of the intellect and the race, shaping the primary substance of the work of art." Arthur Laurendeau, "L'artiste," *L'Action française*, April 1920, pp. 150-151. The concept of conservation was in fact conducive to cultural and social regression: "The illiterate are the faithful and constant guardians of our ancient tradition." See "M. Marius Barbeau parle de nos plus vieilles traditions au Cercle universitaire," *Le Canada*, March 29, 1920. The Société Saint Jean-Baptiste, like the Action française movement, would defend

the superiority of tradition over change. (Paper presented to the provincial legislature on the problem of colonization.) "Créer des industries est bien; créer des paroisses est mieux, à tous les points de vue," *Le Devoir*, February 13, 1929.

11. Lecture given by Emmanuel Fougerat on the occasion of his being named as director of Montreal's École des beaux-arts. "Condition essentielle," *La Presse*, October 11, 1923. The Parisian journalist, Louis Thomas, declared: "Note that for the French in Canada, to be schooled in the school of France is, strictly speaking, to be schooled in their own tradition." (In "Les Beaux-Arts dans notre province," *La Patrie*, October 20, 1923.) The artistic connections with France would be kept alive by the continual influx of professors, lecturers, artists and art works from the mother country. Examples of such influences are the 1924 exhibition of 160 works by French artists belonging to the Groupe de l'Érable ("L'exposition de l'art français à l'Hôtel du Gouvernement," *Le Soleil*, March 25, 1924; "Beau succès du salon d'art français inauguré hier soir," *Le Canada*, June 6, 1924) and the visits of Albert Besnard in June 1921 and Maurice Denis in October 1927 ("Deux belles conférences sur l'art religieux au Cercle universitaire," *La Presse*, October 3, 1927; Maurice Denis, "Puvis de Chavannes," *La Revue moderne*, December 1927, pp. 8-9). Furthermore, young artists would once again take up studies in France in the 1920s.

12. Pierre Landry, "L'apport de l'Art Nouveau aux arts graphiques au Québec, de 1898 à 1910," (M.A. thesis, Université Laval, 1983.)

13. "Do not let ourselves be intimidated by those for whom the terroir has something aggravating about it. If they are not moved by the country and country things, they do not have the grace to admit it, let alone vaunt it. As for us, we believe in our very fine history, our rich and varied seasons, our truly picturesque countryside with its people. Artists, with their refined sensibilities, will always be able to discover beauties that have escaped us and, setting them down with pencil, brush or chisel, will earn our gratitude and, perhaps, an added share of glory." Olivier Maurault, "Tendances de l'art canadien," *L'Action française*, vol. 2, no. 8, August 18, 1918, pp. 372-373.

14. Marius Barbeau, *Le Devoir*, January 26, 1918. In order to follow up on his ideas and to promote folkloric values, Marius Barbeau organized the Festival de la Chanson et the Festival des Métiers du Terroir. These were held with support from Canadian Pacific at the Château Frontenac in May 1927 and 1928, and in October 1930.

15. Olivar Asselin and Victor Barbeau, among others, denounced this reactionary movement. Victor Maillat, *La Revue moderne*, February 15, 1920. Also see Laurier Lacroix, "Entre l'érable et le laurier," *The Journal of Canadian Art History*, vol. XIII, no. 2, vol. XIV, no. 1, 1990, pp. 154-174.

16. Berthelot Brunet, "Pourquoi je suis «exotique»," *La Revue moderne*, September 15, 1920, p. 18.

17. "For some years now, there has prevailed in the annual salons what apparently amounts to a fad encouraged by nearly all the professors; I am speaking of a kind of bright painting which appears to derived directly from Impressionism. Impressionism has rendered us an immense service. The breakdown of tones, the practise of colour division and the theory of complementary colours [...] have been useful even to those who denied the efficacy of Impressionism. The later has, meanwhile, become part of history. [...] The current trend is toward a muted palette, although I have not seen examples of it at the Spring Exhibition." Fernand Préfontaine, "Le Salon du printemps," *La Patrie*, March 27, 1926. Bright colours were associated with modernism. "It is modern art: one begins by distorting the drawing; then one adds loud, contrasting colours and one has a masterpiece." C.P.S., "Une exposition d'élèves," *Le Devoir*, June 3, 1929. In the same text, the author remarks on the importance that life studies have assumed. "We asked to be excused for ending on this note, but we must express a deep regret: we did not see a single landscape. Might one not,

perhaps, carve out a small space for this genre from our vast heritage of torsos and thighs?"

18. The discourse in favour of history painting and portraiture received support from the proliferation of life drawing courses. The figure called the primacy of landscape into question, attributing importance to the expression of feelings and to the hierarchy of genres. Its merits were extolled by Henri Fabien, a painter trained in the French academic tradition (*Le Devoir*, November 27, 1915). Meanwhile, history painting was eulogized by Auguste Comte (*La Patrie*, May 14 and 19, 1923).

19. In 1923 Albert Laberge, among others, extolled the work of the landscape painters. "Causerie en marge du Salon du printemps," *La Presse*, April 3, 1923. The members of the Group of Seven drew notice at RCA's annual exhibition at the Art Association of Montreal in November, 1925. ("Toiles remarquables par les peintres de Toronto," *La Presse*, November 23, 1925) They would be back in force at the RCA exhibition of 1927. At that time, they were denounced by Paul Saint-Yves of *Le Devoir* and Jean-René Cotret of *Le Canada*; however, Albert Laberge and Jean Dufresne, writing respectively in *La Presse* and *La Patrie*, lauded their originality and their strength. Their choice of more austere sites far from human habitations seemed to have had an impact on Quebec artists: "We are pleased to note that the Gaspésie has held the attention of our painters, and this subject has furnished us with a number of quite interesting seascapes. Also, a number of canvases have drawn heavily for inspiration upon the Laurentians, the Saguenay and the Lower Saint Lawrence regions. Thus we see that the natural world of Quebec is attracting more and more of our painters, who are deriving excellent subject matter from it." See "Un intéressant salon d'automne," *Le Canada*, November 23, 1929.

20. Rodolphe Duguay inscribed the advice he received from Suzor-Côté in his Journal. See Rodolphe Duguay, *Carnets intimes* (Montreal: Boréal Express, 1978), p. 78 and subsequent. I wish to thank Jean-Guy Dagenais for providing me with access to Duguay's correspondence, which confirms and describes the quality of the training he received from Suzor-Côté.

21. Established in 1921, the Beaver Hall Hill Group occupied 305 Beaver Hall Hill. It brought together graduates of the AAM. The initial exhibition included works by Randolph Hewton (cat. 50), A.Y. Jackson (fig. 2), Mabel May (cat. 77), Hal Ross Perrigard (cat. 89), Torrance Newton (cat. 80), Sarah Robertson, Robert Pilot, Thurstan Topham (fig. 3), Regina Seiden (cat. 106), Annie Savage, Sibyl Robertson, Edwin Holgate (cat. 51, 52) and Sheriff Scott. See "Des artistes qui affirment de beaux dons," *La Presse*, January 21, 1922, and Nora McCullough, *The Beaver Hall Hill Group* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1966).

22. During the exhibition of the work of William-Hughes Taylor at the Arts Club in 1925, the reviewer for *La Presse* described Saint-Eustache as "the painters' favourite spot" ("Exposition de tableaux et d'études par M. W.-H. Taylor," November 25, 1925). Albert Laberge added: "Saint-Eustache is one of the most interesting and lovely areas of the province. A host of painters, including William Brymner, Maurice Cullen, Jobson Paradis, Ulric Lamarche, Ivan Jobin and René Béliveau, have found there the subjects for superb paintings." "Série de paysages et superbes tableaux de fleurs," *La Presse*, November 23, 1926).

23. Louis Dupire, "Des cours de peinture," *Le Devoir*, May 14, 1917; L.D., "Peinture d'après nature," *Le Devoir*, June 9, 1917; "Cours de peinture en plein air," *La Patrie*, June 9 and 28, 1917. Jobin also taught drawing in the schools under the jurisdiction of the East Montreal School Board. He had his students make drawings of objects lent out by Dupuis Frères. "Pour encourager l'étude du dessin chez nos écoliers," *La Patrie*, April 12, 1923; "Le dessin dans l'école primaire," *La Patrie*, June 17, 1923. Jobin was, along with Maurice Lebel and Edwin Holgate, one of the pioneers of wood engraving in Montreal. ("L'art de la gravure sur bois trouve d'enthousi-

astes adeptes à Montréal," *La Presse*, May 1, 1924; "La première exposition de gravure sur bois," *La Presse*, November 17, 1924; Henri Letondal, "Exposition de gravures sur bois," *La Patrie*, November 17, 1924; "Poétique composition par le peintre I. Jobin," *La Presse*, January 11, 1926; E.B., "Une exposition de M. Ivan Jobin," *Le Devoir*, November 21, 1928; Cecimo, "Une exposition des œuvres d'Ivan Jobin," *Le Quartier Latin*, November 29, 1928). On Maurice Lebel, see: Albert Laberge, "Gravure sur bois et camaïeux par un jeune artiste canadien," *La Presse*, March 21, 1928; "Exposition de gravures sur bois, camaïeux et pastels," *La Presse*, November 16, 1929; P. Dumas, "Une exposition de M. Maurice Lebel," *Le Quartier Latin*, November 21, 1929.

24. "M. Maurice Cullen et ses cours de peinture paysagiste," *La Patrie*, May 18, 1923.

25. "Instructive visite aux cours des Arts et manufactures," *Le Canada*, November 29, 1916.

26. "Arts et Manufactures," *La Presse*, October 13, 1917. For information on the Council of Arts and Manufactures, consult the Archives of the Council, UQAM Archives file 32 P. CAM also offered technical courses in musical notation, cutting and sewing, hat-making, sign-painting, lithography, cabinet-making, carpentry, plumbing and architectural drawing.

In the autumn of 1915, the high rate of unemployment in Montreal led a record number of students (1 473) to register at the school. On October 9, 1915, a journalist at *La Presse* wrote: "It is believed that the number of students taking courses at the Council of Arts and Manufactures will double this year." Also see, "1473 élèves aux cours des Arts et Manufactures," *Le Canada*, November 3, 1915. From 1917-18, 1651 students were registered in the 18 courses offered in Montreal (*Prospectus 1918-1919*, p. 29) and, between 1921-22, the number of students climbed to 2008. (*La Patrie*, June 1, 1922). The *Prospectus* was carried by the newspapers (e.g., *La Patrie*, October 7, 1916).

27. For examples of prize winners lists published in the newspapers, see: *La Presse*, June 9, 1915; *Le Canada*, June 8, 1916; *La Patrie*, June 2, 1922. Each year between 1915 and 1923, Ernest Aubin (cat. 1-21) won first prize in the out-of-competition category for freehand drawing and life modelling. Some of his colleagues from the Montée Saint-Michel group also obtained honours: Octave Proulx (from 1915 to 1918, freehand drawing, 4th year, out-of-competition); Joseph Jutras (freehand drawing, 4th year, honourable mention, 1916); Narcisse Poirier (1915, 1917-1920, life modelling); Eugénie Gervais (from 1916-1917, 1920-1925, modelling from nature). These prize lists show the various generations of artists and cultural figures arriving on the scene. For example, one finds, among the list of recipients for 1918, 1920 and 1921 respectively, Agnès Lefort, Rodolphe Duguay and Alice Nolin. In 1926, the recipients included Marjorie Smith and Wilfrid Corbeil.

28. Gill died on October 16, 1918. Albert Lozeau, "Charles Gill," *Le Devoir*, October 17, 1918; "Le poète Chs. Gill est mort," *La Presse*, October 17, 1918. The artist's works were brought together for a commemorative exhibition at the Bibliothèque Saint-Sulpice. "Exposition des œuvres de Ch. Gill," *La Presse*, March 3, 1919. For this occasion, Olivier Maurault gave a lecture. See "Charles Gill, sa carrière de peintre et de poète," *Le Canada*, May 9, 1919; "La première biographie de Charles Gill," *La Patrie*, May 9, 1919.

29. *Le mendiant*, reproduced in Jean Ménard, *Edmond Dyonnet: Mémoires d'un artiste canadien* (Ottawa: Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1968), p. 123.

30. The opening was announced in 1922: "L'École des beaux-arts à Montréal," *La Patrie*, January 16, 1922; Cyrano, "L'avancement des beaux-arts," *La Presse*, March 1, 1922; "Généreux don de la France pour l'École des beaux-arts," *Le Canada*, July 10, 1922; "Ce que sera l'enseignement à l'École des beaux-arts" [Interview with E. Fougerat], *Le Canada*, October 15, 1923. The school was so successful that, by 1927, plans were being made to enlarge the

building; work began in the following year. "Les progrès des beaux-arts," *Le Canada*, March 3, 1927; "Améliorations à notre école des Beaux-Arts," *La Presse*, September 25, 1928.

31. "Les conditions de l'admission aux Beaux-Arts," *La Patrie*, October 9, 1923.

32. After 1913, courses in the decorative arts for interior decorators were offered in the decorative and industrial arts section of the École polytechnique, where they were given by Mr. Lyon. "Travaux d'art à l'École polytechnique," *Le Canada*, April 17, 1915; "Encourager l'art chez les nôtres," *La Presse*, May 3, 1916.

33. Lagacé was seconded by Émile Vaillancourt, who was named chair of the History of Art in Canada at the École des beaux-arts de Montréal in 1926. (*La Presse*, November 12, 1926.) Lagacé was the uncle of Jean-Paul Pélipin. He served as inspector general of drawing in the schools under the jurisdiction of the Montreal School Board. (*La Presse*, June 7, 1929) These teaching programs provided openings for artists and initiatory situations for future painters. Lagacé also taught art history at the Université Laval in Montreal, and he designed the allegorical floats for the Saint-Jean-Baptiste "processions" between 1924 and 1929. The respective themes for the various years were as follows: What America Owes to the French Race; Visions of the Past—Costumes and Ancestral Traditions of French Canada; Inauguration of the Monument des Patriotes of 1837-38; Four Centuries of History; Our Popular Songs; Popular Tales and Legends of Canada. See "Une exposition de pastels et d'aquarelles," *Le Canada*, April 1, 1919, and the review of an autobiographical talk, "En marge de l'histoire de l'art, chez nous," *Le Devoir*, May 10, 1924. Lagacé's conservative tendencies are in evidence in a lecture, "La Bataille des palettes," given to the Cercle universitaire. "Le cubisme naquit de la rage de destruction et de nouveauté," *Le Canada*, April 11, 1927.

34. UQAM, Bibliothèque des arts, Documentation centre and Archives, papers of the École des beaux-arts de Montréal, Prospectus for 1923. The architecture program, which covered five years, was given by Jules Poivert, M.A. Beaugrand-Champagne, Albert Larue and Henri Labrecque. Biographical notes on these professors may be found in "L'École des beaux-arts," *Le Devoir*, October 17, 1923. And Albéric Bourgeois gives us a caricature of them in his "École des beaux-arts en noir et blanc," *La Presse*, May 24, 1924.

35. "L'enseignement des Beaux-Arts," *Le Devoir*, October 15, 1923. On this occasion, Fougerat proclaimed: "I find it especially pleasing that a large number of professionals and teachers have taken courses with us; they will eventually spread our teaching throughout the province of Quebec." In "Nos rapins" (*Le Canada*, February 23, 1927), Gustave Comte gave his impressions of various Monday evening classes.

36. "Le coût de l'École des beaux-arts de Montréal," *La Presse*, February 28, 1925. At the end of the 1926 school year, the École "had 512 students enrolled in its various courses; 350 students were refused admission last October." ("L'œuvre de l'École des beaux-arts," *La Presse*, June 21, 1926) The same article pointed out that 7 000 people visited the exhibition of student work, which lasted three weeks. In 1930, the school had more than 500 students; 300 attended classes at the school, while 500 teachers were registered in professional development courses given on Friday evenings. "Le nombre d'élèves inscrits à l'École des arts pour 1930," *La Patrie*, October 22, 1930. Fernand Préfontaine expressed concern about this overly numerous enrollment and these sudden, irresistible vocations. He feared that art was being turned into a pastime for young people. ("L'Exposition de l'École des beaux-arts," *Le Devoir*, June 3, 1925) On the other hand, Clarence Hogue, writing in *Le Devoir*, remarked on the benefits of art education for society. ("A l'École des beaux-arts," May 31, 1926).

37. "C'est par l'art que Québec s'exprimera," *La Patrie*, March 11, 1930.

38. "Anciens élèves des Beaux-Arts réunis en une association," *La Patrie*, May 13, 1929. Also see *Le Canada* for the same day.

39. The annual masked ball put on by the École des beaux-arts and the Arts Club was usually held at the Windsor Hotel. The ball, which was the talk of the town, was organized around a theme that determined the choice of costumes.

40. "L'École des Beaux-Arts," *La Patrie*, May 23, 1924; "L'École des Beaux-Arts," *Le Canada*, May 23, 1924; "School of Fine Art is Opened," *Montreal Daily Star*, May 24, 1924; "Open Exhibition at Arts School," *The Gazette*, May 24, 1924. These exhibitions received widespread coverage in the newspapers, and the lists of prize winners were made public. Writing in *La Riposte* for June 9, 1928, Jean Fabry penned the following comments, which seem to me to sum up the opinions found in the press regarding the training dispensed at the École des beaux-arts: "[...] A school of fine arts was not a luxury, [...] but an institution designed to satisfy immediate needs. [...] What strikes me about our young artists, what deserves to be pointed out, is, above and beyond the originality of their works, their genuine audacity in forming personal conceptions without, however, falling into an exaggerated Futurism or Cubism. The latter, as it is generally admitted today in France, were never true art forms. [...] One can see that instruction in drawing, which is a science that one must master perfectly if one is to aspire to the full condition of the artist, is not neglected, nor is human anatomy. [...] After our Religion, the Fine Arts have always been the most important factor in our civilization. We must not forget this, nor must we be sparing in our encouragement of those who have sought to cultivate the taste for the Fine Arts here in Quebec, to draw upon the many artistic talents of our youth. In short, it is everyone's patriotic duty to be familiar with the hothead of culture to be found in one's local École des beaux-arts [...]"

41. In 1925, the Watson Gallery organized an exhibition of Walker's work. "Première exposition de M. Hor. Walker à Montréal," *La Presse*, November 17, 1925; "L'exposition de M. Horatio Walker," *Le Devoir*, November 21, 1925; C.-Paul Sauriol, "Horatio Walker," *Le Devoir*, March 4, 1929; Jean-René de Cotret, "Une exposition des œuvres de Horatio Walker," *Le Canada*, March 4, 1929.

42. On this subject, see the section, "L'École des Beaux-Arts à Montréal: Une école d'arts décoratifs?" in Francine Couture and Suzanne Lemerise, "Insertion sociale de l'École des Beaux-Arts de Montréal," *L'enseignement des arts au Québec* (Montreal: UQAM, 1980), pp. 7-15.

43. "The École des beaux-arts does not limit itself to the accomplishments, but particularly to the practical, industrial and commercial arts." ("Nos progrès dans les arts," *Le Canada*, May 30, 1920) "The times, or rather the mentality, has changed. Drawing is no longer an accomplishment; it has become a useful art, a career that develops more with each passing day." (*La Patrie*, September 23, 1928).

44. Charles Maillard, "Le dessin: son importance dans l'enseignement professionnel et dans l'art," *Le Canada*, September 28, 1928; *La Revue moderne*, October 1928, pp. 6 and 12.

45. Omer Héroux, "Une demi-heure à la Bibliothèque Saint-Sulpice," *Le Devoir*, May 6, 1929; Henri Girard, "Rodolphe Duguay," *La Revue moderne*, November 1920, p. 9.

46. Sandra Paikowsky, "Goodridge Roberts in New York," *The Journal of Canadian Art History*, vol. XII, no. 1, 1989, pp. 50-67.

47. Paul Saint-Yves, "Aux galeries Eaton," *Le Devoir*, October 10, 1927; J.N., "A la Galerie Eaton: Exposition des peintres de la Province de Québec," *La Patrie*, October 12, 1927; Albert Laberge, "Exposition de peintures par les artistes de la province," *La Presse*, October 12, 1927; "L'exposition des artistes de la province de Québec," *La Patrie*, October 21, 1927; "Les artistes de chez nous," *Le Devoir*, May 7, 1929; "Exposition de tableaux et de sculptures à

la maison Eaton," *La Presse*, May 8, 1929; "Nos artistes canadiens," *La Patrie*, May 12, 1930.

48. The painter, Louis St-Hilaire, exhibited his works in the windows of *La Presse* in August 1915. In 1916, he invited the public to come to his studio at 1116, Mount Royal East, and, in 1919, to the Bibliothèque municipale. (*La Presse*, February 25, 1919; *La Presse*, March 28, 1919. Joseph Jutras also invited the public to an exhibition in his home at 2204 Papineau (*La Revue moderne*, April 1925, p. 15) before going on to exhibit at the Palestre nationale in 1926. Georges Delfosse, who showed at the Bibliothèque Saint-Sulpice in 1917 and 1922 and at the Cercle universitaire in 1921, also exhibited work in his home at 718, Sherbrooke Street East in 1925 (*La Patrie*, October 6, 1925). The members of the Beaver Hall Group held their first exhibition in their studios in 1922. "Des artistes qui affirment de beaux dons," *La Presse*, January 21, 1922.

49. Interior views of the gallery can be found in *La Revue moderne*, October 5, 1920, p. 35. See "Dans le monde artiste," *La Revue moderne*, September 15, 1921; *La Presse*, April 14, 1927, and *La Patrie*, April 22, 1927.

50. *Portrait of a Club*, Montreal, The Arts Club, 1962.

51. Lawren Harris exhibited there in 1924.

52. Sidney Carter received visitors on Dorchester Street West, while Mrs. Chowne did the same at 40 McGill College Avenue. "Remarquable exposition de tableaux et d'études," *La Presse*, December 15, 1925.

53. *La Presse*, November 7, 24 and 26, 1917; *La Patrie*, November 26, 1917; *Le Canada*, November 26, 1917.

54. The Société canadienne des beaux-arts, which was formed in 1918, set out to prepare exhibitions for the Bibliothèque municipale (*Le Canada*, June 3, 1918). The copies were purchased in France by Max Doumic, formerly an architecture professor at the École polytechnique. Upon their arrival in 1921, the works were shown at the Municipal Library. ("A propos d'un musée d'art civique," *La Patrie*, March 11, 1921; "Un Musée d'art à Montréal," *Le Canada*, March 14, 1921; *La Presse*, September 23, 1922; *Le Canada*, September 23, 1922; Madeleine, "Le Musée d'art français," *La Revue moderne*, October 15, 1922).

55. J.A. Beaulieu, "La grande misère des artistes," *La Presse*, November 2, 1922. "Artists do have to live, however, and, in order to do so, they must do commercial work and posters as well as advertising and catalogue illustrations. Also, a good many of them, seeing that they hardly ever sell anything during the Spring Exhibition, organize individual exhibitions which give infinitely better results." Albert Laberge, "Le Salon du printemps est le moins important jamais vu ici" *La Presse*, March 29, 1926. Élisée Martel, for example, worked as a cabinetmaker, building easels, boxes and other items for artists before retiring to a farm. Ernest Aubin, Joseph-Onésime Legault and Narcisse Poirier worked in photography studios. After having worked as a salesman, Joseph Jutras founded a perfumery that prospered until the Crash of 1929.

56. This was the case with Ludger Larose, Jobson Paradis and Ivan Jobin, among others. Anne Savage, for her part, began teaching at the Baron Byng High School in 1922, while Lilius Torrance and Mabel May gave private classes, like dozens of other artists.

57. A.G., "L'exposition des affiches," *Le Devoir*, March 8, 1927. "For advertising is painting decked out like a slattern. Those who see posters as the product of this century of excessive industrialization are seriously mistaken. [...] The moral of this whole story is lamentably bourgeois: artists have to live, eat and sleep. This was understood by the Board of Trade when it invited artists to execute several works of interest to merchants." Gustave Comte was not of the same opinion. In "L'Art à côté" (*Le Canada*, March 9, 1927), he praised modern advertising art, as well as the role of Montreal's École des beaux-arts in this area.

58. The war would provide a significant stimulus to commercial art, for example, the contest in commercial drawing for the Emprunt canadien de la Victoire (*Le Canada*, October 4, 1918). In 1924, RCA set up a commercial drawing contest (*Le Devoir*, January 14, 1924). In an entirely different sphere, Thurstan Topham obtained first prize in a poster contest organized on the occasion of the 22nd Canadian National Pilgrimage to Rome (*Le Canada*, November 15, 1924 and January 19, 1925). The Montreal Chamber of Commerce organized a poster salon in March 1927. Joseph Jutras served on the jury, along with E. Cormier, C. Maillard, H. Hébert, F. Préfontaine, and E.H. Holgate. Walter S. Gillespie obtained first prize, while Raoul Bonin, a former student of the French illustrator Cassandre, received an honourable mention. "On inaugure le Salon des affiches," *La Patrie*, March 8, 1927.

59. On May 11, 1940, *La Presse* presented an overview of "Quelques dessinateurs d'autrefois... et d'aujourd'hui." The article included twenty-one reproductions of illustrations along with photographs of fifteen of the artists.

60. See, for example, the cover illustration by Jean Dorais (a student of Wilfred M. Barnes) for "La femme-artiste moderne," which appeared in the *Magazine illustré* of the January 12, 1929 edition of *La Presse*. In addition to the fact that there were accredited illustrators like A.S. Brodeur, who covered current affairs for *La Presse*, or like Isaïe Nantais at the *Revue moderne*, the periodicals regularly published the works of guest artists. The proliferation of illustrated sections would lead to other types of specializations like fashion drawing, a function that Ernest Aubin eventually occupied at *La Presse*.

61. Madeleine, "La mort d'un artiste," *La Revue moderne*, March 15, 1921.

62. "L'imagerie nationale," *Le Devoir*, March 26, 1919.

63. Leduc and Nincheri, who had just finished decorating the Saint-Enfant-Jésus de Mile-End and the Saint Michel churches, were the subjects of an article by Olivier Maurault: "Chronique d'art," *L'Action française*, vol. 4, no. 6, June 1920, pp. 282-285.

64. "L'œuvre de l'École des beaux-arts, les buts qu'elle poursuit," *La Patrie*, June 19, 1926. Reprinted in *La Presse*, June 21, 1926.

65. Among the sixty artists making submissions were the two Montreal laureates, Mabel May and Annie Savage. Other participants were Adrien Hébert, Alfred Faniel, Hall Ross Perrigard, Emily Coonan, Onésime-Aimé Léger, Paul Caron, J.L. Graham, Charles W. Simpson, John Y. Johnstone, Regina Seiden and A. Sheriff Scott.

66. These were: C.W. Simpson's *St. Columba Bringing the Elements of Celtic Art into Scotland, A.D. 563*, for the Art Association building; H.R. Perrigard's *Mount Sir Donald Glacier, B.C.*, for Windsor Station; Robert Pilot's *The First Traders of New France*, for the High School of Montreal; Donald Hill's *Time Pointing Out the Opportunities to Acquire Education and its Rewards*, for the Streatham School; and Leslie Smith's *Education Extends an Open Hand to All Classes*, for the King Edward VII School. National Archives of Canada, RCA Papers file MG 281 126, "Report of the Jury of Award for the mural decorative paintings competition of the preliminary sketches," May 19, 1923; RCA Minute Book, vol. 1, 1895-1925, pp. 458-460, 467, 471-472, 480-481, 484-485, 490, 492; Minute Book 1925-1938, pp. 2-3, 15; Ramsay Traquair, "Mural Decoration," *The Journal, Royal Architectural Institute of Canada*, vol. 3, no. 5, September-October 1926, pp. 176, 182-187. Perrigard's painting was reproduced in *La Presse*, September 11, 1926.

67. These are only a few of the issues that historians are called upon to examine. On the school of Saint-Joachim, see François-Marc Gagnon, *Premiers peintres de la Nouvelle-France*, vol. II (Québec: Ministère des Affaires culturelles, 1976), pp. 133-146. The results of my research on the Desjardins paintings will become public in 1996. On the École de Quévillon, see Joanne Chagnon, "Regards sur l'ensemble sculpté de Saint-Mathias de Rouville," thesis (Montreal: UQAM, 1993).

68. Olivier Maurault, "Les peintres de la Montée Saint-Michel," *Les Cahiers de Dix*, no. 6 (Montreal: 1941), pp. 49-65.

69. If Léger did paint landscapes, it was only as backgrounds for his Symbolist compositions. Léger worked as an assistant to Joseph Saint-Charles, and he was also known as a sculptor and as an illustrator at *La Presse*: "La Pensée et l'Adieu par O.A. Léger," *La Presse*, April 3, 1915; "Statuette du champion Wil. Cabana," *La Presse*, March 30, 1918. Laberge writes at length on his participation in the AAM's Spring Exhibition in 1919: "Exposition artistique à Montréal," *La Presse*, March 21, 1919. The AAM paid tribute to him in its exhibition of April 1925. See "Visite au Salon des artistes canadiens," *La Presse*, April 3, 1925.

70. "L'exposition de M. Émile Vézina," *Le Devoir*, January 25, 1919; Albert Laberge, *Journalistes, écrivains et artistes* (Montreal: n.p., 1945), p. 129-147; Philippe Perrault, "Émile Vézina l'Homme et l'œuvre," M.A. Thesis, Université de Montréal, 1956. Joseph Jutras wrote an unpublished monograph on Vézina (priv. coll.).

71. The journalist, Ubald Paquin, gave this description of the studio in a talk he gave at the Bibliothèque Saint-Sulpice, "L'âme poétique de notre quartier latin," *Le Devoir*, April 27, 1917. The text was republished in *Le Canada*, April 27, 1917. The Cascoars Club set up headquarters at L'Arche during this period. Here it hosted artistic galas frequented by young intellectuals such as Jean Désy, J.E.W. Lecours, Rolland Maillet, Léo-Pol Morin, LaRoque de Roquebrune, René Chopin, C. Maillard, Jean Chauvin, É. Vézina, I. Nantais (*Le Canada*, June 15, 1917). Also, see Jean Chauvin, *Ateliers* (Montréal: Louis Carrier et Cie, 1928), p. 103.

72. Thus, writing about the exhibition of Jutras' paintings held at the Palestre Nationale in February 1926, a *La Presse* journalist (February 22) named nineteen sites represented in the landscapes; however, there were none of the Montée Saint-Michel.

73. "Exposition de tableaux par le peintre J. Jutras," *La Presse*, April 14, 1925.

74. The installation of a tramway line in 1924 greatly facilitated access to the Montée Saint-Michel. "The new line will run from the present-day terminus on Iberville Street and head east along Bélanger Street to the Montée Saint-Michel and the Chemin de Côte Saint-Michel." See "Le tramway ira à St-Michel," *Le Devoir*, May 22, 1924.

75. According to Maurault, Dyonnet, Saint-Charles, Gill, Franchère, J. Paradis, Béliveau, Savard, Brodeur, Suzor-Côté, A. Hébert, Vézina, Delfosse, Fortin, Johnstone, Cullen and Pilot went there to paint. Rodolphe Duguay accompanied Poirier there in 1917 and 1920. See *Carnets intimes*, op. cit., pp. 74, 95.

76. Reynald, "Les peintres de la Montée," *La Presse*, April 19, 1941; Robert Ayre, "Reflections After a Visit to Morency Galleries," *The Standard*, April 26, 1941. From October 29 to November 7, 1944, Monsieur Filion, p.s.s. presented his collection (under the name *Exposition d'art canadien*) at the Collège André-Grasset. The collection included works by all the painters of the Montée.

77. Pépin, who was intent on marketing the eight painters, occasionally had to finish series. As Léger died quite young, leaving a very limited number of works, Pépin did paintings in his style. Since Aubin had an extensive body of work in comparison to Legault and Proulx, the latter's names are sometimes transposed to Aubin's work. Also, Pépin did not hesitate to change the signature on his own works, attributing them to other artists.