

**Russell Harper, *William G.R. Hind*. Canadian Artists Series / Collection: Artistes canadiens, no. 2. Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, 1976. 91 pp., illus., \$3.95 (paper)**

**François-Marc Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*. Canadian Artists Series / Collection: Artistes canadiens, no. 3. Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, 1976. 95 pp., illus., \$3.95 (paper)**

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Peter Larisey

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précision la topographie des lieux de bataille et les positions ennemies. C'est ainsi que les personnages, dans l'ensemble, restent accessoires, bien que l'artiste nous réserve de temps à autre des illustrations pittoresques de la vie quotidienne (nos 8-9, 12, 31, 33, 42, 93, 95). Ses compatriotes anglais, initiés par Canaletto à la peinture reportage, étaient friands de gravures qui reproduisaient surtout les sites de leur nouvelle colonie.

Il est à noter que Cockburn s'est aussi intéressé à ce qui s'était écrit sur Québec. Il a lu la première histoire générale du Canada jamais publiée, celle du jésuite Pierre François Xavier de Charlevoix, et il cite, dans son guide sur Québec et ses environs (*Cockburn 1831*, p. 171), des passages tirés de la première traduction anglaise du *Journal d'un voyage . . .* (1744), celle publiée à Londres en 1761. Il a aussi lu le premier roman canadien (*The History of Emily Montague* par Frances Brooke, 1769), et il a peint la maison qu'il croyait avoir été habitée par Emily (n° 137.)

Les textes descriptifs rédigés par Cameron et Trudel et qui accompagnent chaque reproduction sont d'excellente qualité et les auteurs ont su puiser avec discernement dans leur copieuse bibliographie (pp. 170-173). L'ensemble du volume, fidèle à l'œuvre de Cockburn, est fort cohérent et il est, dans le moment, l'étude la plus complète sur cet officier-artiste qui, selon le témoignage de son amie Lady Louisa Anne Aylmer, était si charmant et en faisait tant!

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RUSSELL HARPER *William G.R. Hind*. Canadian Artists Series / Collection: Artistes canadiens, no. 2. Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, 1976. 91 pp., illus., \$3.95 (paper).

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DENNIS REID *Edwin H. Holgate*. Canadian Artists Series / Collection: Artistes canadiens, no. 4. Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, 1976. 87 pp., illus., \$3.95 (paper).

The three new volumes in the 'Canadian Artists Series / Collection: Artistes canadiens' (formerly called 'Canadian Artists Monographs / Monographies d'artistes canadiens') from the National Gallery of Canada signal a change in format. The first volume (on Bertram Brooker, published in 1973) had been a bilingual book; now the Gallery publishes a separate edition in each of the two official languages, a welcome change which simplifies each volume. In each one, more than three times as many pages are given over to reproductions and figures (several in colour) as to the texts. The purpose of the series is not to present exhaustive studies of artists' careers, but to offer well-documented and credible introductions to their work. These volumes easily achieve this purpose, yet each is quite different.

Dennis Reid's *Edwin H. Holgate* provides the best work available on this artist. Holgate has usually been discussed in connection (in reality quite brief) with the Group of Seven. Reid removes Holgate's reputation from this unjust situation, primarily by providing detailed biographical material. Holgate's life and travels took him to Montreal, Paris, Italy, the Ukraine, Japan, again to Montreal, then to Paris, and finally, by the early 1920s, back to Montreal. His teachers included the Canadian, Maurice Cullen, and, when he was in France, a Spaniard, a Russian, and two French artists. Until he was in his forties, Holgate's cultural life was intricately bound up with the French-speaking milieu of Montreal, and his best friends and collaborators were French Canadians. Far from the rough, wilderness aesthetic adopted by the

Group of Seven and their followers, Holgate led a life of 'cultivated taste, reflective pleasures, literate, ordered, urbane.' A very popular teacher himself, Holgate numbered among his pupils Jean-Paul Lemieux, Jori Smith, Stanley Cosgrove, Paul-Émile Borduas, Norman Bethune, and others.

Onto this biographically structured account of Holgate's life, Reid has grafted stylistic analyses of enough of Holgate's work that one has some sense of how his art grew. Many of Reid's appreciations are excellent, blending notes on the formal qualities of the works with observations on their content. Particularly effective is his account of Holgate's *The Skier*. One learns that Holgate has several large murals to his credit and that he excelled in wood engraving, which he taught at the École des Beaux-Arts.

Throughout his career, Holgate had been involved in formal issues in painting, not in nationalistic programmes. He was interested in what Reid calls 'the inner life of forms.' Although this is a difficult expression to understand, Reid comes closest to making the expression clear in his comments on Holgate's remarkable painting, *Coolie Girl, Jamaica*, of 1929.

Reid explains that over the sixty years of his career Holgate's art 'has not passed through many changes. It has moved closer and closer to an ideal that we feel he perceived first when he began to paint.' Reid explains that the neglect of Holgate's work has been due to the artist's 'lack of self-aggrandisement' and his desire 'that his work stand solely on its own merit.'

Writing about a very different artist, François-Marc Gagnon has chosen a correspondingly different point of view. The main theme in *Paul-Émile Borduas* is the chronology of dramatic changes of style in Borduas's painting. Gagnon presents details from Borduas's life only if they have a direct bearing on the painting. He has chosen this point of view well, and to read his text is to experience something of the excitement one would feel at a retrospective exhibition. One acquires a firm impression of Borduas's strength as an artistic personality. His own energy and artistic experiences are more important than the artistic contacts he made and the influences that he underwent.



The early works discussed by Gagnon include several commissions for church decoration both in Canada in collaboration with Ozias Leduc, and in France in contact with Maurice Denis. We even see some easel paintings of religious subjects, such as *La Fuite en Égypte* of 1930. Not generally known, these early works help us to situate Borduas properly in his cultural context and to throw into even greater relief the impressive development of his art. Gagnon's full monograph on Borduas is due in 1978 and will certainly deal with the necessary biographical dimensions of the artist's life; until then the present book offers the best survey of Borduas's work.

Of the painters treated in these three studies, William G.R. Hind (1833-89) is the least familiar to students of Canadian art. Almost nothing is known about the artist himself, and, as Russell Harper points out, 'a study of his life and accomplishments must be based on the many surviving small paintings and sketches, and on about a dozen meagre, contemporary published references.' Harper brings together all of the available chronological and biographical data, as well as observations on the social and cultural pressures affecting Hind's life and art. These he relates to keen formal and stylistic analyses of the works. He also seeks out attitudes

of the artist that are both hidden and revealed in the works themselves. Harper's patience and care have produced a fascinating study (Fig. 1).

Hind came to Canada from England in 1851. He settled in Toronto, where his brother, scientist Henry Youle Hind, had lived since 1848. Hind became a 'Drawing Master' and painted well, but was exhibited poorly. In 1861, after a return trip to England, he took his first journey into the Canadian wilderness, on a government-sponsored trip up the unexplored Moisie River, north of Sept-îles, into Labrador. The trip took six weeks, and more than one hundred works (in pencil, watercolour, and oil) survive, some of them reproduced as chromolithographs and woodcuts in the published report of the excursion.

Hind's second trip, begun in 1862, was with about 150 'Overlanders,' would-be prospectors trekking across the continent to the Cariboo gold fields. Hind's pictorial record begins at Fort Garry and extends — in sketchbooks and larger watercolours — through the Rockies to Victoria. Hind lived in Victoria for the next few years, painting and sketching in the nearby gold-mining areas; in 1870 he was a resident of the Red River Colony at Fort Garry. While there, he prepared a series of illustrations of Indian life for the *Illustrated London News*, only two of which were published.

Later in 1870, Hind travelled to the Atlantic Provinces, where he spent the rest of his life. He apparently abandoned painting as a career, and worked for the Intercolonial Railway, probably as a draughtsman. One small sketchbook (of 1876) and a few drawings of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick villages and towns survive.

Harper's contribution to our knowledge of Hind will be definitive until new documentation comes to light. In this, his second publication on the artist, Harper weaves the results of his research and his seasoned observations on the paintings and on the artist's elusive personality into a very readable and satisfying account.

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WINIFRED PETCHEY MARSH *People of the Willow: The Padlimiut Tribe of the Caribou Eskimo*. Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1976. 63 pp., illus., \$9.95.

To date, only a few people have seen or heard about Winifred Petchey Marsh's excellent work. Marsh came from England to the Canadian Arctic in 1933 as the bride of the Anglican missionary, the Reverend Donald Ben Marsh. Although she considered her main work to be helping in the care of the mission, she also began to paint Arctic flora and beadwork designs. One day, a Danish archaeologist who was visiting asked her why she was not painting the local people. The watercolours illustrated in the present volume are a result of this inspiration (Fig. 1).

The book contains three sections. The first, an introduction by the artist, describes some aspects of life in the Arctic and the conditions under which the paintings were done. She includes a map of the western shore of Hudson Bay showing the area of the Arctic around Eskimo Point where she and her family lived. This introduction is decorated in the wide margins with ten colour reproductions of Marsh's paintings of various tiny regional plants. The main part of the book, 'Scenes of Padlimiut Life,' containing thirty-three colour reproductions of Marsh's watercolours, follows. The third section, 'Beaded Appliqué Clothes and Ornaments of the Padlimiut and Avilingmiut Peoples,' has ten colour reproductions of her paintings of decorated Eskimo clothing and charts illustrating a large variety of annotated beadwork patterns and designs. One can see from her charts, although one cannot read them since the reproductions are too small and the publisher has not supplied captions, that she labelled these designs carefully.

Only three years or less separate the earliest paintings of Canada's Arctic by Winifred Petchey Marsh from those done by Lawren S. Harris and A.Y. Jackson based on sketches made during their Arctic trip of 1930. The differences between her work and theirs are many. Firstly, Harris and Jackson encountered hundreds of Eskimos and others living in the Arctic, but were not interested in painting them.



FIGURE 1. Hind, *Self-Portrait*, 1876. Harper, fig. 45.