

The Canada Council Collection in Charlottetown

Moncrieff Williamson, F.R.S.A.

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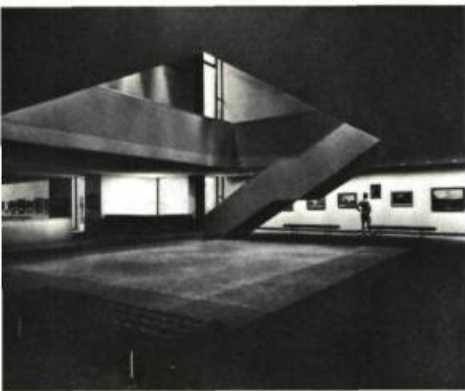
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N CHARLOTTETOWN

1st July — 1st September, 1969,
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Director
Confederation Art Gallery and Museum

*Confederation Art Gallery & Museum.
Vue de la galerie inférieure et aile ouest
de la galerie supérieure. Photo Bob
Brooks, Yarmouth.*

*Ci-dessous : Esther Warkov. Jeux d'hiver
dans un palais de glace ukrainien.
Photo John Evans, Ottawa.*

In the five years since Confederation Art Gallery, Charlottetown was opened by the late Vincent Massey, first Canadian born Governor-General, its programme of approximately twenty-eight exhibitions a year and its collecting policy has had far-reaching effects throughout the Atlantic area. As part of Canada's National Memorial to the founding Fathers of Confederation, the Gallery collects works by Canadian artists and craftsmen exclusively, and already has acquired 200 works for its permanent collection. Its national responsibilities go hand in hand with provincial and city cultural and educational requirements.

Charlottetown, a city of 19,000, can take pride in the fact that gallery attendance has hovered near the 70,000 figure annually. In 1968 during the six week Summer Festival over 4,000 visitors a day entered Confederation Centre when a substantial proportion of tourists saw two major exhibitions "Three Centuries of Scottish Painting" and the Rothmans' collection of "Contemporary French Tapestries". Many people come to Prince Edward Island to visit Confederation Art Gallery which thus has a direct and most important role to play in Island economy.

For 1969 we are once again going all-Canadian for the benefit of the thousands of visitors from outside the Province and through the good co-operation of the National Gallery of Canada, Confederation Art Gallery will give the first showing of the Canada Council Collection. The exhibition opens on Dominion Day, 1st July and closes Labour Day. From October the Canada Council Collection will then travel across Canada till early 1971.

What makes the Charlottetown showing different from later displays is that in Confederation Art Gallery, in addition to the travelling exhibition organized by M. Pierre Théberge of the National Gallery, there will be on display the Council's collection of Graphics, which is already being circulated in the Maritimes by the Atlantic Provinces Art Circuit. For Charlottetown, a few pieces of sculpture and fine crafts objects will also be on view, as well as several works from the Gallery's permanent collection, acquired through the Canada Council's Directors' Choice matching-grants programme. Recent accessions include works by Yves Gaucher, Jean McEwen and Richard Lacroix.

The Province of Quebec has always been generous in its support of Confederation Centre and the Gallery maintains most cordial relations with the *Ministre des Affaires Culturelles*, Quebec, the *Musée du Québec*, the *Musée d'Art Contemporain* as well as the *Montreal Museum of Fine Arts*. Exhibitions by French-Canadian artists and craftsmen have been a regular feature in Charlottetown and we look to a further expansion of this programme in the future.

Confederation Art Gallery, being a part of Canada's National Memorial to the Fathers of Confederation feels that its first loyalty is to Canadian artists. While works by artists of other lands are exhibited through temporary exhibitions, only works by Canadian artists are considered for purchase, or acquired by gift, into the permanent collection. Works by artists of foreign schools are accepted as donations for our study collection, and are exhibited from time to time in appropriate displays.

While we feel that our first obligation is to contemporary artists and are therefore concerned with national representation of artists from all the Provinces and the Territories, we are deeply aware of our responsibilities towards the inhabitants of Prince Edward Island in providing them with a comprehensive collection covering the historical pattern of Canadian art movements. While works by artists of earlier periods are scarce we are confident that as the Gallery develops in the years ahead, significant historical omissions will be rectified through bequests and other gifts, when such works do not appear on the open market.

The works of art of today will be history in the Twenty-First Century.

The Canada Council Collection, assembled primarily by Mr. David Silcox, is regarded as one of the most significant ever to have been shown in Charlottetown.

