“ODDBALLS AND ECCENTRICS” (“LES HIRSUTES ET LES EXCENTRIQUES”): VISUAL ARTS AND ARTISTS IN THE POPULAR PRESS IN POST-WAR CANADA

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the representation of visual arts and artists in two popular Canadian magazines. It is based on case studies of the Montréal-based Le petit journal, a French-language magazine, and the Toronto-based English-language publication Star Weekly, from 1945 to 1968. Both were weekly magazines with large readerships and included content for the entire family. Neither was devoted to visual arts but both carried photographs and articles that engaged with broad issues in the field of visual arts. As such, they represent a cross-section of ideas and perspectives that is very different from those of daily newspapers or of publications explicitly devoted to the arts. In addition, both implicitly claimed a national perspective by including articles and information about different regions of Canada. In this way, although in reality the two publications constitute a central Canadian perspective, inflected in each case by the particularities of their provincial locations, they claimed a national vision.

In contrast to existing research concerning art journals and art critics in Canada, my investigation involves the ownership and editorial direction of these two popular magazines. By analyzing the content of the magazines across more than two decades, I am able to identify shifts in outlook as they occurred and consider them in the context of the period. I have found that, although there were substantial differences between the two publications, the way that they participated in the construction of ideas was strikingly similar. In effect, both magazines projected specific notions of the value of artists and visual arts and used this coverage to shape attitudes—to work, gender, immigration, nationalism and a host of other topics. I argue that the presentation of ideas was rooted in both liberalism and anti-communism, and was informed by inherent self-interest on the part of the owners of the magazines. In addition, I argue that this perspective was largely hidden within a language of disinterested public service. Finally, I posit
that representations in the popular press shaped opinions and attitudes to visual arts and artists in ways that continue to resonate today, more than forty years later.
I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Lynda Jessup for her unwavering support over the past four and a half years. Her patience, encouragement and thoughtful suggestions have been invaluable to me and, hopefully, I have emerged from this process a better scholar and writer. Her frequent emails and our telephone conversations helped mitigate the often daunting process of writing, and rewriting, this dissertation. Without her, I doubt it would have been finished.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

A brief encounter with the Star Weekly magazine several years ago prompted my interest in the popular press as a source of ideas about visual arts and artists. In order to get a sense of the overall content of the magazine while working on a previous research project, I picked an arbitrary date, 1 January 1960, and briefly scanned the magazine. Not long into this exercise, I was struck by the repetitiveness of Canadiana in the magazine—the recurring Canadian motifs, photographs and articles about Canada—the Mounties, maple syrup production, the Rockies, Québec maple syrup, hockey, the Mounties in the Rockies, then Niagara Falls...and on it went, week after week. I interpreted this as a concerted effort to inspire patriotism and to promote a particular vision of Canada and Canadian identity; two parts advertising, one part propaganda (or vice versa). Conscious of the oft-repeated lament that Canadians lack a strong national identity, I was struck by how familiar this content was to me. I wondered if the campaign underway in 1960 had produced tangible results and also what the owners of the magazine stood to gain by promoting Canada and achievements by Canadians at this time. And, because of the part assigned to artists and other cultural producers in this focus on Canada, I was curious about the place of visual arts within what appeared to be a larger project involving the promotion of Canadian nationalism.

This dissertation is an attempt to answer these questions through study and analysis of representations of visual arts and artists in two popular, Canadian, mass-audience magazines. What began with a few straightforward questions has expanded into an investigation of how (and why) these publications used visual arts coverage to project ideas, not only about artists but also
about a host of subjects seemingly peripheral to visual arts—attitudes to women, immigration, disability, work, sexual orientation and patriotism, to name a few. In my thesis I argue that these representations were neither arbitrary nor objective, but rather were deeply entwined with the economic interests and political perspectives of the owners of the magazines. Further, I argue that this reality was largely hidden within a language of disinterested public service and concern for the common good, a presentation that helped obscure from public view the process at work. Finally, I argue that representations in the popular press shaped opinions and attitudes to visual arts and artists among Canadian readers in ways that continue to resonate today, more than forty years later.

While my initial questions were prompted by the *Star Weekly*, an English-language magazine, presumably reflecting an English-Canadian perspective, I have broadened my research to include the French-Canadian perspective of the French-language publication *Le petit journal*. A key consideration for my selection of these publications was their large readerships: the *Star Weekly*’s circulation was over one million in the 1950s and circulation of *Le petit journal* was one-quarter million during the same time period. They were both the largest magazines in their respective Canadian markets; until the *Montreal Star* remade the *Montreal Standard* into the *Weekend Magazine* in 1951, the *Weekly*’s circulation was more than that of its two largest competitors combined, much larger than other English-language publications such as *Maclean’s Magazine* and *Saturday Night*.¹ The *Journal* was the largest French-language weekly magazine in North America.² Circulation figures represent a significant segment of the post-war population

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in Canada and are an indication of the potential of both magazines to reach broad cross-sections of the Canadian public.

Owned by private, capitalist interests throughout the period under study, both magazines were also mass-circulation publications. Neither was devoted to visual arts but instead included content for the entire family. The Star Weekly was published by the Toronto Daily Star under the ownership of Joseph E. Atkinson from its founding in 1910. Modeled on the English Sunday newspaper format and distributed nationally in Canada beginning in the 1930s, it could be purchased on its own from newsstands or through subscription. It remained under the control of the Atkinson family and the Atkinson Charitable Foundation until purchased by former Foundation trustees, members of the Atkinson family and Weekly editor Beland Honderich in 1958, and then by Honderich alone in 1963. In keeping with the founder’s political views, the content of the magazine was shaped by liberalism, and the Weekly frequently endorsed the policies of the Liberal Party of Canada. It ceased publication in 1973.

*Le petit journal* was founded in 1926 in Montréal by brothers Roger and Rolland Maillet. Although it claimed impartiality, its editorial position favored the provincial Conservative Party prior to the party’s absorption into the *Union Nationale*. Its content varied over the years; however, news, politics, sports, cinema, television news, photography, fashion and comic strips were consistently an important part of the publication, and the magazine enjoyed continued financial success and popularity for several decades. It was purchased by Montréal financier Jean-Louis Lévesque in 1964 and became part of the *Corporation des Valeurs Trans-Canada*.

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4 Beaulieu 1973, 13. The *journal* was uncritical of the *Union Nationale* and carried extensive advertising for the party during provincial election campaigns. See also Richard Foisy, *Les Casoars: En souvenir des diners du Casoar-Club* (Montréal: Les Editions Varia, 2003) for information about Roger Maillet.
5 I have used the term magazine rather than journal to indicate a popular, non-academic periodical.
was subsequently purchased by a succession of business and media conglomerates in Québec in the late 1960s, and ultimately folded in 1977.

In the study that follows, I have used the magazines as the basis for two case studies that begin in the final year of World War II and end following Canada’s centennial year. These two decades constitute a distinct era, primarily because the end of the war was a pivotal event not only in Canada but in world history, and changes underway in 1968—in the country as a whole, in the publishing industry in Canada in particular, and in the magazines specifically—marked that year as a similarly decisive moment. These two decades make up the first chapter of the post-war era, a period of monumental change in Canadian society. By analyzing the content of the magazines across two decades, I am able to identify shifts in outlook and perspective as they occurred, consider them in the context of the period, and link them to historical events. Over the two decades of this study, ideas surfaced, retreated, reappeared—often transformed—in concert with fundamental changes in Canadian society from the end of World War II to the Centennial.

The popular press may seem an unorthodox source of ideas about visual arts and artists, and certainly other Canadian publications provided readers with information on these subjects. The magazine Canadian Art, for instance, began publishing in 1943, but was specifically devoted to the visual arts, had a very small circulation and appears targeted to a readership of collectors, dealers, artists and museum professionals. In addition, because it was published by the National Gallery of Canada with editing and contributions by museum staff, it projected the perspective of the premier art institution in the country. A range of other publications, such as Canadian Forum, which was founded in 1920, and Vie des arts, which began production in 1956, offered

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6 Circulation of Canadian Art was less than 4,000 in 1960.
readers information on visual arts, in addition to poetry, short fiction and other commentary.  

Again, however, these magazines had very small circulations in comparison with the *Star Weekly* and *Le petit journal* and appear to have targeted an intellectual elite. Daily newspapers were additional sources of information, and both large and small newspapers included weekly exhibition reviews. During the period under consideration here, art critics such as Pearl McCarthy at the *Globe and Mail*, Robert Fulford at the *Toronto Daily Star*, Robert Ayre at the *Montreal Star*, Rodolphe de Repentigny at *La Presse* and *Le Devoir* and Mildred Valley Thornton at the *Vancouver Sun* wrote weekly columns about visual arts in their respective cities. While the longevity of many of these critics established them as prominent voices in the visual arts sector in Canada, the columns they wrote focused on current exhibitions in local settings. In contrast, both the *Weekly* and *Journal* typically carried longer articles and engaged with broad issues in the field of visual arts and, although art criticism written by Paul Gladu was a fixture in the *Journal*’s coverage beginning in 1953, this inclusion is indication of the importance of the sector in Québec. The two publications under examination here present a view of commonly held ideas and beliefs that is very different from that of publications explicitly devoted to the arts. In addition, both implicitly claimed a national perspective by including articles and information about different regions of Canada. In this way, although in reality the two publications constituted a central Canadian perspective, they claimed a national vision. Thus, there is also symmetry in the Ontario-Québec and English-French language orientation of both my case studies and my analysis of them.

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Another of my key decisions in focusing this analysis on visual arts coverage in two publications, generally, was to direct attention to the ownership and editorial direction of the magazines themselves, rather than to investigate one or more critical voices. There has been preliminary research about Canadian art critics and their contributions to art criticism in Canada. Art historian Marie Carani, for example, has examined critical writing by de Repentigny in the context of the aesthetic theories that informed his body of work. Art criticism by Walter Abell, Graham McInnes and National Gallery curator Donald Buchanan has also received some attention from Canadian scholars, as have exhibition reviews by Ayre and McCarthy. With this study, I have taken a different approach to such cultural production, one that assumes that individual critics and writers were granted only a certain amount of autonomy, a feature of the period indicated by the simple fact that writers were often forced to work under a pseudonym because their employer demanded exclusivity. Abrupt and unexplained changes in art critics and other journalists featured in the magazines also suggest that employees and freelance writers enjoyed limited autonomy at this time. In effect, despite a certain prominence, art critics remained subject to the demands of managing editors and, ultimately, to the owners of the magazines.

A final consideration was my decision to focus on two decades of visual arts coverage. By using this time frame, I am able to identify the origins and context of particular ideas and how

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these changed over time. I ask, where do ideas about art and artists originate? Who controls this information? How is it framed and transmitted, and for what purposes? What impact, if any, do perceptions formulated in the past have on contemporary art debates and cultural policy directions? These questions, among others, have guided my inquiry. Admittedly only one site where ideas are constructed, supported and projected to an audience, these two publications have provided me with a starting point to consider their influence on perceptions of visual arts and artists.

Why do these questions matter?

The large readerships of these magazines and their potential to reach a broad cross-section of the Canadian public, combined with the unique perspective presented by non-art periodicals, renders these publications a significant source of ideas about visual arts in Canada in the post-war years. In effect, they constituted both a network of information that existed outside of artists, galleries and dealers and a perspective that is strikingly different from that found in exhibition catalogues and art history texts. This difference suggests that the magazines provide an alternative viewpoint, one that challenges the historical narrative of Canadian art that has been written by curators and art historians since the 1960s. In effect, this alternative viewpoint may have augmented what tension exists between popular perceptions of the role and place of visual arts in Canada and that endorsed and promoted by cultural institutions in Canada. Located in the public sphere, this tension has occasionally erupted with force, perhaps most recently, in 1990, when the National Gallery in Ottawa purchased Voice of Fire (1967) by U.S. artist Barnett Newman. In this instance, the purchase price of the painting and the nationality of the artist were the focus of widespread criticism in the press in Canada. In turn, coverage of the incident sparked vocal
debate about funding and decision-making processes at the National Gallery of Canada, debate that extended to the Canadian Parliament.\textsuperscript{10} Although the controversy is now well in the past, the strength and substance of the criticisms that arose at the time, and the way that museum officials were caught off-guard by the vociferous public response, suggests that there was a significant gap between popular perceptions of visual arts and those of elite cultural authorities in Canada. Indeed, press coverage of the incident posed a challenge, albeit short-lived, to the authority of elites to establish priorities in the cultural sector on behalf of the Canadian public.

In this study, I investigate potential sources of these divergent views of the place and value of visual arts and artists in Canada. I argue that the publications selected for these case studies, while they typically advanced a conventional narrative of Canadian art, were concerned primarily with the values of the marketplace, rather than those of the academy. In addition, I argue that the magazines participated in a broad-based citizenship project aimed at structuring and controlling behavior. This citizen-building project was part of what Leonard Kuffert has identified as a post-war preoccupation with reconstruction based on planning, what he terms “a powerful and malleable synonym for the exertion of authority.”\textsuperscript{11} According to Kuffert, this project was formulated in the hope that “Canada could be reinvented as a nation of citizens who heeded their responsibilities and their obligations to the community and the democratic ideal.”\textsuperscript{12} Finally, as do other scholars, I argue that the self-interest at the heart of this exercise in citizen-formation was not openly acknowledged; to do so would have exposed the workings of dominant

\textsuperscript{10} For a discussion of the controversy, see Bruce Barber, Serge Guilbaut and John O’Brien, \textit{Voices of Fire: Art, Rage, Power and the State} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Ibid.}, 66.
ideologies, rendering the project less effective and challenging popular perceptions of Canada as an independent liberal democracy.\textsuperscript{13}

\textit{Liberalism and Anti-communism within a Middlebrow Sensibility}

Reading the \textit{Star Weekly} and \textit{Le petit journal}, I became aware that, in the immediate post-war period, both registered significant interest in, and support of, the role of visual arts as an educational resource for personal enrichment and as an outlet to divert potential dissidence.

There was a strong link between this interest and fears of civil unrest following demobilization.

In addition, both magazines registered concern that an excess of free time, the purported product of increased mechanization and a shorter work week, would be harmful to Canadian society, and that art production was a possible solution to this perceived problem. More than in the \textit{Journal}, this perspective was extensively developed in the \textit{Weekly}, which promoted visual arts as a recreational activity equivalent to a hobby. In contrast, \textit{Le petit journal} registered less interest in social policy, the French-language magazine instead promoting the economic benefits of visual arts and tourism, corresponding support for art schools in different parts of the province of Québec and teaching art as a rewarding career. The \textit{Journal} also portrayed visual arts as a key component of the cultural heritage of French Canada.

In other words, visual arts coverage in both magazines gave expression, in post-war Canada, to liberalism and anti-communism. In both publications, material wealth and prosperity were interpreted and presented as evidence of mental and spiritual well-being, this conception

based on liberal notions of progress. As Ian McKay has described, liberalism in Canada is founded on 19th-century ideas of individualism, broadened in the 20th century to encompass liberal social welfare and intrusions by the state into areas of health, family welfare and education and extending to control of immigrants and citizen-building projects.14 This expansion of the liberal project was a necessary part of the post-war process of concession and compromise, according to McKay who, following Gramsci, argues that this compromise was necessary in order to achieve and sustain liberal hegemony for the ruling classes. In both magazines, the philosophy of liberalism underpinned the conception of art-making as an amateur pursuit for personal growth and enrichment and as a means of supporting expansion of the capitalist economy.

At the same time, the Weekly and the Journal both registered the impact of anti-communism, a key preoccupation in Canada throughout the Cold War. An important element of the fear of potential civil unrest following the war was the perceived threat posed by “disunity” and the consequences of economic disparity within Canadian society, conditions open to possible exploitation by communist subversives. In the Star Weekly, this apprehension was linked specifically to the threat posed by communism within Canada and, as a consequence, the magazine supported the development of public policy initiatives in Canada as a defensive strategy. While links between expanded social programs and the fight against communism were less prominent in Le petit journal, a perceived communist threat was also a concern in Québec and was registered in positive and supportive publicity for efforts undertaken by the state to eliminate the threat of internal subversion.

These facets of the magazines are an indication of how the two publications participated in the discourse of anti-communism and responded to the perceived threat of communism in

Canada. Including both fear of communism external to the country and communist subversion from within, anti-communism carried implications for all aspects of life in the Cold War era. The perceived loss of personal freedom in a communist state—restrictions on family and religion, on private property, on the ability to travel and choose a livelihood and on consumer choice—were emphasized within anti-communist perspectives to discourage sympathy for communism. The notion that artistic creativity is only possible in a “free” and “democratic” society and that education was the primary means of building resistance to communism were also central to anti-communist ideology in Canada.

Political scientist Reg Whitaker and historian Steve Hewitt have identified the Cold War as “one of the most important events in shaping Canada in the twentieth century,” describing it as “a war of loyalty versus disloyalty, patriotism versus subversion,…an ideological and cultural clash between capitalism and Communism, imperialism and socialism, freedom and totalitarianism, democracy and dictatorship, godliness and atheism…” While less sensational than McCarthyism in the United States, anti-communism also flourished in Canada. It was a consideration in post-war sensitivity about promoting nationalism, which at its perceived extreme was associated with propaganda in totalitarian regimes (both fascist and communist, Nazi and Soviet). In addition, both the peace movement and opposition to nuclear armaments were potentially suspect, the presumption of unquestioning support and of faith in established institutions seen as central to the ideology. Finally, to be a communist was to be fundamentally unpatriotic.

The strength of the liberal ideology is most clearly evident in the magazines during the first decade of the Cold War when they supported social policy initiatives as a component of the

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15 Reg Whitaker and Steve Hewitt, Canada and the Cold War (Toronto: Lorimer, 2003), 5.
response to the perceived threat of communism and as an expression of solidarity among Western nations. A decade later, the emphasis in both magazines shifted away from anti-communism toward support for cultural nationalism and economic independence—in English Canada from increased U.S. ownership of companies and resources and in Québec from English North America.

What I recognize in the Weekly in 1960 is evidence of a turn toward cultural nationalism that began in the magazine much earlier, in 1957. In the late 1950s, the publication began to promote Canada and Canadian achievements in ways that closely resemble a marketing and advertising campaign to encourage patriotic attachment to the country among Weekly readers. Publicity for visual arts and artists was one component of increased attention to Canadian themes and subjects, attachment to Canada a key element of the identity of the artist at this time. At the same time, accomplishments by Canadian artists were celebrated as evidence of innovation and experimentation linked to economic development and participation in commercial enterprise, and these were used in turn to project an image of Canada as a modern and dynamic economy. In other words, preoccupations with economic development central to liberalism became more prominent in visual arts coverage from 1957.

A different yet related project developed in the French-language magazine following the war. The Journal carried extensive coverage of visual arts and artists from the beginning of the post-war period in weekly exhibition reviews and other art-related feature articles. This attention included recognition of the importance of the arts and cultural sector for economic development and was characterized by prominent coverage of the developing infrastructure of art centres, private and public galleries, dealers, collectors, patrons and artists. Rather than a sudden shift from anti-communist preoccupations and support for the status quo to cultural nationalism, a
focus on Québec national identity and the promotion of specifically Francophone artists evolved gradually in the Journal, intensifying in the late 1950s to pose a competing vision to that of the Weekly, one identified with Québec, rather than Canadian, nationalism.

Although there were significant differences between the way that the two magazines approached visual arts and artists, the methods used to mitigate or deflect potentially challenging behaviors and debates were quite similar. In the decade following the war, profiles of individual Canadian artists invariably included reference to conventional family structures, military service and either teaching or commercial art as a full-time career. These profiles skirted contentious ideas by either ignoring evidence of critical inquiry or using humor, while at the same time emphasizing how artists were contributing to the economy. Canadian artists were presented as sincere and altruistic, non-materialistic, hard working, high minded and loyal, their value to Canadian society resting primarily with their ability to contribute to economic development, their masculinity unassailable. In contrast, European artists were typically described in negative terms, their behaviour and attitudes mocked and dismissed as decadent and trivial.

These characteristics of visual arts coverage—its emphasis on patriotic attachment to Canada and avoidance of philosophical or other critical debates—mark it as middlebrow. In other words, the way that the magazines presented information about visual arts and artists was consistent with middlebrow values. Examined as a formation by Christine Klein (following Raymond Williams) in Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-61, middlebrow culture includes magazines, books, radio and television programs, musicals, movies, book clubs and other social organizations.\textsuperscript{16} While the category is founded on notions of intellectual and class hierarchy based in psycho-biology, Klein has identified positive elements

\textsuperscript{16} Christine Klein, Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-61 (Berkley, California: University of California Press, 2003), 64.
associated with hard work, commitment to family, religion and community as fundamental to a middlebrow sensibility. And, drawing on research by Serge Guilbaut, she has argued that the rejection of negative or challenging philosophical inquiry in middlebrow products was one response to the communist threat, arising out of fears that citizens would lose faith in western democracy if confronted with such questions.\textsuperscript{17} This perspective helps to account for the rejection of the European \textit{avant-garde} and the emphasis on family, work and patriotism in descriptions of Canadian artists in both magazines.

Based on the way the two publications appealed to sentiment and sentimental attachment to nation, and on how they emphasized cultural populism and the importance of self-education, I have identified visual arts coverage in the \textit{Star Weekly} and \textit{Le petit journal} as largely middlebrow. In \textit{The Making of Middlebrow Culture} (1992), Joan Rubin links the origins of middlebrow to 19\textsuperscript{th}-century literary critic Mathew Arnold’s concept of the “genteel aesthetic.” She writes, “to be middlebrow is to accept responsibility for the education and enlightenment of the self, guided by an elite infused with notions of patriotic duty.”\textsuperscript{18} While Rubin was describing the motivations that shaped middlebrow publishing endeavors such as the Great Books and Book of the Month Club in the United States, this apt turn of phrase also describes the impetus underlying the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (1949-51). In his investigation of the Massey Commission, as it came to be known, Paul Litt has

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identified a parallel belief in education as a means of “raising tastes.” Similar attitudes are evident in the *Star Weekly* and *Le petit journal*, although neither were exclusively middlebrow because they included entertainment features typically considered lowbrow, such as comics, serialized fiction and movie, radio and television programming news, in addition to articles about economic and political affairs associated with highbrow cultural products. The focus on education and self-betterment in the magazines, the moralizing tone and the absence of any discussion of the need for fundamental change, however, marks visual arts coverage in both magazines as middlebrow.

Canadian author Robertson Davies provides a succinct description of the category of middlebrow as existing “between the people who buy their books in the drug store and read them at the soda counter, and the other group who buy their books at a discount at the university bookstore and read them in the faculty club…” As Rubin has described, divisions between low, middle and highbrow are rooted in the pseudo-science of eugenics and reference an intellectual and class hierarchy. Perhaps for these reasons, other terms have more recently been used to express similar divisions. For example, Paul Litt makes a distinction between high culture, popular culture and mass culture in Canada, and communications scholar Zoe Druick has used the term middle-ground. Others have eliminated the term altogether, preferring a simple binary between high/low or elite/popular culture. In effect, the use of different terminology blurs the distinctions between intellectual sophistication and economic class, avoiding, in the process, the

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question of agency. In other words, the use of a middlebrow sensibility in these publications was a deliberate choice, made to appeal to specific values.

Eschewing critical investigation and mass appeal, middlebrow cultural products emphasize hard work, commitment to family, religion and patriotism and promote these values to shape behavior and attitudes. According to Klein, middlebrow cultural products perform this work by establishing a personal connection with the reader, often through the application of sentiment or the use of a sentimental literary mode. In the Star Weekly and Le petit journal, sentiment was used to promote national feeling and patriotism; however humor, referencing lowbrow cultural products, was also frequently used. This humor was typically self-deprecating, mildly sarcastic or mocking in tone (which is often characterized as “populist”) and functioned in similar ways as sentiment to establish a personal connection with the reader. As literary scholar Jerry Farber has described, “derisive humor gets its satisfaction from the act of rising above, from [Thomas] Hobbes’s “sudden glory”; empathic humor provides us with company in our un-risen state.”

Humor helped to establish a sense of community among readers, of a shared sense of superiority and/or self-recognition. In other words, humor was used in the magazines to create a common perspective and promote solidarity with readers, while at the same time allowing the publications to maintain the appearance of objective disinterest.

Both the Star Weekly and Le petit journal used humor and referenced lowbrow cultural products in articles about visual arts and artists. Humorous, tongue-in-cheek and mocking comments were used in descriptions of both the European avant-garde and Canadian artists working in non-objective and abstract modes. These references worked to deflect or deny critical 

intent and to downplay the existence of wealth-based class in Canada by projecting a shared, unpretentious, working-class sensibility. This approach was possible in part because of a general distrust of visual arts, artists and the art market in Canada in the 1950s and 60s and an expectation that many Canadians were intimidated by culture. In effect, both magazines framed information about visual arts in specific ways and advanced a particular perspective on the value and role of artists in Canada, these characteristics conforming to middlebrow values.

The ideas about visual arts and artists that were projected by the two publications represented a central Canadian perspective and the hegemonic position of Toronto and Montréal in the post-war era. They were ideas formulated in central Canada and projected out to the Canadian hinterland. In effect, the popular press constituted a space in which a particular vision of Canada and Canadian artists was constructed and reproduced.

**Organization**

The following study is attentive to contemporary events as they were registered in the content of the magazines. Chapter two is a review of recent literature on the subject of post-war Canadian art, cultural policy and mass media. In this survey of the literature, I have identified the main themes found in these publications and considered the strengths and limitations of this body of writing. I have found that, as a group, Canadian scholars have tended to focus on maturing national identity and support for national culture in Canada in the post-war era and to link this to resistance to U.S. influence. The Massey Report is a foundational document for many of the scholars writing about the period. In the literature on Canadian art, there has been relatively little attention to the question of the impact of the Cold War and anti-communism on art production

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25 Kuffert 2003, 185.
and critical reception to this production in Canada. I identify a similar preoccupation with expressions of nation building in scholarship dealing with television, film and print media during the first two decades of the Cold War in Canada.

Chapter three is an analysis of the Star Weekly from 1945 to the end of 1956, a period during which anti-communism dominated the content of the magazine as a whole. In this context, I argue that visual arts were promoted as an element of social policy, endorsed by the Weekly as a response to the perceived threat of communism and as an educational resource to strengthen productivity in Canada. While visual arts were a minor interest at this time, the magazine registered concern that, under the influence of modernism, changes in art education would have a negative impact on design and industrial development. These potential negative outcomes were addressed indirectly, through the use of humor and references to lowbrow and entertainment, which served to deflect and downplay both the seriousness of debate and the magazine’s interest in the issues at stake. I argue that, in this decade as well, the magazine used visual arts coverage to convey its position on a host of issues involving immigration, disability, and the role of women in Canadian society and to project a claim of classlessness in Western societies. I have identified a significant shift toward the end of 1956, at which point anti-communism subsided and was overtaken by attention to issues of Canadian cultural nationalism. I argue that the magazine’s sudden and dramatic attention to Canadian nationalism at the end of the decade signals the use of nationalism as an expedient to advance the economic interests of the owners of the magazine.

Chapter four takes up the Weekly in 1957 following the magazine’s turn to promoting Canadian nationalism. In it, I identify how the Weekly moved from initial support for education and training for Canadians to enhance manufacturing and industrial design and began to promote
visual artists as part of a larger project to strengthen Canadian nationalism and project a modern and dynamic economy both within and without the country. The magazine linked the value of visual artists to national identity at this time and also registered a new emphasis on Canadian visual artists as celebrities. In doing so, the magazine used strategies that closely resembled marketing and advertising campaigns, using achievements in the past and present to promote Canadian history and culture to Canadian readers. Also in this decade, accomplishments of Canadian artists were presented in close association with innovation and experimentation linked to economic development and participation in commercial enterprise. In this context, the magazine briefly promoted abstraction as a marker of experimentation and innovation, only to subsequently dismiss the style as evidence of subservience to U.S. artists. Once again, the magazine used visual arts coverage to project ideas and attitudes in areas unrelated to visual arts, for instance it registered the impact of feminism and other changes underway in Canada and, at the end of the decade, promoted an emerging ideal of the artist as independent rebel and outsider.

Chapter five involves a similar analysis of the visual arts coverage in *Le petit journal* from 1945 to 1956, a period when anti-communism also dominated the overall content of the magazine. At the same time, the magazine registered support for the maintenance of traditional life and established institutions in Québec and included weekly exhibition reviews and other art-related feature articles written by named individuals. This attention signals a different attitude to the arts and the magazine’s recognition of the importance of the arts and cultural sphere for both French culture and economic development in the province. I argue that the *Journal* managed debate in ways that paralleled the *Weekly*, such as in its use of mocking humor and its linking of lowbrow and entertainment, but that it also registered a degree of animosity and hostility towards experimentation by artists and challenges to the status quo. In time this hostility faded, as new
approaches to visual arts were downplayed and deflected into appreciation of the sector as a site for pleasure and enrichment. In the process, the Journal avoided discussion of potentially challenging or disruptive ideas that engaged artists at the time. I argue that this approach enabled the magazine to promote visual artists as both important assets to Québec culture and agents of economic development.

Chapter six takes up the analysis of Le petit journal in 1957. Again, economic growth was an important consideration in visual arts coverage, but the Journal also used this coverage to promote awareness of Francophone Québec as a distinct society. In addition, coverage of developments in visual arts and a claim of innovation and originality in abstraction was used to project the idea of Québec as modern and progressive, an assertion supported by the limiting of information on developments elsewhere, for instance in the rest of Canada and the United States. I have found that, in support of this project, the magazine presented an alternative version of the contemporary art scene in the U.S.—a version that did not include notice of abstract expressionism—and promoted visual arts as key components of economic development and Francophone identity throughout the decade. In addition, I argue that the magazine linked Québec heritage to an emerging Québec-based national identity and focused on male artists as workers in an emerging technologically and industrially-based economy.

In the final chapter I present my findings from this investigation. I have concluded that both magazines used coverage of the visual arts to construct a particular vision, not only of artists and their place and role in Canadian society, but also of Canadian society in the post-war era. In the process, they transmitted a message of conformity and deference to authority, a characteristic most apparent in the way both magazines skirted evidence that visual artists engaged in political debates and, at the same time, discouraged such activity. Further, I argue that the heavy-handed
approach to managing dissent gradually evolved into a more sophisticated project in which an artist’s oppositional art practice and acts of rebellion were acknowledged and even celebrated, particularly for their potential to provide resistance to the growing economic presence of the United States in Canada and of English North America in Québec. In effect, these case studies expose the workings of the popular press and how ideas about visual arts and artists were intimately tied to the economic and political interests of the owners of the magazines.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

James Turk, executive director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, likened the treatment of Prof. Dossa to the 1950s McCarthy period in the United States when academics and others were subjected to intense pressure not to attend events that were unpopular.

Michael Valpy, 2007

As Michael Valpy’s account suggests, there has been a collective “forgetting” of Canada’s experience of the Cold War; the frame of reference for this era is typically projected onto the United States, and the implications of both censorship and denial of intellectual freedom have been downplayed as relatively inconsequential. Certainly, the end of the Cold War in 1989 reinvigorated scholarly investigation of the post-war period, the study of which has exposed the impact of anti-communism on daily life in Western countries. Scholars of Canadian history and political science have devoted considerable attention to the experience of the Cold War in Canada, and recent work by communications scholars has augmented the field considerably. In addition, feminist historians in Canada have considered the period through the prism of gender. In the field of Canadian art history, however, investigation of the impact of the Cold War on visual arts and art criticism has been limited. Instead, art historians have emphasized nationalism as the key ideology of the post-war era in Canada and have presumed that an interest in visual arts

and support for cultural infrastructure developed spontaneously within the context of post-war prosperity and reconstruction. Closer examination of critical writing dating to the first decade following the war, however, suggests that a new framework is needed, one that takes into account attention to internationalism in Canada during the Cold War, rising interest in cultural nationalism in the late 1950s, and the impact of both on ideas about visual arts.

**Canadian Art History: A Narrative of Nation-Building**

Art historians and curators who have investigated the post-war period in Canada have focused primarily on formal aesthetics, conflict between proponents of abstraction and representation, and expressions of Canadian national identity in work by Canadian artists. The narrative of Canadian cultural maturity that has developed since WWII is typically framed around charismatic, dedicated and newly-professionalized curators who persuaded a reluctant wealthy class to support the arts in the name of civic and/or national public service.

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about museums in Canada have also claimed that nationalism was a factor in the growth of educational divisions and resources at public museums.\textsuperscript{4} In the work of such scholars, Cold War politics and anti-communism are dismissed as “hysteria” associated with the United States and only peripherally with Canada. Further, the inclination in art historical writing has been at once to consider the two decades following the war as a period of steadily rising nationalism and to organize the Canadian art canon around expressions of nation building.\textsuperscript{5} Finally, art historians have interpreted the active participation by artists in the post-war economy—for instance, as commercial artists and teachers—as evidence of an underdeveloped visual arts sector, a characteristic used to explain the extensive corporate support for commissions and touring exhibitions following the war.\textsuperscript{6}

A preoccupation with linking cultural policy in Canada to the promotion of Canadian identity and nationalism predominates in scholarship dealing with the Massey Report and subsequent founding of the Canada Council for the Arts. Both these developments have been interpreted as indications of emphasis on national culture in the face of growing post-war U.S. American presence in Canada. According to Sandra Paikowsky, for instance, nation building was the primary motivation behind Canada’s first independent participation in the Venice Biennale in 1952.\textsuperscript{7} The author has argued that the country’s participation was a reflection of Canada’s “growing confidence in the international arena” and was motivated by the desire to claim a

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\textsuperscript{6} See David Burnett and Marilyn Schiff, \textit{Contemporary Canadian Art} (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Inc, 1983); Leclerc 1992; McKaskell 1993.

parallel middle power status in culture that it enjoyed in the political sphere. According to Paikowsky, the “projection of Canada abroad” was recommended by the Massey Commission in its 1951 report, and similar ideas had been advanced by representatives of the National Gallery in their submissions to the commission. Paikowsky has suggested, as a result, that the choice of artists and works for the exhibition is something of a puzzle, in that the selection was dominated by figure studies by Alfred Pellan, Goodridge Roberts, Emily Carr and David Milne, rather than by landscapes, the genre typically associated with Canadian art. The art historian is also critical of the essay written by National Gallery curator R.H. Hubbard for the catalogue to the show, claiming that it is “difficult to understand the ambiguity of the text, its irrelevance to the pictures and its defensive attitude.”

She has presumed a motivation for the curatorial perspective rooted in post-war nation building, despite indications that Canada’s participation in the exhibition might be productively explored in the context of the Cold War, the projection of Western solidarity and an international perspective at a moment of heightened tension in Europe. In a contemporary analysis, Donald Buchanan suggested as much, asserting that, in exhibiting at the Biennale, “Canada now takes its place with most of the other nations of the free world in this assembly of the arts.”

Other art historians have begun the process of evaluating the impact of the Cold War and anti-communism on reception to the work of Canadian artists. Anna Hudson, for instance, has identified both as important factors in the neglect of artists associated with the Canadian Group of

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8 Ibid., 157.
9 The Korean War began in 1950, tensions were high in Europe and there was growing concern that Italy, the host country, would elect a communist government.
Painters. ¹¹ In her investigation of this group of artists, who were active from 1933 to 1967, Hudson has argued that the shared values of members of the Group raised suspicions in the political atmosphere of the Cold War, and that concern for propaganda associated with representational painting following the war explains the subsequent rejection of the type of work produced by the Canadian Group. According to Hudson, the interest in a “socially informed” art practice was also rejected in favour of a turn toward the international language of abstraction at this time. Her identification of the transfer in responsibility for exhibitions, away from artists’ groups to professional administrators, suggests additional questions about the coercive power of funding agencies in “managing” dissent through control of funding and administration. Robert McKaskell has also noted this phenomenon in his account of the decline in influence experienced by voluntary societies and artists’ groups in the 1950s, their role effectively replaced by the National Gallery and the Canada Council. ¹² In his account, this shift is presented as a natural development in the post-war era, rather than as a specific policy aimed at directing or shaping art production.

Until recently, a more typical interpretation of the 1930s involved a denial that artists were involved in political debate or intellectual discussions outside of the visual arts. Writing in 1975, for instance, National Gallery curator Charles Hill found “little overt political or social content” in art work produced during the 1930s and a limited market for art work by those who registered these interests. ¹³ At the same time, however, the list of politically-engaged artists he has identified is quite lengthy, and Hill has also acknowledged that several art critics supported “art of social comment” in the 1930s. Both the subsequent decline in interest in these artists in

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¹² McKaskell 1993, 19.
the 1950s and bias against works of art that might be perceived as propaganda suggest the impact of the Cold War on the arts sector in Canada. Scholars have only recently begun to consider this as a factor in art criticism; for instance Esther Trépanier has studied critical reception to Québec artist Marc Aurèle-Fortin’s work and has identified elements of anti-communism in the writing about the artist in the 1940s.\(^\text{14}\) This example suggests that a similar approach might be taken in study of the critical reception of other artists at the time, among them Paul-Émile Borduas, who was considered to be sympathetic to communism in the late 1940s.\(^\text{15}\)

Because scholarship to date has emphasized nationalism and nation-building as the primary focus of both art production and critical writing in post-war Canada, less attention has been paid by scholars to other factors that might have influenced art production. An international outlook, for instance, sits uneasily within this preoccupation with nationalism, even though contemporary writing on art, produced during the first decade of the Cold War, suggests that internationalism was a persistent theme. It was an era of cultural exchange, touring exhibitions, travel grants, and other forms of public and private sponsorship, both U.S. and Canadian, all of which fostered internationalism. In the literature dating to the period, Canada appears as a participant in the projection of Western solidarity against the Soviets. Nonetheless, scholars have tended to interpret this phenomenon as evidence of U.S. influence in directing and sponsoring exhibitions and other forms of cultural exchange.\(^\text{16}\)

The focus on the United States as the main proponent of internationalism is echoed by many scholars. The impact of the Cold War on touring exhibitions has been identified by Édith-


\(^{15}\) In 1953 Borduas was refused entry into the United States due to suspicions of communist affiliations. See *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, online version, consulted 6 Dec. 2010.

Anne Pageot, for instance, in her study of the exhibition, “Canadian Women Artists,” which was held at the Riverside Museum in New York in 1947. Pageot includes consideration of the political context within which curators developed this exhibition, the first dedicated exclusively to Canadian women artists, and therefore of particular interest to feminist scholars. According to the author, the exhibition provided an opportunity for cultural exchange between two neighboring and allied countries and, as such, served as an instrument of propaganda, intended to help spread democracy by showcasing art works as the product of freedom of expression. In her analysis, the United States was the force behind the project, but a contemporary review by art critic Paul Duval presented the exhibition as a cooperative venture. According to Duval, the exhibition was “a result of free cooperation, on behalf of Canadian art, of a national organization of private citizens, a governmental department, a group of artists and a commercial concern,” his account acknowledging support for the exhibition from various Canadian sources. The critic echoed contemporary rhetoric that emphasized cooperation among “free” nations, alleging that this “admirably democratic” way of organizing an exhibition was “even more important than the selection of paintings themselves.” In subsequent writing about the period, however, there has been little if any investigation of the motivations behind business and corporate support for such initiatives; it has been interpreted simply as a response to a lack of state funding.

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18 Ibid., 128.
Art criticism produced during the period tells a different story, one that registered the impact of political tensions in the 1940s and early 50s. In much critical writing produced at the time, there was a tendency to recast prewar and wartime nationalist preoccupations in internationalist terms. In his submission to the Massey Commission, for instance, artist Charles Comfort identified the political connotations of both nationalism and internationalism, and cited nationalism in art as “a problem weighted with peril.” The emphasis on internationalism is most striking in reviews and articles about members of the Group of Seven because, between the wars, their work was promoted as a vehicle for national identity. After World War II, however, as the Cold War intensified, members of the Group were written about as historical figures, their nationalist project something of the past, despite the fact that several members were still exhibiting regularly. In this body of writing, art critics emphasized that members of the Group studied and exhibited in Europe, Mexico or the United States, and registered approval when younger artists moved away from their influence to follow international trends. A related characteristic in the writing of the period was the focus of criticism on the formal aspects of

21 According to Duval, for instance, “in promoting the artist’s contribution, business will be serving the ends which will most positively ensure its competitive continuance in a free society” (Paul Duval, “Exhibition Proves that Art and Business Work Together to Enrich the National Spirit,” Saturday Night, 26 Oct. 1947, 2-3).


24 See for example Leslie Dawn, National Visions, National Blindness: Canadian Art and Identities in the 1920s (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006).


representational art work, rather than on the content, on visual arts as personal expression, and to present membership in the Group of Seven as merely one stage of a varied career. Terms describing works of art as the product of freedom and experimentation were applied to other artists working in a figurative mode, among them, both independents and members of the Canadian Group of Painters. Buchanan, for instance, described artist David Milne’s paintings as the product of a search for personal expression, and identified “a full acceptance of the whole western world as their cultural home” in work by artists exhibited in the Second Biennial of Canadian Art. These characteristics indicate ways that art critics responded to the political climate and, in turn, how this climate registered in art criticism. Ideas appear to have been rendered fluid enough by art criticism to accommodate a wide range of activities, interests and styles, and a national focus was often simply rewritten as internationalism, universalism or even regionalism. This practice of reformulating nationalism continued into the 1960s; for instance, art historian Russell Harper used what he described as a post-war proliferation of interests and international influences on Canadian artists to argue that Canada, and presumably its art production, had matured beyond a focus on national identity.

The subtleties of this body of writing and the nuances in these texts suggest that further investigation is needed of both critical writing and reception to work by artists in the period following the war. Joyce Zemans has begun this process in a series of articles about the National Gallery’s fine art reproduction projects before, during, and after World War II. She has identified

an emphasis on art works by members of the Group of Seven in the first two series and has argued that this preference continued following the war. Among her conclusions, she has argued that the reproductions produced following the war fixed popular perceptions of the leading role played by Group members and their landscape paintings in establishing Canadian identity. Her detailed examination not only of what was reproduced and how often, but also of the sponsorship of the projects has provided a critical starting point for further investigation into the educational and nation-building impetus behind the reproduction series. Additional study might investigate changes in the project in the 1950s, for instance, when reproductions of paintings by Group members were published within categories such as “The Trees of Canada” or “The Provinces of Canada.” This organizational change suggests the possibility that the nationalist agenda associated with the Group was in time redirected and deployed in new ways, even as the work continued to be publicized to a wide audience.

In fact, nationalism, or a specific national focus, appears increasingly contested through the late 1940s and early 1950s because of its associations with both communist and fascist totalitarianism. Sensitivity to these issues was a prominent aspect of Vincent Massey’s 1948 book On Being Canadian. In the text, Massey identified the importance of both nationalism and a strong nation of united citizens in the fight against communism, and acknowledged that efforts

32 Zemans 2000, 125.
33 Sets of reproductions were sent to the United States, Mexico, Austria and Russia.
34 Vincent Massey, On Being Canadian (Toronto: Dent and Sons, 1948). See also Irving Abella and Harold Troper, None is Too Many (New York: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1983), 196, for Massey’s response to revelations of the extent of Nazi atrocities.
to promote nationalism might be perceived as propaganda. In subsequent writing, however, the wealthy diplomat has been characterized as a staunch nationalist, his personal interest in protecting Canada and Canadians against American mass culture an important influence on the Royal Commission, which he headed. In her biography of Massey, Karen Finley attributes his interest in culture entirely to nationalism.

New research by Zoe Druick has identified both the role played by internationalism in legitimizing support for national culture following the war and the influence of UNESCO on the Massey Commission. While in previous analysis, Paul Litt has acknowledged the influence of the Cold War and anti-communism on the decision to establish the commission, the international context for it has been downplayed. An influential reference point for subsequent investigations of post-war cultural nationalism, Litt’s work has linked the founding of the commission to fears of communism, concern about the leftist appeal of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and lobbying by voluntary associations that were well connected to the political and cultural elite. He has argued that increased emphasis on education functioned as a defensive strategy to build a strong community during the Cold War, and that the arts and culture field was a related site in which to demonstrate the benefits of life in a capitalist state. Ultimately, however, Litt has assigned greater weight to disdain for U.S. mass culture and fears of the cultural dominance of the United States as the main impetus for establishing the commission. According to Litt, the close proximity and influence of the United States prompted the report’s

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35 Massey 1948, 159.
calls for greater state support for arts and launched what he has described as “a crusade for
Canadian cultural nationalism.”39 The shared belief in education as a means of supporting and
sustaining democracy suggests middlebrow values; however, Litt has argued that the commission
adopted a strategy of presenting “elite culture as popular culture” and in this way provided an
alternative to mass culture while avoiding charges of elitism. This assessment has been very
influential in subsequent scholarship, in which little or no attention has been paid to the absence
of critical enquiry in this conceptualization. In other words, the Massey Commission promoted a
middlebrow/populist version of culture, one that did not include challenging intellectual ideas or
arguments for fundamental change in Canadian society, but this aspect of the commission’s work
has received little attention from scholars.

The focus scholars of cultural policy have placed on the Massey Report as a foundational
document for Canadian cultural nationalism, an exercise in nation building, and a defense against
American mass culture is echoed in much of the research in cultural policy. According to Jody
Berland, for instance, the post-war surge in interest in nationalism in Canada was very different
from the situation in Europe “where there was a widespread retreat from nationalist politics and a
move toward articulating new ideas of the social.”40 Alison Beale has also linked the impetus for
the Massey Commission to both citizen-formation and education as a means of building
resistance to U.S. popular culture.41 In addition, the subject of post-war cultural policy has been

39 Litt 1992, 3 and 175.
40 Jody Berland, “Nationalism and the Modernist Legacy: Dialogues with Innis,” Capital Culture: A Reader
in Modernist Legacies, State Institutions and the Values of Art, ed. Shelley Hornstein and Jody Berland
(Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000), 16; see also Berland “Politics After Nationalism,
41 Alison Beale, “The Dilettante’s Dilemma: Speaking for the Arts in Canadian Cultural Policy,” in Harold
Innis in the New Century: Reflections and Refractions, ed. Charles Acland and William Buxton (Montréal:
McGill Queens University Press, 1999), 355-368; see also Jamie Portman, “And not by bread alone: The
Battle over Canadian Culture,” Canada and the United States: Differences That Count, ed. David Thomas
taken up by Barbara Godard, who has argued that creating an audience of consumers rather than producers was a primary goal in government support for education in the arts.42 Both Godard and Litt have argued that a post-war populist view of culture as recreation or leisure was founded on the work of Matthew Arnold and informed by theories of culture as a civilizing influence. The close ties between the state, education and business have also been noted by Godard, who has attributed such a policy direction to the persistence of idealist philosophy among Canadian intellectuals. She, too, has argued that Canadian nationalism was a decisive factor in the promotion of the arts at this time.

In the United States, scholars of the arts and culture have devoted considerable attention to the impact of the Cold War on visual arts in that country; in contrast to the preoccupation with nationalism that has engaged art historians and scholars of cultural policy in Canada. Frances Stoner Saunders has investigated efforts by the U.S. state to influence cultural production in a number of sectors, including the visual arts.43 Eva Cockcroft has argued that abstract expressionism was promoted as an apolitical style and an outlet for personal expression, creativity and freedom.44 And Serge Guilbaut has identified ways that the prevalence of experimentation by visual artists in the West was used to demonstrate the benefits of life in a capitalist state, in contrast to life under totalitarian regimes such as Soviet Russia.45

(Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1993). Litt similarly identifies education as a key preoccupation of the Massey Report, one that he links to anti-communism.
Similar observations might apply to the Canadian experience of the Cold War; however, due to preoccupations with nationalism, the development of abstraction in Canada has been interpreted as evidence of excessive ties to the United States and the product of undue influence in Canada of prominent U.S. artists and art critics such as Clement Greenberg.\textsuperscript{46} This interpretation is most apparent in writing about members of Painters Eleven and reception to artists from Western Canada following workshops held by U.S. artists such as Barnett Newman at Emma Lake, Saskatchewan. The idea that Canadian artists merely copied U.S. trends in abstraction has been so deeply embedded in the popular imagination in Canada that challenging this notion was a critical component of Denise Leclerc’s text \textit{The Crisis of Abstraction in Canada: the 1950s}.\textsuperscript{47} McKaskell has similarly presented an alternative view by linking the development of abstraction to European modernism and the influence of art teachers trained outside of Canada who had an interest in international trends.\textsuperscript{48} The purported influence of the U.S. on art production in Canada has been used, in turn, to support anti-Americanism in critical writing in the 1970s, feeding a discourse that effectively substituted anti-Americanism for anti-communism.\textsuperscript{49}

The focus on nationalism as the predominant ideology of the post-war era in Canada remains an important feature of current scholarship in the field of Canadian art history. In a

\textsuperscript{48} McKaskell 1992, 33.
recent article examining Russell Harper’s 1966 survey of Canadian art, for instance, Anne
Whitelaw has emphasized the nation-building orientation of the book, a centennial project that
included both French and English-language contributors, and editions in both languages. 50
Whitelaw has argued that Harper’s ultimate goal was to establish a coherent narrative of
Canadian art, one that was independent of the influence of England and France, and that this goal
was informed by a preoccupation with national identity. She has considered Harper’s book as a
culmination of the intellectual milieu of 1950s regionalism and environmentalism, in addition to
nationalism, and has noted the growing concern in the 1960s over U.S. dominance of academia as
factors in the writing of the book. While she has acknowledged that Harper appears uncertain
about how to present post-war trends in visual arts, such as internationalism and contemporary art
generally, she has attributed this to the fact that his specialty was Canadian historical art.

It is noteworthy in this context that Harper’s writing registered the impact of two decades
of Cold War thinking, in addition to resurgent interest in nationalism in the 1960s. For instance,
he consistently argued that artists in Canada avoided both political debates and causes in their
work, and that expressions of nationalism were prompted by sentimental attachment to Canada.
He was also critical of viewers who attempted to “intellectualize” about painting rather than
connect with “pure feeling.” So, while distinguished French art critic George Duthuit described
Québec artist Jean-Paul Riopelle’s abstractions as expressions of “death, terrifying exuberance,
nightmare and violence,” Harper claimed that the artist was not an intellectual and that he rejected
theory in favour of romantic and emotional expressions of “universal truths.” 51 Similar

50 Anne Whitelaw, “‘To Better Know Ourselves’: J. Russell Harper’s Painting in Canada: A History,”
Journal of Canadian Art History vol. 26 (2005), 8-33.
51 Duthuit was characterized as “one of France’s most distinguished writers on contemporary art.” George
characterizations were advanced by Ayre and Hubbard; Ayre was specifically critical of Duthuit because the French critic raised the specter of death rather than “being satisfied with its display of agreeable splendors,” and Hubbard noted that Riopelle’s art work could be “supremely festive and apocalyptic at the same time.”

Guilbaut has argued that this type of critical writing—involving a denial of both challenging philosophical ideas and an engagement with contemporary political or intellectual debates—was typical of the Cold War era generally. To date, however, there has been little attention to how this sensibility registered in Canadian art criticism.

The Cold War in Canada: A Narrative of Control

In contrast to the limited attention the subject has received from art historians, the Cold War in Canada has been thoughtfully examined by historians and other scholars. Many have investigated the impact of Cold War politics on Canadians; Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse, for example, have studied communist purges of unions, the civil service, the scientific community and such government agencies as the National Film Board. They have argued that both the conservatism of Canada following the war and a general deference to authority facilitated government efforts to work in secret. Doug Owram has identified the impact of the Cold War and the threat of nuclear war on institutions of family and home life in post-war Canada, and has linked reluctance to question or challenge authority to the search for security and conformity at the time. In addition, Mark Kristmanson has investigated the interrelationships between security and


53 Guilbaut 1983, 83.


intelligence agencies and cultural mandarins following the war, focusing on, among other things, their role in drafting the legislation for the creation of the Canada Council. The use of cultural agencies as institutions of control has also been examined by Richard Cavell, who has compared the regulation employed by these agencies to the policing of sexuality.

The measures described by Whitaker, Marcuse and others can be considered defensive strategies aimed at controlling the population and discouraging dissent, while the regulation of the culture industries functioned as an offensive strategy by providing approved outlets through funding and support in specific fields. Scholars of the Canadian experience have examined these aspects of cultural policy, Kevin Dowler arguing, for example, that institutional support for new and unconventional art forms such as independent video, funded by the Canada Council in the late 1960s, was a strategy used to diffuse tension within youth culture by channeling dissent into creativity. According to Dowler, this approach was an extension of well-established policies of state intervention, although direct government intervention was difficult due to its associations with the practices of totalitarian governments. Dowler has linked the creation of “arms length” agencies such as the Canada Council, the National Film Board and the CBC to strategies of both “discipline and surveillance,” a feature of the Cold War era exposed by Kristmanson’s assertion that the Canada Council requested file checks from the RCMP on Council members, executive officers and grant recipients named in Council minutes.

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60 Kristmanson 2003, 264.
The use of cultural policy in managing dissent in Canada has been thoughtfully considered by scholars in other fields. In her analysis of the influence of UNESCO on the Massey Report, for instance, Druick has identified intersections between culture and politics in the post-war period. She has argued that, during this time, when a polarization of ideology—between freedom and totalitarianism, and capitalism and communism-dominated contemporary thought, cultural exchange, tolerance and diplomacy were actively promoted as a way of advancing peace. According to Druick, the fear of communism is evident in the language of the Massey Report, and she has also identified tension in the struggle to find an alternative between “mass American culture and communist totalitarianism.” Druick argues that this struggle had a significant impact on the objectives of the Massey commissioners, leading them to blend “contradictory aspects of elite and mass culture.” Informed by Guilbaut’s research on art criticism and abstract expressionism, Druick has also identified how the promotion of “freedom of expression” was a useful strategy in creating the appearance of what she has described as “political apoliticism”—in other words, a lack of a political position.

Druick’s research helps to explain the widespread preoccupation with, and support of, expanded educational opportunities, particularly for adults, following the war. She has identified both a shift away from a language of racial difference within UNESCO, for instance, and the substitution of cultural difference to explain behaviour, attributing these changes to a belief that culture can be learned (and unlearned).

In this way, education was envisioned as a site for changing behavior and attitudes. While, in her most recent research, Druick has focused on the NFB, an organization she has linked to the language of empire communications, eugenics and an

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61 Druick 2006.
ideology of governance that seeks to form model citizens as “self-disciplined” subjects, her work might also be expanded to encompass other cultural agencies. Druick has been very attentive to shifts in policy indicated by the ministry responsible for the NFB, for instance, shifts that also apply to the National Gallery of Canada and the Canada Council, and the use of social science methodologies, such as representative sampling, within government agencies. Further, she has linked the rise of a liberal, post-war welfare state to theories of risk aversion as a means of mitigating potential social unrest. Similar strategies aimed at diffusing perceived or potential problems are also implicated in cultural and citizen-formation initiatives that arose out of the experience of the Depression. In her words, the “site of operation was the malleable citizen, increasingly understood in marketing terms as a member of a number of subcultures.”

Promising new investigation of the NFB and documentary film has also been undertaken by historians in Canada. In his study of films produced by the NFB from 1939 to 1946, Malek Khouri has exposed both the tensions and fears associated with communism during World War II and how the government agency’s response to these tensions was apparent in the documentary films it produced. Among his findings, he has identified a preoccupation with a nationalist agenda among Canadian film scholars who have studied the period, and has argued that this preoccupation has obscured issues such as the impact of international developments on documentaries produced by the NFB. According to Khouri, the NFB was targeted as sympathetic to communism following the war.

Khourí’s focus on how NFB films responded to the arrival of the Cold War, combined with his treatment of the increased scrutiny directed at the agency itself, has exposed how cultural

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63 Ibid., 72.
64 Malek Khouri, Filming Politics: Communism and the Portrayal of the Working Class at the National Film Board of Canada, 1939-46 (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2007).
products and producers were shaped by a process of external control. His research suggests a need for further investigation into other forms of cultural production, such as visual arts and art criticism, as sites that were subject to increasing levels of institutional management following World War II. The questions asked by historians and communications scholars, about how offensive and defensive strategies were used to both discourage dissent and direct cultural production in specific ways, have provided an important example for further investigation by art historians.

**Mass Media in Canada: A Narrative of National Defense**

As well as being a focus in Canadian art history, explorations of nation-building and examinations of efforts to support Canadian mass media products against an encroaching U.S. mass culture have dominated scholarly writing on television and other media in Canada. In his popular study of television in Canada, for instance, Paul Rutherford deals with the extent of U.S. domination in the 1950s and its impact on Canadian society. In his analysis, the historian is dismissive of Cold War politics as factors in the establishment of the Massey Commission, attributing the founding of the commission to nationalism and fears of “moral decay.”

Nationalism is also the focus of Ryan Edwardson’s study of Canadian television and film from the Massey Commission to the present. He argues, for instance, that the “Canadianization” of these industries was “formulated by intelligentsia and arts communities seeking support for the high arts and for the suppression of a commercial culture deemed threatening to national

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68 Similar nationalist concerns have been identified by David Hogarth in *Documentary Television in Canada: From National Public Service to Global Marketplace* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002).


War, for instance, and Lynn Spigel has examined how the trope of the family was used on television to convey information about political developments and public policy in the U.S.71

Other U.S. mass media products of the post-war period have received similar attention from scholars. Elaine Tyler May has studied movies, television and magazines produced in the United States, for instance, and has argued that a “rhetoric of classlessness,” consumption as a civic duty and clearly defined roles for men and women were projected in different media throughout the Cold War.72 Her research has also highlighted how the family was used to disseminate anti-communist ideology in the West. In addition, Wendy Kozol has analyzed Life magazine, an important model for the photo-story format adopted by the Star Weekly in the 1950s.73 In the course of her research, Kozol has identified how both the domestic realm and the family were used to frame information about the world for a white middle-class audience.74 Among her conclusions, she has argued that this use of the family was specific to the post-war era, and has linked this to the fight against communism underway at the time.75 Finally, Christine Klein’s study of orientalism during the Cold War is based on careful consideration of how anti-communism registered in magazines, film, musicals and fiction.76

73 Fulford 1988, 121.
75 Related aspects of this conceptualization of the family include a return to “separate spheres” for men and women, a position, Kozol argues, that had been eroded during the years of the Depression and the Second World War. She has also identified how gender roles among journalists became more rigid as the 1950s progressed, noting that, increasingly, female journalists were assigned to cover stories “from the women’s perspective.” Because these assignments that were less tightly controlled during and immediately after World War II, Kozol relates this change to the Cold War. *Ibid.*, 108.
76 Klein 2003.
The preceding examples are indications of key contributions made to the study of mass media products by feminist scholarship. Building on this research, scholars have taken up similar investigations of the Canadian experience of the Cold War as it registered in print media during the post-war period. Franca Iacovetta, for instance, has studied *Chatelaine* and has noted a dialogue of fear and uncertainty toward communism in her analysis of the editorial content in the magazine.\(^77\) Iacovetta has expanded this research into a study of post-war immigration and citizenship initiatives in which she has identified the role of the state, informed by Cold War fears, in a citizenship project targeted at immigrants and Canadians.\(^78\) The impact of the Cold War on Canadian families has also been investigated by Mary Louise Adams, who has observed that Canadians were exposed to Cold War rhetoric through popular culture, films, television shows and American magazines.\(^79\) In other words, anti-communist sentiment was not confined to U.S. publications at this time but was also a significant presence in Canadian magazines.

At the same time, there has been little investigation of the possibility that a decisive shift occurred in the late 1950s and that an international perspective, informed by Cold War preoccupations, was overtaken by the increasing promotion of nationalism at this time. Valerie Korinek, for instance, has noted the prevalence of Canadian motifs and Canadiana in *Chatelaine* after mid-century and has attributed this phenomenon to the inspiration of the approaching Canadian Centennial and the search for a distinct Canadian culture.\(^80\) In fact, as Leonard Kuffert has observed, the post-war period has only recently been explored from the perspective of social

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\(^80\) Valerie Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the 50s and 60s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 163.
and cultural history, and analysis of print media from this perspective is underdeveloped.\textsuperscript{81} Feminist scholarship is an important exception, and Kuffert has further augmented contributions from this field with his analysis of cultural production in English Canada from World War II to Centennial. He has focused on the ideas and commentary presented in magazines, radio and television broadcasts. Of particular interest for Kuffert is the participation of public intellectuals in contemporary debates about culture, mass media, and perceived changes underway in Canadian society. He has argued that these intellectuals assumed a leadership role and made important contributions to intellectual debates in the post-war era, until replaced by youthful rebellion and the counter-culture in the mid 1960s.\textsuperscript{82} An element of his analysis that is pertinent to the study that follows is his characterization of Canadian nationalism as a middlebrow ideology, one that advanced a claim of merit simply because an individual or product was Canadian.\textsuperscript{83}

Analysis of the press in Québec is similarly underdeveloped. According to Fernande Roy, while some promising new research has been advanced, scholars “continue to read nineteenth-and twentieth-century newspapers solely in terms of their content” while “study of the container is generally ignored.”\textsuperscript{84} Roy argues that content analysis, rather than investigations of underlying ideologies, dominates recent scholarship, pointing out as well a lack of attention to comparisons of the Anglophone and Francophone presses.\textsuperscript{85} Comprehensive histories of

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\textsuperscript{81} Kuffert 2003, 6.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 232.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 186.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 260.
\end{flushleft}
newspapers and media companies in the rest of Canada are also limited. Attention to the press in Canada has typically focused on biographies of journalists and writers, rather than cultural analysis or study from a business perspective. A 1963 biography of *Weekly* founder J.E. Atkinson for instance, written by former employee Ross Harkness, is the lone source of information about the *Weekly* and other media outlets owned by the publisher. The record has been augmented somewhat by personal memoirs written by *Weekly* contributor Robert Fulford, but these accounts are lacking in critical analysis and scholarly distance; Fulford, for instance, has presented the *Weekly*’s hiring of a Soviet affairs specialist in 1957 as an idiosyncratic whim, in this way downplaying the impact of contemporary world politics on decision-making at the magazine. In addition, both Fulford and Harkness have attributed the decision to adopt the “picture stories” format for the *Star Weekly* in 1957 to economic interests, without considering the possibility that photographs were an effective means of disseminating information to an expanding, non-English or French-speaking immigrant population. These questions have been taken up by scholars working in the field of photography, several having analyzed the use of government-sponsored photography to establish Canadian identity and to promote racial tolerance and multiculturalism in the 1960s.

A focus on individual writers also extends in recent scholarship to examination of the writings of art critics. A number of Québec scholars have studied the role of the press in shaping ideas about art. Marie Carani has examined art reviews and criticism in the Montréal press in her

86 In contrast, U.S. magazines such as *Reader’s Digest*, in addition to *Life* mentioned above, have received considerable scholarly attention.
88 Fulford 1988, 121.
study of the writings of Rodolphe de Repentigny.\textsuperscript{91} Louise Moreau has undertaken an investigation of the origins and editorial direction of \textit{Vie des Arts}, and Ray Ellenwood has examined press coverage of \textit{les automatistes} in the course of his study of the history of the group of Montréal-based artists.\textsuperscript{92} These historically-based studies have focused on individual artists and art critics, and the formal, aesthetic and theoretical preoccupations that engaged artists, in addition to the progress of art criticism in Québec as a significant intellectual pursuit.

The focus on nationalism within art historical scholarship on the post-war era in Canada has not only obscured the political realities of the Cold War and their impact on visual arts, but has also diverted attention away from economic interests to the realm of idealist philosophy. Within this conceptualization, nationalism has been interpreted as a public good and, perhaps as a consequence, art historians have remained largely silent when confronted with evidence of racism, sexism and classism in the primary literature and historical record.\textsuperscript{93} What curator Philip Monk once referred to as “the geniality that passed for art criticism in this country” remains much in evidence.\textsuperscript{94} To this I would add that my investigation of the literature about the Cold War era in Canada has also revealed significant gaps in the scholarship to date occasioned by preoccupation with nationalism, particularly in the way both art production and art criticism have been interpreted by art historians. In the study that follows, I address this neglect by examining two contemporary sources of ideas and information, from both English and French Canada. This close scrutiny of primary sources brings Canadian art history into line with scholarship in other

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\textsuperscript{91} Carani 1990.
disciplines. In addition, it contributes substantially to understanding of the period and challenges many assumptions about both the source of, and impetus for, ideas about visual arts and artists in Canada.
Chapter 3

The Star Weekly, 1945-1956

In this chapter I begin my examination of visual arts coverage in the Star Weekly in the final year of World War II as Canadians prepared for demobilization and post-war reconstruction. I end my analysis in 1956 when a significant shift toward support for Canadian cultural nationalism becomes apparent. The decade as a whole constituted a distinct period in the magazine; the cessation of hostilities marked a pivotal moment not only in Canadian but in world history, and the turn toward support for Canadian cultural nationalism at the end of the decade signaled an important change in the magazine’s orientation. Throughout this first post-war decade, art-related matters were a minor concern and visual arts received little attention in the Weekly. An important exception was in the area of adult education, because exposure to visual arts and arts education were elements of a broad policy agenda of increased access to education, funding for community centres to host exhibitions and art classes and other infrastructure advanced by the post-war federal government and endorsed by the magazine. This support for a narrow range of art-related activities is consistent with an instrumentalist conception of the arts as a potential hobby for Canadian adults, a means of enhancing economic development, and an outlet to divert possible dissidence into positive recreational activity. As the decade advanced, this model expanded to include art production as a means of mental and physical rehabilitation.

According to my analysis, articles concerning art and artists were included in the magazine not out of intrinsic interest in cultural matters but as coverage of a larger project, initiated by the federal government, to broaden educational opportunities for Canadian adults. Attention to the subject of education and awareness of the effect on industrial productivity of an
inadequately-educated work force were persistent elements of magazine editorials and feature articles. Presented as concern for improving the lives of ordinary Canadians and ensuring economic prosperity consistent with liberalism, the magazine’s support for state funding of community centres and education was also consistent with anti-communist perspectives which recognized a target for communist propaganda in economic disparities in Western countries. Over time, expanded educational opportunities for Canadians were also linked, in the magazine, to economic development and to the improvements in industrial and commercial design deemed necessary to meet the challenge to Western innovation posed by communist states. In this connection, art production was also a site to expose the restrictions of life under communism and the denial of artistic freedom in communist countries, in apparent contrast to open democracies in the West. In addition, Weekly articles about art patronage, rising values for works of art and challenges to ownership helped to project a sense of classlessness in the West, a construction typical of the Cold War era. In other words, the magazine’s treatment of ideas about art and artists was shaped by the ideologies of both liberalism and anti-communism in the immediate post-war years and both ideologies had an impact on the way that visual arts and artists were valued at this time.

Significant as an element in the formation of ideas about artists in this context was the relative absence in the pages of the magazine of the Canadian male as a professional practitioner of art. Defined against the frivolous female hobbyist and effete European male artist of the magazine’s visual arts coverage, what profile the Canadian male artist had in the magazine at this time came from his perceived contribution to the national economy. Over the decade, a handful of artists were granted the opportunity to comment on matters related to training for artists, arts education and funding for the arts, but this access to the realm of public discourse was framed in
specific ways. As the Cold War deepened, art production was increasingly presented as a site of escapism, and the fluidity of the designation “artist,” loosely applied to a variety of individuals working with non-art materials, was mirrored by an irreverent and mocking presentation of European artists. Rooted within the developing construction of European art as decadent and feminine, in opposition to North American art as virile and masculine, this gendered conception directed attention to the behavior and appearance of artists, aspects of their professional persona that posed a challenge to middlebrow values.

Finally, a key feature of the magazine’s coverage following the war was the way ideas about visual arts and artists were mediated through the cultural authority of Great Britain. At the same time, the number of reproductions of both paintings by U.S. artists and scenes from south of the border is an indication of the increasing integration of the North American economies underway at this time. This duality suggests that the symbolic heart, the mentalité of the magazine, lay somewhere between Britain and the United States during these years. There was little interest in specifically Canadian art produced by artists born in Canada, and initially no attention to the subject of cultural nationalism, both topics that would become a major preoccupation in the Weekly in the late 1950s, the subject of chapter four.

**Liberalism and Anti-communism: A Delicate Balance**

Across the decade, support for visual arts was a minor element of the magazine’s campaign to encourage expanded educational opportunities for Canadians. Initially, the magazine conceived of art production as a means of personal growth and enrichment and little or no attention was paid to the training of professional artists. Instead, as the post-war economy expanded, the magazine devoted more space to publicizing initiatives to ensure a better-trained work force in support of
capitalist development. In time, it also promoted access to public institutions such as art museums as educational resources linked to technical proficiency and intellectual growth. Developments that might impede the progress of economic expansion, for instance a decline in educational standards for the training of artists and designers, received significant negative attention in the magazine.

These elements of visual arts coverage in the magazine are consistent with the goals and ideals of liberalism; however, entwined in this liberal project was a complementary unease regarding the spread of communism in Canada and around the world. In the atmosphere of post-war reconstruction, this concern was revealed in the magazine’s support of initiatives that identified and attempted to prevent “problem” behavior by directing Canadians into correspondingly positive recreational activities such as art production and appreciation. As the Cold War intensified into the 1950s, the magazine’s support of expanded educational opportunities was bolstered by awareness of the economic challenge posed by communist states, and concern over declining technical standards for artists was symptomatic of efforts to discourage impediments to economic expansion. The magazine also publicized the restrictions placed on artists in communist states while emphasizing elements of classlessness in Western democracies using the example of increased access to public art collections and the affordability of works of art. In both these instances, negative aspects of life under communism and positive developments in the West were highlighted in articles concerning art and artists. At the end of the decade, when the magazine supported initiatives to open up trade between Canada and the USSR, visual art production was once again deployed, in this instance to argue that censorship in communist states was less oppressive than it had been in the past.
While the magazine endorsed a broad range of formal and informal educational opportunities over the decade, initial support was given to the development of opportunities for education and enrichment for Canadian adults. In the immediate post-war period, for instance, the magazine promoted initiatives such as community centres to act as venues to assist returning service personnel to adjust to civilian life and to function as sites for arts-related education and enrichment. The argument advanced in editorials and news articles in the magazine was that these centres would contribute to the “development of creative expressions in Canada.” In support of this project, the *Weekly* advocated that community centres engage the services of artists, musicians, dramatists, writers and sports and recreation leaders. Echoing the proposals made by Lawren Harris in his role as head of the Federation of Canadian Artists in a brief to the federal government’s Special Committee on Reconstruction and Re-Establishment, the magazine suggested that the National Gallery of Canada, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the National Film Board might provide programming in the form of exhibitions, films and live performances.

With this endorsement of community centres to host a range of cultural activities, the magazine promoted the idea that cultural producers such as artists, writers and musicians were important resources for education and enrichment. The social policy initiatives endorsed by the magazine at this time appear to have been informed by concerns for mental and social hygiene, a preoccupation Zoe Druick has linked to social engineering initiatives founded in eugenics. As Druick explains, expanding earlier government interventions in regulating nutrition, fitness, racial integration and housing, new concerns for leisure, recreation and citizenship emerged at the end

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1 “For a United Canada,” Editorial, *Star Weekly* 2 June 1945, 6. Unless otherwise indicated, references are from section 1 of the magazine.

of the war to be similarly shaped by government programs. In this context, the goal of diverting potential dissidence into what were presented as positive recreational activities also emerged in the description of how class and ethnic divisions in Canada might be successfully managed at the centres. The magazine suggested, for instance, that “in the centres there can most effectively be broken down the psychological ‘fences’ which may exist between members of the community of different classes, national or economic background.” With the memory of civil unrest following WWI demobilization still alive, the Canadian government may have been prompted to take initiatives to avoid a recurrence. The Weekly appears to have recognized the threat posed by what was described as “disunity” within Canadian society, endorsing government initiatives in addressing the problem and identifying a place for visual arts in this project.

Coverage of expanded commercial activity and increased international trade were additional elements of the magazine’s support for educational opportunities in Canada generally, underscoring the intersections between the economy and social policy. Government support for education as an element of post-war reconstruction was renewed and expanded in the late 1940s as the international situation appeared increasingly troubling. Initially part of a policy direction consistent with liberalism, in which these initiatives were presented as concern to improve living standards in Canada, education became a target for anti-communist initiatives as the Cold War intensified. Anxiety regarding the dangers of communism is evident in a speech quoted in an editorial in the magazine in which future Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent explicitly linked the

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4 SW [Star Weekly] 2 June 1945, 6.
Liberal government’s social policy initiatives to anti-communist activities. The provocative language employed by St. Laurent in the speech was typical of the Cold War era, characterized by Whitaker and Marcuse as infused with “lofty sentiments and high rhetoric.” Employing the contents of the speech as justification, the editorial supported the policy initiatives proposed by the federal Liberal party as strategies to combat communist activities in Canada.

According to Whitaker and Marcuse, the dramatic prose employed by journalists and public figures at the time in describing communism was a useful strategy to heighten the sense of danger concerning its growth around the world. Further, they argue that emphasizing an increasingly perilous situation was a means of building support for the key role played by governments in the fight against it. Promoting the link that politicians were making between social policy and anti-communism, articles in the magazine justified the expansion of social welfare policies in Canada into areas of family welfare, housing, universal health care, old age security and family allowance initiatives by identifying a need to ensure “a wholesome and secure family life in a free society.” An important factor in this support was recognition of how communist propaganda exploited poverty and other social problems in Western countries.

As the threat of communism expanded in various parts of the world in the late 1940s, the magazine endorsed art-related activities in support of economic development and international aid combined with anti-communist initiatives. A potential role for Canada and Canadians in this project was suggested by the magazine’s description of Canadian artist Reva Esser. According to

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6 “As in the last war, we are engaged in a struggle for the control for men’s minds and men’s souls. We know that, divided, the free nations may fall, one by one, before the forces of totalitarian tyranny, working within and without their borders, but that, united, they can preserve freedom and peace for all” (“Canada’s Foreign Policy,” Editorial, SW 22 Jan. 1949, 6).
8 Ibid., 81.
9 Ross Harkness, “Canada’s Record in Social Security,” SW 11 June 1949, 2 (2). As a rule, the Weekly did not expose problems within the country until there was a government strategy in place to address it.
the Weekly, the fabric and textile artist’s work among poverty-stricken peasants in China was part of a relief project carried out during the civil war in that country. The efforts of the graduate of the Ontario College of Art, in a project sponsored by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) at the Bailie School for Co-operatives in Sandan, China, provided an example in the magazine of how an artist might contribute to economic development in areas threatened by communism and also how the arts might function as an element of foreign aid.

At the same time, the Weekly actively discouraged developments that might have posed a challenge to the progress of capitalist expansion in post-war Canada. This preoccupation may have prompted a degree of interest in training for artists and in arts education in the late 1940s, a subject typically of minor concern in the magazine. The increased attention to the subject of visual arts at this time may have been prompted by the Massey Commission because the process of public hearings conducted by the commission, beginning in 1949, opened up public debate in Canada on the subject of government funding for the arts and education. Perhaps in response to ongoing discussions in Canada, the magazine included an article concerning the situation in Britain and comments made by the outgoing president at the British Royal Academy annual dinner in London regarding the education of artists and control of arts funding. While the Massey Commission was not mentioned in the article, criticisms launched by Sir Alfred Munnings and questions about “public money, spent on subsidizing galleries and art education, of who gets the jobs and who gets the scholarships and of what children shall be taught in schools” suggests that ongoing discussions in Canada formed the background to the article. As the author of the article explained, Munnings was “gravely concerned” that modernism and the “School of Paris” had

come to dominate art education in Britain, unduly influencing the allocation of public money for purchases, scholarships and exhibitions.

The magazine’s treatment of the Royal Academy dinner is a prime example of the strategies employed by the magazine when presenting critical issues to the readership; it used humor to deflect potentially controversial topics and to diminish attention to class interests, even as it displaced potential points of contention further by filtering debates through a British perspective and events in Great Britain. The issue of public funding for visual arts education and infrastructure was a serious matter at the time, yet the author of the article employed a light-hearted tone in the account published in the *Weekly*. Munnings’s “unconventional language” at the Royal Academy dinner was excused as the outspoken opinions of an iconoclast, even though his comments were reported elsewhere as not only laced with profanity, fuelled by alcohol and made in the presence of Winston Churchill, the Archbishop of Canterbury and a member of the Royal family, but also broadcast live on BBC radio.¹³ The author chose to downplay these potentially embarrassing aspects of the affair, instead providing a description of the support that Munnings had received from radio listeners and other interested individuals following the broadcast. In this instance, the magazine maintained the appearance of disinterest in publicizing the controversy concerning arts funding, employing the opinions of an artist and private individual to prompt awareness of developments that might impede its growth. In spite of the humorous tone, the article raised serious questions concerning the direction of the British Arts Council, public funding for the arts and the role of so-called “highbrows” in controlling publicly

funded institutions, questions that were also fundamental to the commission inquiry underway in Canada.  

Because the Massey Commission was conceived in part as an initiative to fight communism, the article provides an example as well of how anti-communism and liberalism were intertwined in discussions of art matters in the magazine in the early years of the Cold War. The connection between them was exposed in a subsequent article that, in this instance, addressed the situation within Canada directly. The questions posed by Munnings concerning arts education and the impact of modernism on art training were embedded, in this case, in the opinions of former Canadian war artist Kenneth Forbes. Described as a traditionalist and “one of Canada’s leading painters,” Forbes made an explicit connection between modern art and communism, labeling modern art subversive because it was promoted by international communism. And, like Munnings, he expressed concern as to what students were being taught in art schools and charged that modern art was promoted by international communism as a deliberate strategy to lower art standards and technical performance in Western countries.

In this instance also, humor was employed to diffuse potentially controversial issues. The opinions of an outspoken artist—even as they were employed to advance the issues—were mediated by the author’s use of humor, Forbes adding to a sense of the absurd with his description of an abstract painting created by a donkey wagging its tail across a canvas and another by a cat walking in paint. The humorous and tongue-in-cheek tone suggested that the

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14 Litt 1992, 56.
15 Ibid., 16.
16 Dennis Braithwaite, “Modern Art is a Racket,” SW 22 December 1951, 2 (2).
17 Kenneth Forbes (1892-1980) was an artist with the Canadian War Records Office during WWI and a prominent portrait painter in Canada. Born in Toronto, Forbes studied art in the United Kingdom, at the Slade Art School and the New London Art School. In addition to his work as a war artist, Forbes produced many portraits of prominent Canadians, including Prime Minister John Diefenbaker.
article was not to be taken entirely seriously; nevertheless, questions concerning the possible link between communist subversion, declining artistic standards and modern art were placed in circulation by this public airing of the artist’s opinions.

Links between modern art and communism were again publicized in the magazine in 1955. And, once again, the opinions of a private individual and questions concerning modernism and declining art standards were employed to advance the idea of a connection between them. In this instance, the article concerned Montréal lawyer Charles Greenshields and a proposal to set up a private foundation to provide funding for artists working in traditional modes of painting. Similar questions concerning modernism and charges that reduced standards he associated with modern art would have a negative impact on industrial and commercial design were prominent features of the article. In the words of the art patron, “Modern art is a portrayal of squalor, ugliness and even obscenity. It is a widespread distortion of human and other forms. It is shocking.”

Noting the “iconoclasm and unbridled license of a rapidly growing and articulate group of artists and their supporters,” Greenshields raised the specter of communist subversion and its impact on impressionable youth. According to Greenshields, “certain fundamental principles and standards have emerged to guide the young in making their contributions to continued progress. The action of modernists parallels the work of Communists and also tears down standards of free countries. The destruction of old and established standards has always been their first step toward the attainment of their evil ends.” Greenshields, an amateur painter himself according to the article, claimed that students who were learning to just “express themselves” were bypassing rigorous training in the fundamentals of art and design.

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While neither Forbes nor Munnings were mentioned in the article, many of the opinions expressed by Greenshields echoed earlier charges that abstraction had the potential to weaken industrial and commercial design standards in Canada. This time, however, the article appeared to present a more balanced view and cited prominent gallery directors, including Martin Baldwin of the Art Gallery of Toronto (now Art Gallery of Ontario), John Steegman of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, who supported artistic freedom and found the idea of the foundation dangerous, and Robert Hubbard of the National Gallery of Canada who maintained that contemporary Canadian art was only “semi-abstract.” Once again, the magazine employed humor to mediate the seriousness of the accusations by promoting the article on the cover of the Rotogravure section below an illustration of a tennis match between a man and a woman in which the female player dominates her male opponent at the net (fig. 1).19 With the man cowering at his opponent’s feet, the illustration suggested a “battle of the sexes” confrontation over modern art, employing humour to render the controversy less troubling. At the same time, however, the issues at stake were placed in circulation and questions regarding associations between modern art, communist subversion and the impact of both on economic development in Canada were raised by the magazine.

19 SW 20 Aug. 1955 cover (R).
In addition to the publication of articles dealing with the training of artists, the magazine engaged with contemporary debates about the role of public institutions such as art galleries and museums in the expanding liberal project. The issue of public funding to support these institutions was a significant component of ongoing discussions at the time, addressed, for instance, by the Massey Commission’s investigation into the state of the arts and culture in Canada. The Weekly participated in these discussions through the publication of articles that
provided information but also advanced the magazine’s perspective on the subject. Recommendations made by the Massey Commission, for instance, were an element of an article concerning the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. In this instance turning to an authority at a U.S. institution for commentary and analysis of the progress of cultural affairs in Canada, *Toronto Star* reporter Monroe Johnston reported that the director of the Met approved of the recommendations made by the Massey Commission because “the museum is one of the few places where the population can escape from the impositions of an age starved for spiritual values.” According to the reporter, the director believed workers in the “atomic age” would have too much time on their hands and proposed the museum as a site to address this perceived problem by engaging the public in activities and enrichment.

In this instance, the New York museum was employed as a negative role model for Canadian institutions because it appeared to promote “entertainment” over “education.” The author described the atmosphere at the Met as a “circus” and the director a “salesman,” for instance, and cited his use of “the latest public relations strategies, writing books, selling miniatures [reproductions] and appearing on television and radio shows to promote the art museum.” While the museum director was acknowledged as an important authority from a major public institution, the magazine was openly critical of the management model employed in New York and promoted the idea that cultural institutions in Canada should follow a different path. The *Weekly* advanced a similar argument concerning the Royal Ontario Museum and extended the role of museums to include the idea that museums should act as vehicles for economic development and improved manufacturing and industrial design. An article published in the magazine, for instance, identified a specific project undertaken by the museum aimed at

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furthering industrial design in order to enhance manufacturing in Canada.  

Employing the example of Canadian sculptor Emanuel Hahn, who sketched from a caribou specimen at the museum in order to produce the image of the caribou head on the Canadian quarter, the author of the article argued for the importance of the institution as an educational resource for Canadians. In this, the museum was presented by the magazine as an alternative to a costly expansion of the educational system and a site for self-education.

A preoccupation with the idea of education in support of commercial and industrial innovation and of “raising tastes” through exposure to visual arts is characteristic of a middlebrow sensibility and its appearance in the magazine a demonstration of how the Weekly used these values in specific ways. Significantly, the article describing activities at the Met identified typically lowbrow “entertainment” initiatives at the U.S. institution as a point of comparison. Other articles and features supported middlebrow values, for instance the magazine promoted both educational activities at the Royal Ontario Museum and the educational value of reproductions of birds and wildlife produced by museum employees, reproduced in the magazine. The perspective promoted in the Weekly suggests an interest in education in support of capitalist enterprises through commercial and industrial innovation in order to produce a better-trained work force. The magazine also identified the goal of “freeing Canadian designs from their subservience to U.S. and British influence” as an important function of museums in Canada. This example of efforts to promote a Canadian sensibility in design and of promoting

21 “This policy, which museums in Britain, France and other industrial countries have followed for years, has helped revolutionize manufacturing design, invigorate industrial crafts, raise the standard of workmanship and stimulate inventiveness generally” (Harold Hilliard, “A New Role for the Museum,” SW 20 May 1950, 4 [2]).
22 Emanuel Hahn (1881-1957) was a Canadian sculptor with numerous public commissions. A long-time teacher at the Ontario College of Art, Hahn was a founding member of the Sculptor’s Society of Canada.
cultural institutions as sites to advance this project linked national identity with economic
development, associations that would intensify in the magazine over time.

The delicate balance maintained in the magazine between liberal and anti-communist
perspectives, and their relationship to ideas about art, extended beyond Canada and Western
democracies. In fact, many articles published in the Weekly during the first decade of the Cold
War described life in communist countries as a point of contrast with life in the West.
Restrictions on artists and writers were identified in the magazine as examples of the extent of
censorship in communist states, underscoring the implications of the denial of intellectual
freedom under communism. Typically projected at reinforcing negative perceptions of
communism, these articles at times highlighted elements where, from the magazine’s perspective,
the West might improve. In a series of articles following a trip to Russia, for instance, reporter
Angela Burke emphasized restrictions on artistic freedom but acknowledged that the arts were
well funded by the Soviet state. Along with her description of the status of visual arts and
censorship, however, the reporter described the poor quality and scarcity of consumer goods in
Russia, suggesting the magazine’s interest in presenting communist states as possible markets for
Canadian products at this time.

As the decade ended, the magazine began to devote more attention to providing evidence
of greater freedom for artists and the easing of restrictions in communist countries. This altered
perspective supported calls for a new relationship between the West and communist states,
particularly in response to the leadership of Nikita Khrushchev in the USSR. The magazine
used the example of reduced censorship in the visual arts sector to provide tangible evidence of

Kremlin’s Warrior,” SW 9 December 1950, 4.
change; rather than continuing confrontation with communist governments, it argued, the time was right to negotiate. This new emphasis on change within communist states served, in turn, to bolster an argument related to economic development, in this case with a potential trading partner. The shift illustrates not only the magazine’s priorities and the importance of economic considerations in visual arts coverage, but also the impact of contemporary events on ideas about art and artists. While the liberal project remained deeply inflected with anti-communism into the 1960s, the emphasis shifted at this time, the magazine’s endorsement of the liberal project overtaking fears of the spread of communism in Canada and around the world.

**An Era of Classlessness**

Throughout the decade, as a counterpoint to negative aspects of life under communism, the magazine also emphasized positive elements of life in Western democracies. Among the many benefits of life in the West promoted in the magazine was a claim of classlessness, and this conception was an important component of articles concerning art collecting and art patronage. Articles published following the war that dealt with increased access to public art collections and the affordability of works of art suggested that the economic benefits of capitalism were available to all. At the same time, notice of the declining fortunes of the European aristocracy, symbolized by the forced sale or seizure of art collections and other cultural property, suggested the triumph of democracy over a corrupt and exploitative ruling class. Any relationship between rising middle-class affluence and the economic boom produced by the war was not acknowledged in the magazine, nor was the motive behind its support for education and the production of a better-trained work force. Invariably justified by the needs of industrial and commercial expansion, the interests, and indeed the existence, of a capitalist class remained largely hidden. Instead, the
Weekly presented Western democracies as classless and visual arts coverage provided an important site to establish and promote this idea.

The way that the Weekly described the post-war opening up of the art market in New York to members of the general public and the increasing accessibility of paintings by Old Masters in public collections are examples of the promotion of classlessness within the realm of visual arts coverage. Articles published in the magazine at this time suggested that collecting art was no longer the domain of the wealthy few but that anyone might profit from the purchase of an unknown painting; it might be subsequently authenticated by an expert as valuable using the latest scientific techniques. In a real sense, “mass buying by the general public” was presented as a positive outcome of the democratizing authority of scientific knowledge and technical expertise. At the same time, profiting from rising values of works of art was also presented as a benefit available to all citizens, a “safe” investment or a significant asset for posthumous donation despite the fact that the art market might be as unpredictable as the stock market. The increasing accessibility of paintings in public collections in the United States and Canada, attributed to the benevolence of wealthy patrons, was another important element of articles describing rising values for works of art. These discussions underscored the notion of Western democracies under capitalism as successors to a corrupt and decadent European aristocracy, supported notions of classlessness as another positive aspect of life in the West and advocated for philanthropy on the part of wealthy individuals.

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27 Albert Hicks, “Quest for Old Masters,” SW 9 Mar. 1946, 8.
28 Serge Guilbaut has argued that the increased affluence of middle-class U.S. Americans was a product of the economic boom produced by the war; see Serge Guilbaut, How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 90.
30 For instance, the Carnegie Corporation’s sponsorship of the Banff Summer School of Fine Arts, “Art Classes in the Rockies,” SW 25 Oct. 1945, 30(R). For a discussion of the projection of classlessness, see
In addition to its endorsement of patronage-class willingness to open up private collections to the public, the magazine also promoted a message of classlessness in other ways. An article by Canadian journalist Matthew Halton on the “cultural renaissance” underway in post-war Britain is a good example. It projected the idea of classlessness in its assertion that increased interest in the arts had led to declining class divisions in Britain. According to the article, “during the long hours of blackout people in Britain turned more and more to books, music and radio.” Halton also claimed that this experience had prompted “all classes to turn to the arts” and that attendance at exhibitions and other cultural events was rising. The notion of Western nations as democratic successors to a declining European aristocracy was an important element of the CBC correspondent’s description of post-war Britain, as was the role of BBC radio and television in supporting and promoting increased interest in the arts. The article also advanced the idea that visual arts and other cultural activities were a way of ensuring the continuation of the democratization process.

A similar construction appeared in an article concerning an art exhibition at the Art Gallery of Toronto, “Treasures of the Hapsburgs.” Placing the responsibility for the rise of communism on a corrupt European aristocracy, reporter William Stephenson provided an unflattering portrait of the former owners of the collection. According to the magazine article, the collection, amassed by greed and theft across several centuries before being pillaged by the Nazis, was no longer controlled by wealthy aristocrats but available for all to enjoy in Toronto “for the price of a milkshake.” Projecting associations with lowbrow cultural products against suspicions of elite or highbrow culture, the author focused on what might be described as the

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“cloak and dagger” elements of the history of the collection, including its most recent treatment during World War II. The Allied Forces emerge as the heroes of the story for rescuing the works of art, reinforcing notions of the benevolent actions of Western democracies in support of the grand heritage of Western art.

In similar fashion, the National Gallery of Canada’s acquisition of paintings from the Prince of Liechtenstein was presented as part of a natural and inevitable process of decline, the public institution a democratic successor to such collections. The declining fortunes of the aristocracy in Britain, indicated by coverage of the dispersal of art collections and other property, is further indication of how the magazine presented these developments. They were treated lightly in reports in the Weekly, the magazine adopting a humorous tone in accounts of the selling off of estates and their contents, and presenting this development as a natural progression as the contemporary world moved away from the stratified class system of the past. Other articles emphasized the new functions of historic homes and estates in the U.K., increasingly supported by public funds directed at maintaining and preserving national heritage. Open to the public as tourist attractions, these estates were described as “historical curiosities,” remnants of a way of life that had vanished. The magazine presented the process of change as a natural and inevitable facet of life in the West. In this, capitalism appears self-regulating, occasional interventions made by democratic governments mediating the excesses of the past. The magazine presented the rewards of capitalism, symbolized by ownership of Old Master paintings and other cultural

33 SW 28 Nov. 1953, 30-31 (R); “Five Pictures Cost Ottawa $360,000,” SW 14 Aug. 1954, 15 (R).
assets, as available for all to enjoy and, in the process, presented Western democracies as classless.

**The Artist in Society**

In addition to publicizing examples of the increasing accessibility of works of art and other positive aspects of life in the West, the *Weekly*’s visual arts coverage participated in the construction of ideas concerning artists. Once again, liberal and anti-communist perspectives were embedded in this discussion, with both ideologies deployed together in numerous articles across the decade. The magazine continued to demonstrate a limited interest in visual arts in general; instead, the artist was a vehicle through which to engage with a broad range of contemporary issues. In addition to his role in advancing art education and training, the artist was a site to promote the magazine’s perspective on the place and value of the artist in society, and a variety of topics, from the assimilation of immigrants to attitudes toward women, emerged in the discussion. In its portrayal of artists, the magazine also established and promoted an association between modern art, abstraction, mental illness, and communism. European artists came under negative scrutiny in the magazine, presented as effete and frivolous in both appearance and with respect to their art practices. Against the dismissal of European artists, the magazine emphasized the contributions the Canadian male artist was making to the economy, deploying evidence of marriage and military service to signify masculinity and patriotic attachment to family and country.

An important feature of the magazine’s content was the relative lack of attention during these years to professional artists in Canada. The article on the educational potential of museums in Canada cited earlier, which included a brief reference to sculptor Emanuel Hahn, is an example
of this limited examination. In the article, the reader learned nothing about the sculptor or his art practice apart from his role in the design of the Canadian coin, and thus the way in which it reflected the intersection between design and commerce. The articles on Forbes and Greenshields were important exceptions; however, again, the focus was on commercial activity, criticisms of then current art education and declining design standards. The opinions of several practicing artists were quoted in the article concerning Greenfield’s proposed foundation, including those of Montréal artists Stanley Cosgrove and Goodridge Roberts, and several members of Toronto-based Painters Eleven. The reader learned little about the artists or their respective practices, however, apart from the fact that Cosgrove “flirted” with abstraction, that Kazuo Nakamura’s work evoked the world of science, medicine, and industry, and that the others were interested in creative expression.

In contrast to such brief remarks concerning contemporary artists working in abstraction, the article on Forbes projected important ideas about the acceptable behavior, appearance, attitudes and working practice of the professional Canadian artist. Accompanied by a large photograph of the artist and his wife observing their daughter at work on a self-portrait, the article included a description of how, over three generations, from Britain to Canada, the Forbes family had carried on a tradition of representational painting and portraiture based on prominent Canadian and British subjects. In the photograph, the three artists appear content and prosperous, in contrast to the inflammatory language of the text and the accusations made by Forbes linking modernism with communist subversion (fig. 2). Forbes’s authority to address

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36 Braithwaite, SW 22 Dec. 1951, 2 (2).
Figure 2: “Champion of the traditional school of painting whose portraits have brought him international recognition, Kenneth K. Forbes is seen above. With him are his wife (centre), an accomplished painter in her own right, and his daughter June (right), also a portrait painter. Facing her is a portrait of herself.”

these matters was assured by his status as “one of Canada’s leading painters” with an “international reputation,” and the photographs and family history included with the article projected an image of Canadians as white and Anglo-British. At the same time, elements of Forbes’s biography, including his service as a Canadian war artist during World War I and his success as an amateur boxer in England, provided evidence of patriotism and offset suspicions of elitist behavior and attitudes, particularly those evident in his lament, “We don’t have as good a class of people sponsoring art today.”

Two weeks later, a second article on a Canadian male artist was featured in the magazine, this time a piece dealing with now little-known artist Matthew Kousal, an immigrant from
Czechoslovakia who had arrived in Canada in 1926. Significantly, however, the artist was the focus of a detailed examination, not of the contemporary artist in Canada, but of the life and experience of the immigrant. 37 The reporter described Kousal’s initial poverty as a farm labourer, the hard work and disappointment of owning his own farm during the Depression and his eventual success as a prosperous landscape artist who was able to support himself by teaching and by sales of his paintings. In this instance, the assimilation of immigrants, particularly the assimilation of immigrants from communist countries, emerged as the central theme of the text.38 In this sense, Kousal’s financial success following immigration was an important element of his “triumph over adversity,” the article emphasizing the fact that this success followed many years of hardship. Significantly, the artist was not a recent immigrant but had been in Canada for more than two decades, what was presented as his successful integration thus becoming instructive in the context of post-war immigration policies. The details of his experience conveyed an important message to other immigrants, about how to assimilate, the hardships that may lie ahead and the potential economic rewards of immigration and assimilation into Canadian society.39 At the same time, the description of his life and his appreciation of the opportunities offered in Canada worked to ease the fears of more settled Canadians concerning the presence of immigrants.40

38 According to Donald Avery, immigrants from Eastern Europe were “particularly suspect” and subject to restrictions under the 1952 Immigration Act. Donald Avery, Reluctant Host: Canada’s Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896-1994 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995), 174.
39 These rewards and the possible links between art and commercial activity were suggested by the full page colour reproductions of several of Kousal’s landscape paintings published in the magazine throughout 1952 and 1953.
40 Franca Iacovetta has described the press as an important site to stimulate debate and reflection among Canadian readers regarding immigration; see Franca Iacovetta, Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada (Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2006), 54.

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A key element of the article was the emphasis in the text on the “freedom” Kousal enjoyed in his new country. Opportunities identified by the journalist included the freedom to travel across Canada each summer, to become an artist by profession and relocate from one community to another. The prevalence of articles in the magazine describing censorship and other restrictions in communist countries suggests that Coady could assume a level of awareness on the part of readers concerning constraints on these “freedoms” in communist-controlled states. In this context, the description of the artist’s life in Canada appeared as a compelling contrast, a contrast the artist acknowledged by referring to the denial of these choices in his former home country.41 The restrictions on travel and individual freedom in communist countries reported in the article reinforced the negative perceptions of life in communist countries promoted in the magazine, while projecting its interest in the assimilation of immigrants from Eastern Europe as full, productive and patriotic Canadians.42

In addition to its role in facilitating the assimilation process, visual arts were presented in the article as a solution to other perceived social problems such as mental illness. In this instance, the artist’s opinions were deployed to support a claim for art appreciation as a source of pleasure and relaxation and therefore a positive benefit to the public. The opinions expressed by Forbes regarding the dangers of modern art advanced in the earlier article were reinforced by a parallel argument here that “naturism [sic] or classical art can do more for mental health than ultramodern art.” Once again, liberalism and anti-communist perspectives were intertwined in the description

41 “Here I can travel for thousands of miles without anyone asking where I am going, and I can paint what I like. If I were in Czechoslovakia, if I were still alive, I would at least be in a concentration camp” (Charles Coady, “His Dream of Canada Came True,” SW 5 Jan. 1952, 4 [2]).
42 The issue of patriotism was addressed in the text through a description of the artist’s family; “the eldest girl is in the RCAF, and the second one is engaged, and pert 18-year old Frances plans to join the air force shortly” (Charles Coady, “His Dream of Canada Came True,” SW 5 Jan. 1952, 4 [2]).
of the artist’s life, and the profile was employed as a vehicle to advance the perspective of the magazine concerning immigrants, assimilation, communism and modern art.

In these articles, the magazine refrained from direct criticism of abstraction or modernism; and employed the opinions of practicing artists such as Forbes and Kousal to inform readers of potential problems and criticisms in the realm of visual arts. In other features in the magazine, contemporary suspicions regarding abstract or non-objective art and associations between abstraction and mental illness were projected more explicitly. A short story by freelance U.S. author Charles Carver, for instance, told of an artist from Greenwich Village who was consumed by a “restless spirit” and felt a “strange moody dissatisfaction” until he abandoned abstract painting. 43 While formerly “miserable, morose, haunted, unhappy and possessed of demons,” the artist found satisfaction when he gave up painting for marriage, employment in a bank and a home in New Jersey. The fictional account presented abstraction as the product of mental illness and the desired outcome projected in the magazine was that individuals abandon the “unhealthy” pursuits in favour of a conventional home and work environment.

While directing artists away from abstraction by emphasizing negative associations with mental illness, other articles in the magazine proposed that working as an artist presented a solution to contemporary social problems. In addition to aiding in the assimilation of immigrants and promoting mental health, visual arts were presented as a potential occupation for disabled adults and youth. Adult rehabilitation and juvenile delinquency were two areas of concern addressed in this way—the possibility of art production as a means to self-sufficiency advanced as a reason for adopting it as an occupation. 44 Afflicted with different physical ailments,

43 Charles Carver, “The Artist Disappeared,” SW 23 Oct. 1948, 3(2). Carver’s fiction was also published in magazines such as Esquire, Colliers and American.
44 Melba Lent, “Fun for Everyone,” SW 11 June 1949, 6 (2).
including war injuries, paralysis from polio, birth defects and accidental injuries, disabled artists were featured in photographs in the magazine and described as painting with a brush in the mouth or the crook of an arm, from a canoe, in wheelchairs or on crutches, overcoming adversity and physical limitations to advance the work (fig. 3). In an effort to reinforce positive aspects of the desired outcome, these individuals were described as brave, hard working and determined to succeed, and the financial rewards from exhibitions and sales of paintings were included as both an indication of well-being and evidence of self-sufficiency.

Figure 3: “Stuart Shaw of Lansing, Ontario, is no armchair artist. Despite paralysis, he penetrates the remotest corners, not only of Ontario but the Rockies of British Columbia, to transfer to canvas the glories of nature in the raw. Above, Shaw uses his crutches for an easel and a seat.”

The articles promoting art production and art appreciation as solutions to social problems in Canada, and the attention to the art practice and opinions of now little-known artists such as Kousal and Forbes highlights the absence of what would be considered canonical Canadian artists in the magazine throughout this period. Reproductions of paintings by artists such as Franz Johnston and Cornelius Krieghoff appeared from time to time, often in connection with contemporary events and concerns, but extensive details concerning the artists were not included. In the absence of information and attention to Canadian artists, the portrait of European artists projected in the magazine established a negative perception of the role and activities of the professional artist in society.

An important example of the construction of ideas concerning European artists emerged in the specifics of the noteworthy and recurring attention to the Spanish painters Salvador Dali and Pablo Picasso. Of the two, Dali enjoyed the greater profile over the course of the decade and was featured in numerous photographs in the magazine, although this coverage was largely negative. The description of the artist provided by the magazine suggested that Dali’s physical appearance was eccentric and his art practice unusual. Captions, for instance, “He is not the screwball he seems but has a high appreciation of publicity, and makes seeming crazy pay good dividends,” suggested that the artist was dishonest and manipulative. In addition to offending middlebrow values of hard work, the photographs and the underlying conception of the artist suggested links with the entertainment industry rather than serious artistic investigations or intellectual inquiry. As Keith Eggener has described, Dali’s reception in the United States was based on a close association between the artist and vaudeville, circus acts, “screwball” comedies.

46 See for instance SW 2 Mar. 1946, n.p. Franz Johnston was an original member of the Group of Seven. 47 “Dali, wearing a silk dressing-gown, has just dashed off a creative idea that came to him, as many of his best ideas do, during a siesta on the studio couch” (“Salvador Dali, Surrealist,” SW 21 July 1945, 6 [R]); “Salvador Dali in More Extremes of Surrealism,” SW 27 Oct. 1945, 8 (R).
and Walt Disney, rather than consideration of the ideas and politics behind surrealism or the artist’s work in it. The context within which the photographs of Dali were taken was usually not reported either, and the coverage was largely mocking in tone (see for instance fig. 4).

Figure 4: “Salvador Dali in More Extremes of Surrealism”

The artist was presented as effete as well as eccentric, a conception that suggests the developing construction of European contemporary art as decadent and gendered feminine.49

This negative representation of Dali was also characteristic of the magazine’s treatment of Picasso. Another prominent figure in visual arts coverage in the magazine, his financial success was attributed to the gullibility of collectors and to the artist’s eccentricities, rather than to any significant artistic achievement. At the same time, Picasso’s artistic integrity was projected through information concerning his reluctance to sell his work “even though collectors gladly pay high prices.”50 Otherwise, the magazine provided little information about his work and even less analysis of it, apart from the fact that “Picasso is fond of birds of every description” and that, in addition to his interest in the “abstract,” he also worked in “primitivism, cubism and surrealism.”51 Photographs of other contemporary artists, such as “Surrealist Franco Assetto of Turin, Italy, [who] devotes his talent to painting women’s backs on the Italian and French Riviera,” reinforced the negative and frivolous context established for the work of European artists and surrealism in the magazine.52 Prominent, internationally recognized artists such as Dali and Picasso appeared no more significant or noteworthy than the weekly parade of “artists” shown working with unusual processes and unconventional materials such as teeth, shells or toothpicks featured in the Rotogravure section of the magazine.53 The only distinction was that

49 Guilbaut 1983, 179.
51 The reference to Picasso’s fondness for birds may be connected to the artist’s Peace Dove lithograph, used in the poster designed for the International Peace Conference, Paris 1949.
53 On the rare occasions when a contemporary international artist was given more serious consideration in the magazine, the underlying reason for this positive treatment was invariably unrelated to the field of visual arts. Mexican artists Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, for instance, were featured in a series in the Rotogravure section, with Rivera depicted in the process of painting a mural for the lobby of the new Cardiac Institute in Mexico City; see “The Famous Diego Rivera and His Wife At Work,” SW 25 Oct. 1952, 14 (R). The photographs conveyed information about the progress of modernization and the stability of the country, suggesting that the magazine’s decision to showcase Kahlo and Rivera was informed by an
the famous artists enjoyed the financial rewards of success; otherwise the activities of the artists were presented with lighthearted and mocking comments that simulated bewilderment and reinforced associations between contemporary artists and lowbrow entertainment. In fact, the financial success enjoyed by Dali was a source of disparagement, and the idea that an artist might profit from sales of art works was treated negatively in the magazine. In other words, the notion that artists often lived in poverty was presented as evidence of artistic integrity. The connection made in the magazine between art production and entertainment was reinforced by the many articles that provided practical advice and promoted painting as a hobby for adults.\footnote{Gwen Cowley “Let’s Go Sketching,” SW 15 Oct. 1949, 10 (2).}

The portrait of European artists promoted in the magazine’s visual arts coverage helped to project ideas concerning his Canadian counterpart, a construction that was also defined, in absence, by the presentation of women artists. In fact, the majority of artists who were featured in the magazine were women, either students or amateurs who were marking time, playing at being an “artist” until they fulfilled their inevitable destinies as wives and mothers (fig. 5). This conception was echoed in works of fiction in the magazine that featured women artists as main characters. According to the magazine, men had “traditional” jobs and engaged in artistic activities as hobbies, a welcome escape from the demands of their professional lives.

interest in Mexico as an important market for Canadian products at this time. The Star Weekly devoted considerable attention to Mexico and promoted trade and tourism in Mexico. For instance, throughout 1947 every issue contained at least one article or photograph about Mexico.
The description and presentation of women artists in the magazine helped to project and maintain conventional gender roles in Canadian society, particularly as the decade advanced. In contrast to the rigidly defined gender stereotypes promoted in the magazine in subsequent years, a
glowing profile of Canadian artist Lillian Freiman, written by a female journalist and published in
the magazine in 1946, highlights the serious attention devoted to women’s issues both during and
immediately following the war. In the profile, the “little girl from Guelph, Ont.” was hailed as a
successful artist in New York, her work praised by both the director of the Detroit Institute of Art
and a curator from the Louvre. The description of Freiman as an independent woman with a
fulfilling bohemian life as an artist in New York was typical of the focus in the magazine in the
1940s. Features about balancing career and home, profiles of women in unconventional careers,
articles on women forced to give up their jobs to returning servicemen and items on women
sports heroes were a significant part of the content of the Weekly at this time. The predominance
of these subjects and the serious attention devoted to these issues suggests that women were
recognized as an important target audience with significant purchasing power. By the early
1950s, however, this focus faded and emphasis in the magazine was redirected to supporting
conventional gender roles for women. An important element in this conception was the
magazine’s characterization of women artists as amateurs.

The increasingly active role of women in the economy, as the decade advanced, was also
singled out in the magazine’s visual arts coverage as a problem to be addressed. This “problem,”
for instance, was an important element of the criticisms launched by Forbes in his condemnation
of modernism. With visual arts employed as a site to expose public debate, Forbes placed the
blame for the popularity of modern art on women and was highly critical of them in this role,
arguing “it used to be men controlled the money and if they liked a good picture they would buy
it and hang it in their homes. Now women do a lot of spending. They are not interested in art, as
such. They will buy a pretty picture to match the drapes. They are more interested in colour than

in form and composition.”56 Both the gendering of modern art as a feminine interest and the deployment of this association to disparage abstraction remained fixtures of visual arts coverage into the next decade.

In addition to criticism of the changing role of women in contemporary life, articles in the magazine supported traditional patriarchal family structures and strict gender divisions across the decade. This perspective was an important element of the articles on Forbes and Kousal and was projected in photographs of the artists and their respective families. Throughout the 1950s, gender divisions became more pronounced, in concert with developments in other Western countries, and magazines such as the Weekly were important venues in establishing and reinforcing these divisions.57 Articles concerning the recreational and rehabilitative potential of artistic production were typically inserted in Section Two (the Women’s Pages), for instance, indicating that the target audience for the message they contained was female, and visual arts and art appreciation were increasingly presented as a feminine interest. Emblematic of the Cold War era, gender divisions have been linked to efforts to combat communism on the domestic front.58

While highlighting the lack of importance attached to visual arts generally, the magazine’s limited attention to Canadian professional artists throughout the decade is nonetheless noteworthy. In effect, the figure of the artist was a convenient vehicle for discussion concerning a host of issues, many seemingly unrelated to the sector. From the assimilation of immigrants to the role of women in contemporary Canada, the artist was employed not only to advance the magazine’s perspective, but also to shape perceptions among readers. The narrow conception of

56 Braithwaite, SW 22 December 1951, 2(2).
57 In her study of post-war United States, Elaine Tyler May argues that strict gender divisions were established and promoted in cultural products such as books, magazines, television and movies in an attempt to strengthen the “moral fibre” of the nation during the Cold War; see May 1999, 53.
58 May 1999, xxi.
the artist, projected in the magazine at this time, left little room for the idea that artists might contribute meaningfully to intellectual life in Canada.

A Mentalité in Flux

The possibility of global conflict appears to have had an impact on visual arts coverage in the magazine, not only in the projection of ideas concerning artists, but also in other ways. In addition to an increasingly integrated North American economy and a historical attachment to Great Britain, the projection of solidarity among Western nations, in opposition to the Soviet sphere, was an important element of the magazine during this period. Extensive numbers of reproductions of paintings by U.S. artists and little emphasis on nationality signal the absence of a clearly defined border between Canada and the United States. Instead, images and texts suggested a shared North American identity and perspective in the years following World War II. At the same time, the magazine demonstrated a sustained attachment to Great Britain and to membership in the British Commonwealth, and the arts and culture sector was an important site to demonstrate the ongoing strength and authority of the former colonial centre. Over the decade, this connection diminished, and issues of Canadian cultural sovereignty gradually emerged, the possibility of nuclear war an element of growing anti-Americanism in the pages of the magazine.

Frequent full-page reproductions of works of art by U.S. artists, published in the magazine in the decade following the war, are suggestive of a limited interest in promoting specifically Canadian topics and themes in visual arts coverage at this time. Reproductions of paintings by Canadian artists such as Cornelius Krieghoff, for instance, attest to a lack of

59 Representational paintings by U.S. artists included numerous western and landscape genre scenes, for instance Rocky Mountain Scenery by Mary O’Carroll, Trouble on the Trail by Olaf Wieghorst, scenes of the old west by American artists William R. Leigh and Phillip Goodwin, T. Crane’s Where Trout Lurk and reproductions of paintings by Winslow Homer and Thomas Hart Benton.
attention to issues of cultural nationalism because, in one example, Krieghoff was described as “an early 19th-century American painter” and in another the artist’s significance lay in his association with an English artist.\textsuperscript{60} The magazine’s desire to retain and even enhance circulation in the United States may explain why the magazine appeared increasingly North American in terms of target audience at this time. Few Canadian artists were mentioned, apart from occasional references to artists such as A.Y Jackson, who was described as the “well known member of the School of Seven” [sic] in a photograph of the artist teaching at the Banff Summer School of Fine Arts where “students come from all parts of the continent.”\textsuperscript{61} The source of photographs and reproductions published in the magazine was not indicated but the images may have been purchased en masse from New York agents, a common practice at the \textit{Weekly}.\textsuperscript{62} In contrast, as issues of cultural nationalism became more prominent in the next decade, Canadian artists such as Krieghoff and members of the Group of Seven became sites to celebrate Canadian accomplishments and to distinguish Canada from the United States.\textsuperscript{63}

In addition to presenting an integrated North American perspective, the magazine also projected a sustained attachment to Great Britain and membership in the British Commonwealth in the decade following the war. Once again, visual arts coverage exposed this \textit{mentalité} in that ideas about art and artists were mediated through the cultural authority of Great Britain. The example of Sir Alfred Munnings cited earlier is illustrative of this characteristic, providing an example of how contemporary debates in Canada were initially addressed through an examination

\textsuperscript{60} SW 18 Jan. 1947, 15 (R); “Two Fine Examples of Early Canadian Art,” \textit{SW} 20 June 1945, 8 (R).
\textsuperscript{61} SW 27 Sep. 1947, 6 (R).
\textsuperscript{63} Only rarely is cultural sovereignty an issue in the magazine at this time. One exception was an article supporting funding for universities that included a quote from submissions to the Massey hearings concerning the importance of Canadian sovereignty in the arts and letters; see for instance A.O.C. Cole, “Our Universities Are Going Bankrupt,” \textit{SW} 11 Mar. 1950, 2.
of the situation in Britain. Further, among the rare profiles of professional artists published in the magazine were articles on artists Jacob Epstein and Augustus John and, although Epstein was born in the U.S., the profiles were written from the perspective of Great Britain, by an English author, concerning people and events in the United Kingdom.

Embedded within the profiles of Epstein and John were ideas of unconventional behavior balanced by personal integrity and disdain for profit. John was described as a bohemian, in contrast to his contemporaries, who “dressed like stockbrokers,” and the British-Canadian connection was established through reference to John’s work as a war artist attached to the Canadian forces during WWI. The author described John as a rugged individualist, unconcerned with money, fame and fortune, his work eagerly sought by wealthy U.S. collectors. The portrait that emerged was that of a successful but idiosyncratic artist imbued with masculinity. Epstein was portrayed as more socially minded and “an artist with a purpose” who purportedly could not be influenced or diverted from his goal even if this meant that his work was unlikely to find a buyer. The description presented Epstein as a hardworking “genius” who was also unconcerned with financial gain. The conduct and appearance of these artists, particularly John, which would otherwise have violated middlebrow values, were accepted in the magazine’s coverage because they represented notions of nonconformity and were emblematic of the extreme individuality identified with the male artistic genius.

The presentation of these ideas concerning the behavior and role of artists involved individuals born and working outside of Canada; however, the attention to subjects and events in Britain was characteristic of the sustained attachment to British heritage and culture demonstrated

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64 Dennis Holman, “He Became an ‘Old Master’ While Still Alive,” SW 26 June 1947, 3.
in the pages of the magazine. The authority of British institutions was an important element throughout the decade, not only with respect to cultural affairs but also in the way the magazine turned to British authorities for commentary and analysis on a wide range of topics without distinguishing these sources as external to Canada. Art and cultural matters were also sites to demonstrate the ongoing strength of Britain as a world power following the war, a subject of some discussion in the magazine.

Over the decade, attachment to Britain remained strong although attention to Canadian subjects and themes increased gradually. For instance, the magazine returned to the subject of Augustus John in 1955 with another lengthy profile of the artist, this time written by Canadian foreign correspondent Matthew Halton, rather than a British journalist. Once again the artist was described as colourful and rebellious, a “free-living bohemian in black beret and corduroy trousers who once travelled around Europe in a caravan.” At the same time, however, references to the artist’s professional associations, such as membership in the British Royal Academy, helped stabilize notions of eccentric behavior. Other prominent features of this second portrait of John was an emphasis on the artist’s family, individuality and Christian values—his artistic talent described as “God-given.”

These associations projected both a shared Western humanism and middlebrow cultural values and conveyed growing concern for the implications of nuclear warfare at the end of the decade. In this instance, the British artist was employed as a vehicle for reflection on fears that nuclear war between the U.S. and the Soviets would destroy the world. The potential loss of the

66 These articles supported the magazine’s perspective on the political situation, for instance advocating that Canada join the U.S. in joint defense because Britain would bear the brunt of a Soviet attack; see “Making America Safe,” Editorial, SW 14 Jan. 1950, 6.
cultural heritage of the Western world was one element of this anxiety but a growing anti-Americanism was also suggested by this debate, perception of U.S. intransigence toward the Soviets gaining profile in the magazine toward the end of the decade. The example also provides a glimpse of the turn toward Canadian cultural nationalism in the next decade and the gradual withdrawal from the British sphere that accompanied it, indicating as well ways that the magazine’s coverage of ideas about art and artists exposed contemporary issues, not only with respect to individual artists, but also on a broader social basis.

**Conclusion**

Preoccupation with the contribution of the visual arts to economic development was the central focus of visual arts coverage in the *Weekly* throughout the first decade following World War II. The magazine’s support for expanded educational opportunities for Canadian adults at this time was closely tied to the requirements of capitalist growth and the labor needs of an expanding economy, with little or no thought given to the possible intellectual or broad cultural benefits of art production. The magazine’s interest in promoting specific roles for Canadian artists and definite functions for visual art, and otherwise using it to advance ideas unrelated to the arts, is suggestive of an instrumentalist conception of the role of visual arts and, at the same time, the limited importance attached to the sector in post-war English Canada. Not only was participation in visual arts and knowledge of art devalued; apart from passing references to their role in enhancing industrial productivity, artists received little recognition as valuable human resources, people who were making important contributions to Canadian society.

These characteristics of the *Weekly*’s visual arts coverage suggests a substantially different perspective from that found in Canadian art history texts. A preoccupation with
nationalism and nation-building, for instance, identified as the major post-war ideology by Canadian art historians, is strikingly absent in the Weekly’s visual arts coverage in the first decade following the war.\(^{69}\) In addition, the magazine’s use of visual arts coverage to project a sense of classlessness as a feature of Western democracies challenges the notion that support for visual arts and cultural infrastructure developed spontaneously out of post-war prosperity and that wealthy individuals in Canada contributed to this project out of a sense of civic duty and national pride.\(^{70}\) Further, the way that the magazine tied art production to economic activity indicates that artists were valued for their perceived contributions to the post-war economy, in effect the inverse of how participation in the commercial sector has been presented by art historians in Canada.\(^{71}\)

The marginal place of visual art in the magazine throughout the first decade following the war, and the use of the sector as an expedient, has important implications for subsequent developments in English Canada. For one thing, the practice of employing visual arts coverage to project specific ideas, for instance classlessness and strict gender divisions, was expanded and broadened in the next decade to promote Canadian nationalism. The magazine’s use of visual arts to advance anti-communist perspectives and to influence social policy in Canada was redirected at this time toward promoting cultural nationalism. This subject received little attention in the magazine immediately following the war but was a major preoccupation beginning in 1957. At the same time, the use of humor to deflect attention from contentious or


troubling issues remained a key strategy in the magazine’s projection of ideas in the next decade. In effect, a humorous cast facilitated the projection of disinterest and selfless public service in the magazine as it embarked on a campaign of nationalist propaganda.
Chapter 4

The Star Weekly 1957-1968

The year 1957 registered a sudden and dramatic increase in the Star Weekly in the number of articles about Canadian artists, and with it, an important shift in presentation of the function and role of visual arts in Canada that would continue until 1968. Serving to characterize the decade leading up to Canada’s centennial celebrations in 1967, this change in visual arts coverage was accompanied by a similarly striking increase in support for cultural nationalism, which replaced the earlier instrumentalist conception of visual art with coverage in which the activities of artists were tied to nationality and evaluated in terms of their contributions to Canada. The expanded interest in Canadian artists and emphasis on the role played by visual arts in economic development in Canada suggests a new perception in the magazine, by the late 1950s, of the economic value of artists. It was a positive perception that drew on previous notions of how art production might contribute to economic activity and ignored any hint of oppositional art practices or the possibility that artists were engaged in social and/or political critique. It was also short lived. Following the centennial year, this narrow conception faded and the promotion of cultural nationalism as a component of economic nationalism was replaced by the idea of the Canadian artist as independent outsider and rebel.

Rather than indicating a new interest in visual arts, the increased attention in the Weekly to Canadian artists and issues of cultural nationalism in 1957 appears as an expedient linked to the financial interests of the owners of the magazine. The effort to promote awareness and pride in Canada, Canadians and Canadian achievements in visual arts and other fields emerges as a campaign to deploy nationalism to ensure the profitability of the magazine within an expanding
North American economy. Economic interests also appear to have influenced both the increasing prominence of the visual arts in the magazine and its stress on the role of artists in contributing to economic development. A strong interest in the impact of foreign ownership of Canadian companies and resources informed this emphasis on Canadian subjects and themes. While the training and education of artists remained an important subject associated with competition with other industrialized nations, in time the contributions made by Canadian contemporary artists as intellectuals were accepted and promoted as an essential component of a dynamic modern economy.

In addition to its implication in economic interests characteristic of the period generally, visual arts coverage continued to project ideas about Canada and Canadian identity, including notions of Canada as a classless society. In contrast to the magazine’s earlier, Cold War projection of classlessness as a feature common among Western nations, the idea of classlessness was applied specifically to Canada at this time. The actions of Canadian art patrons were celebrated in the Weekly as evidence of economic prosperity in Canada and deployed to promote cultural nationalism. Private art collections were presented as both a resource for public education and a source of national prestige. In this, the circumstances of their formation were deflected by the presentation of art collecting, not as the product of patrician sensibilities and great wealth, but as a hobby, individual passion, reward for hard work, or entrepreneurial activity. Across the decade, emphasis shifted in the magazine from individual patrons to the patronage of the state, a shift that corresponded to the tremendous post-war expansion of the Canadian state into areas of citizenship and culture. Initially promoted by the magazine as a source of funding for research and development in the visual arts, the state was gradually assigned the task of protecting and promoting Canadian cultural heritage. This position was in keeping with the
argument for economic nationalism advanced by the magazine and supported accusations that the Canadian state had not done enough to protect Canadian culture and its industries.

Visual arts coverage was also a site to project and promote citizenship and to foster ideas about ethnic diversity and gender roles. The characteristics of the professional Canadian artist, defined as white and male, stood in for a particular vision of Canadian society, with the contributions made by Canadian artists to economic development an increasingly important consideration in the presentation of artists at this time. Against popular suspicions and the association of artists with homosexuality, communism and other behaviors deemed unacceptable, the magazine emphasized the Canadian artist’s masculinity and conventional family relationships alongside his participation in the capitalist economy. The category of professional artist expanded modestly during this period to include recent immigrants from Europe and the U.S., while the exclusion of women and racial-minority artists from this construct remained an essential feature of visual arts coverage in the magazine.

The emergence of the Canadian male artist as rebel and outsider at the end of the decade suggests the fracturing of the magazine’s essentially self-serving deployment of Canadian cultural nationalism. The idea of a politically-engaged art practice, within certain limitations, was acknowledged at this time, although economic interests continued to shape the magazine’s endorsement of rebellion and acceptance of artistic individuality. Emblematic of the rapid commercialization of the counter-culture by the end of the 1960s, the shift in attitudes suggests an emerging understanding of dissidence as desirable and even necessary in order to profit from the economic benefits associated with the visual arts sector. This shift in ideas about artists mirrored changes both in the magazine and externally in Canada following the centennial year. It marked a decisive turning point and an end to the first chapter of the post-war era.


_Selling Canada to Canadians_

In contrast to the limited attention given the visual arts in the immediate post-war years, a strong emphasis in the _Weekly_ on Canadian artists and visual arts in Canada throughout the subsequent decade marked an important change in the direction of the magazine. Part of a larger project to encourage knowledge of Canada and pride in Canadian achievements among readers, the increased attention in the magazine to visual arts, alongside other Canadian achievements, appears to have been conceived and executed in the manner of an advertising campaign. Artists such as members of the Group of Seven emerged as important historical figures in its pages at this time and elements of the founding mythology of the Group were featured in numerous articles. An almost complete absence of information or even references to U.S. art or artists during this crucial period of rising U.S. influence in the field of visual arts mirrored a nascent anti-Americanism in the magazine and the gradual substitution of the United States for the Soviet Union as the greatest threat to the Canadian way of life. An important break from the past occurred at the end of the decade, when a column devoted to visual arts and exhibitions was introduced in the magazine, an acknowledgment perhaps not only of the significance and maturity of Canadian visual arts and the rise of commercial galleries, but also of changes underway in Canada in 1968.

A profile of New Brunswick potters Erica and Kjeld Deichmann published in late 1956 is an example of the new focus on Canada and Canadians in the _Weekly_ at the beginning of the decade. According to the article, the potters produced objects that were useful as well as attractive, “practical objects of beauty and world renown.”¹ The pottery was described as “distinctive Canadian” whereas the Scandinavian sensibility in the potters’ work, highly

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fashionable and influential in North American design during the late 1950s, was not mentioned. ²

Other examples of the new emphasis on art produced by Canadian artists included reproductions of paintings commissioned by Canadian Oil Companies Ltd “under the guidance of the National Gallery of Canada” and sketches by staff artist George Paginton of the town of Iroquois, Ontario, prior to flooding for the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway. ³ In the previous decade, reproductions of representational paintings were occasionally included in connection with historical events and resource development, and this practice was broadened and expanded considerably over the next few years.

An extended series on Canadian art written by Weekly reporter Angela Burke with National Gallery of Canada director Alan Jarvis was another indication of increased attention to Canada and Canadian art in the late 1950s. ⁴ In the previous decade, the magazine included reproductions of Canadian paintings only occasionally, and even then, they were usually works of historical interest, so the series on Canadian art was a new departure for the magazine.

Showcasing the work of nine Canadian painters over a period of several weeks, the series included a brief discussion of each artist and his/her work, either a photograph of the subject or a picture of Jarvis, and a full-page colour reproduction of one painting. The series as a whole was introduced by Burke, who described the strength and status of culture in Canada as booming, “like the nation’s economy.” ⁵ Recent purchases of European art by the National Gallery (from

³ Advertisements, Canadian Oil Companies Ltd., 6 Apr. 1957, 32 (R); 18 May 1957, 40 (M); 29 June 1957, 28 (R); 9 Aug. 1957, 28 (R). Reproductions included Maple Sugar Party by Albert Cloutier, Atlantic Scene by Edward Pulford, Prairie Village by Kenneth C. Lochhead and Northern Ontario River by Alan C. Collier.
⁴ Alan Jarvis was director of the National Gallery of Canada from 1955 to 1959. For discussion of Jarvis’s career, see Andrew Horrall, Bringing Art to Life: A Biography of Alan Jarvis (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009).
⁵ Angela Burke, “Canadian Art Comes Into Its Own,” SW 28 Dec. 1957, 26-8 (M).
the Prince of Liechtenstein’s collection) and the construction of the gallery’s new building in Ottawa were presented as evidence of rising interest in cultural matters in the country, and this idea was supported by other details in the article. Burke identified growing interest in learning about art in Canada, for instance, citing the positive response that Jarvis received on a recent cross-Canada speaking tour as the basis for her observation. She also claimed that collectors were increasingly drawn to Canadian art. Her observations about the investment potential of Canadian art were offset by a description of purported contributions made by women in stimulating this interest in Canadian art through arts education and fundraising at the Art Gallery of Toronto.

Burke’s introductory article included information about the Group of Seven and surviving members Frederick H. Varley, A.Y. Jackson, Lawren Harris and Arthur Lismer. She also interviewed Martin Baldwin, then director of the Art Gallery of Toronto as he examined “a new abstract he had just bought from a Japanese-Canadian artist.” The article ended with a brief chronology of Canadian art, from the work of “Brother Luc” through that of the English topographers to the painting of Krieghoff and Paul Kane. According to the article, “stuffy colonialism” following Confederation was replaced by impressionist influences in the work of James Wilson Morrice and Maurice Cullen, which was followed by that of the Group of Seven, who “established a national style that was completely independent” and “portrayed Canada in its individuality as bravely as Renaissance artists had portrayed Europe.” The article balanced art

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6 Included in the article were photographs of Harris with a reproduction of his painting North Shore Lake Superior (1926), which appeared in reverse; a photograph of Jackson discussing a silkscreen with Archie Kay in Calgary; a Varley Self Portrait, and Bateaux (n.d.) by Tom Thomson.

7 A curator at the Art Gallery of Toronto from 1932 to 1948, Martin Baldwin served as director from 1948 to 1961.
historical information with an emphasis on purchasing Canadian art as an investment and an invitation to “start your own collection under the guidance of an expert.”

The emphasis on the Group of Seven in this introductory article serves to highlight the relative absence of the artists from the pages of the Weekly in the previous decade. As noted, the magazine demonstrated only limited interest in art and only incidentally included reproductions by Canadian artists. The neglect of the Group of Seven during the decade following World War II is nonetheless noteworthy and is perhaps related to an interest in promoting an international outlook during the Cold War. The nationalist rhetoric that enveloped the Group in the 1920s may also have caused problems in the years immediately following World War II, an era cognizant of the role played by racial theories and nationalism in atrocities committed during the war and in Russia under the regime of Joseph Stalin. A decade later, these concerns appear to have been overcome and the Group members were presented in the magazine within a new emphasis on Canadiannes as important historical figures. The essential elements of the mythology of the Group, for instance independence from European trends, their “courageous and pioneering” behavior, and early hostility to their work, were all present in this initial article. Also noteworthy was the prominent focus on images of the artists, a practice that suggests the projection of notions of individual celebrity in connection with important Canadian public figures.

Accompanied by a brief treatment of each artist written by Alan Jarvis, the promised series began in January 1958 with a full-page color reproduction of The Ferry, Quebec (1907) by

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8 Sandra Paikowsky has identified a similar interest behind the National Gallery’s submissions to the 1952 Venice Biennale and notes the absence of landscape and works by the Group in the Canadian selections. See Sandra Paikowsky, “Constructing an Identity: The 1952 XXVI Biennale di Venezia and ‘The Projection of Canada Abroad,’” Journal of Canadian Art History vol. 20 no. 1-2 (1999), 131.

9 See, for instance, Vincent Massey, On Being Canadian (Toronto: Dent and Sons, 1948), 36.
James Wilson Morrice from the National Gallery collection.\textsuperscript{10} Jarvis described the Morrice painting as “famous” and the artist as “one of Canada’s finest,” represented in public and private collections on three continents. Morrice was deemed “in advance of his time,” an expatriate accepted and admired in Paris, but one who returned to Canada “usually each year to paint the winter landscapes of his native Quebec.” According to Jarvis, “Morrice was the first to introduce that gentle, almost imperceptible pinkish glow which is peculiar to Canadian skies.” The director also cited French artist Henri Matisse’s favorable opinion of Morrice, although not the friendship between the artists, noting instead Morrice’s friendships with English writers Somerset Maugham and Arnold Bennett.

While attention to Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven dominated the introductory article, only Group member J.E.H. MacDonald was included in the list of artists profiled. A full-page colour reproduction of *Gloam on the Hill* (1921) by MacDonald, from the collection of the National Gallery, with a photograph of MacDonald with Franz Johnston “on Algoma trip 1919” appeared next in the sequence of artists. In the text, Jarvis highlighted the artist’s reaction to the landscape of Canada on his first trip north of Lake Superior and also that his work “aroused reactions of outrage and indignation when it was first shown.”\textsuperscript{11} Emily Carr’s *Indian Church* (1929), from the C.S. Band collection, was featured a week later, followed by David Milne’s *Water Lilies, Temagami*, from the collection of Hart House, and *Ghost Ships* by B.C. Binning from the Art Gallery of Toronto collection.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{12}  Alan Jarvis, “Canadian Paintings,” *SW* 18 Jan. 1958, 23 (M); 25 Jan. 1958, 22 (M); 1 Feb. 1958, 26 (M).
Sous le vent de l’île (1947) by Paul-Émile Borduas, also from the National Gallery collection, was next in the sequence, accompanied by a photograph of the artist. Jarvis described Borduas as “famous in Europe” and claimed that, along with Alfred Pellan and Jean-Paul Riopelle, the artist enjoyed a significant reputation outside Canada in Paris, London and New York. The National Gallery director attributed both this fame and the popularity of the artists’ work to links with “the currently fashionable international schools of non-objective or abstract painting.” In the text, Jarvis also alluded to Refus global, describing it as a manifesto “so vehement in its iconoclasm that it cost [Borduas] his teaching job,” and attributed it to “an explosion of temperament.” He maintained that the painting lacked a subject but instead suggested a mood; “it evoked in me a slightly dream-like and most unearthly feeling which I finally identified as the sensation I have when an aircraft tips wings over and begins to descend on Dorval airport, with the St. Lawrence and the islands stretched out below.” This expression of national feeling linked to landscape, altered to accommodate modern air travel, deflected attention from the fact that Borduas was no longer living in Canada.

Boy and Dog from the McGill University Faculty Club collection appeared next in the sequence, also accompanied by a photograph of artist Goodridge Roberts. According to Jarvis, Roberts’s paintings reflected the artist’s “deeply contemplative, sensitive personality,” a turning away from the work of the Group of Seven in works expressive of an “undramatic, domestic and cultivated landscape.” Describing an affinity between the paintings and poetry, Jarvis claimed Roberts’s paintings reminded him of poems by U.S. poet Robert Frost because Roberts was both the nephew of Canadian poet Sir Charles G.D. Roberts and a relative of Bliss Carman, the “other

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14 Refus Global was published in 1948 in Montréal by Borduas and les automatistes.
great poet of Canadian nature.” Emphasizing affinities between painting and poetry, the familial lineage also positioned the artist within historical Anglo-Canadian cultural elite.

A photograph of Jacques de Tonnancour wearing a suit and tie, and seated in front of a painting, accompanied the next work, *Landscape, Northwestern Ontario* from the collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. According to Jarvis, de Tonnancour was beginning to achieve an international reputation like that of Pellan, Borduas and Riopelle. He also maintained that de Tonnancour had turned away from the “native school” represented in the painting of the Group of Seven, although he was occupied with “distinctively Canadian subject matter, particularly landscape, rather than with pure abstractions.”

The series ended with *Coups sur coups*, from the collection of the Art Gallery of Toronto, by Jean-Paul Riopelle, characterized as “another painter of abstract color patterns.” Citing resistance to abstraction, Jarvis acknowledged that the “wholly abstract or ‘non-objective’ are bound to generate violent reactions.” He mediated these suspicions with assurances that Riopelle “is being hailed by critics in England, Europe and the United States as well as in Canada,” and that his works were “selling literally like hot cakes in London, Paris, New York, Montreal and Toronto.” According to the director, both the National Gallery of Canada and the Museum of Modern Art in New York had purchased pieces by Riopelle. Citing the artist’s interest in creating “patterns of colour for their own sake rather than what they represent,” Jarvis connected the colours employed by Riopelle to emotions roused by music.

Within the series as a whole, a number of common themes and characteristics related to the promotion of Canadian cultural nationalism can be identified. An important component of the description of each artist was an emphasis on attachment to Canada and Britain and reference to

the popularity of the artist among private collectors and public institutions. As a group the artists were presented as fairly staid and somber, displaying a modest level of personal eccentricity, with rebelliousness limited to matters related to art. They were all Anglo- or French-Canadians, and the selection of artists suggested that the development of modern art in Canada began with the work of Morrice and ended with that of Riopelle, reinforcing the connection of Canadian contemporary art to French modernist influences favored by Jarvis. Abstraction and non-objective art were deemed “currently fashionable international schools.”

According to the explanation given in the introductory article, Jarvis’s role was to explain why each of the paintings was “important to the growth of Canadian art”; however, the series contained limited art historical information. Instead, the intent appears to have been to create interest in, and awareness of, developments in Canadian art within an atmosphere of national pride, mediated by the director of the nation’s premier art institution. Jarvis also provided details that would be of interest to collectors, such as how successful the artist was in Europe, the U.S. and in Canada, and whether their work appeared in major institutional collections. Here the phrase, the “growth of Canadian art,” conveyed a double meaning and could refer to either economic and market growth or art historical advancement and stylistic development. Also noteworthy is the fact that, at the time the series appeared in the Weekly, the Gallery’s purchase of European paintings from the Prince of Lichtenstein’s collection was under attack in the Canadian House of Commons. The range of Canadian art institutions represented by the art works selected for the series was perhaps a deliberate strategy to suggest support for Jarvis among the

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19 For full discussion see Horrall 2009, 260.
Canadian economic and cultural elite, the focus on Canadian art a way of diffusing accusations that the National Gallery was neglecting Canadian artists.\textsuperscript{20}

In addition to this series on canonical Canadian artists, the magazine featured an increasing number of Canadian subjects and themes beginning in late 1956 and continuing into the next decade. The \textit{Weekly} appeared increasingly preoccupied with promoting Canadian history, people and events; for instance, it introduced a weekly page of photographs devoted exclusively to Canada in the Rotogravure section. The search for national symbols such as a flag and anthem, and celebrations such as the upcoming Centennial, were given prominent exposure, and Canadian achievements were included in advertisements as well as feature articles.\textsuperscript{21} Games such as a “Know Canada Contest,” coverage of the upcoming 1958 Olympics and advertisements that referenced Canada increased dramatically at this time.\textsuperscript{22} Historical Canadian artists such as members of the Group of Seven were included in this project, their purported value as cultural resources celebrated, for instance, in an article about the fortieth anniversary of their first exhibition at the Art Gallery of Toronto in 1920. Repeating the word “Canadian” and “Canada” more than a dozen times in seven short paragraphs, author Robert Fulford presented the four surviving members of the Group as neglected historical figures whose achievements were “part of Canadian folklore.”\textsuperscript{23} In the text, Fulford described the Group’s initial rejection and denunciation by fellow artists and the public, and stressed the vitality and energy of the surviving members.

\textsuperscript{20} Horrall argues that the selection of paintings was intended to demonstrate that the National Gallery “had long collected Canadian works, that many of these had become national icons, and that the institution continued to buy from the country’s best artists” (Horrall 2009, 278). Only three of the nine works in the series, however, came from the National Gallery collection.
\textsuperscript{21} While in previous editorial discussions the \textit{Star Weekly} strongly supported retaining the Union Jack as one element of a new flag, the magazine moved away from this position at this time to advocate for a design “uniquely Canadian”; see \textit{SW} 15 June 1957, 1 (R); Monroe Johnston, 3 (M).
\textsuperscript{22} “Know Canada Contest,” \textit{SW} 12 Jan. 1957, 16 (M).
\textsuperscript{23} Robert Fulford, “They Started the New Look in Canadian Art,” \textit{SW} 23 Apr. 1960, 12-15 (R). The photographs of the artists are larger than reproductions of their paintings.
Describing their accomplishments as “one of the greatest moments in our history” and their first exhibition as a “nation-shaking event,” he focused the article on the artists themselves, shown in photographs as the “grand old men of Canadian art,” who “keep an open mind” regarding abstraction. The mythology of the Group of Seven as forgotten Old Masters was also evident in a subsequent article on the refurbished St. Anne’s Church in Toronto which had been decorated by Group members under the guidance of J.E.H. MacDonald. Reinforcing the charge that Canadians were unaware of Canadian accomplishments and their own history, the article described both the “unknown treasures” in the interior and the centennial project to restore the Byzantine-style church. The article identified lack of knowledge and recognition of Canadian accomplishments as a significant problem that required action, while emphasizing the foreign origin of the architectural style and the lack of a strong indigenous architecture tradition when the building was conceived. These types of criticisms were prominent features of the magazine’s attention to issues of cultural nationalism, ostensibly employed to persuade Canadians of the need for change.

While attention to Canada as a subject in the magazine had been building since the early 1950s, the intensity of the shift in focus in late 1956 was quite dramatic. The new emphasis on Canada and Canadian themes may be attributed in part to a new direction in the management of the magazine, which promoted Beland Honderich to the position of editor-in-chief in 1955. The change may have also been rooted in a campaign to promote Canadian nationalism as concern for the extent of foreign investment in Canada and the implications of foreign ownership became more widely known and discussed. The number and scope of editorials concerning the findings

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24 “Five of the wall decorations were done by members of the Group of Seven, the now venerated group of impressionists that abandoned European traditions to interpret a young nation’s growth and spirit” (SW 10 Feb. 1962, 15 [R]).
25 An employee from 1943, Beland Honderich became editor-in-chief in 1955, but the ownership of the magazine remained with the Atkinson Charitable Foundation under the direction of the Atkinson family until purchased by Honderich in 1963.
of the Royal Commission on Canada’s Economic Prospects in 1956 suggest that the issue of foreign ownership was an important concern for the owners of the *Weekly*. Canada entered a recession in 1957, and the general health of the economy may have prompted this expression of concern about foreign ownership. At the same time, however, the owners of the magazine may have had more specific reasons for addressing it. Advertising was an important source of revenue for the magazine and attracting advertisers to the *Weekly* a significant activity. Analysis of advertising trends has shown that multinational companies were less inclined to advertise separately through their Canadian subsidiaries and instead relied on “spill over” advertising in U.S. magazines. Increased American ownership and foreign takeovers of Canadian companies would therefore have a direct impact on advertising by reducing the number of advertisers in an industry already experiencing new competition for advertising dollars from both television and other mass publications.

The implications of foreign ownership for the owners of the magazine were therefore straightforward: more companies targeting Canadian consumers owned by multinational corporations would mean reduced advertising revenue. The close friendship between Walter Gordon, one of the members of the Royal Commission, and *Weekly* editor-in-chief Beland Honderich may also have played a role, not only in the extensive coverage of the report and the

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issues at stake but also in underscoring the impact of U.S. ownership for the *Weekly.* In fact, Stephen Azzi has suggested that Walter Gordon’s concern over American ownership was personal and influenced by the loss of business suffered by his family accounting firm, one of the first services to be transferred outside the country following the purchase of a Canadian company.

The increased attention to Canadian art and other elements of Canadian content in the magazine is therefore perhaps best understood as an effort to deploy Canadian nationalism in order to ensure the economic viability of the magazine. In many ways, the intense focus on Canada resembled an advertising campaign, employing strategies of the advertising industry, including a logo (the search for a Canadian flag), a jingle (*O Canada* to replace *God Save the Queen*), product copy (Canadian art, culture, sports, history, geography, people), endorsements (personal testimonials, or “why I have decided to remain in Canada when I could make more money south of the border”) and mass public events (Dominion Day, the Centennial celebrations).

The issue of foreign ownership was also addressed directly in the magazine’s visual arts coverage at this time. Ownership of works of art by Canadian artists and other Canadian resources, for instance, was a significant subtext of a lengthy profile in the magazine of U.S. mining entrepreneur, art patron and collector Joseph H. Hirshhorn. Interviewed by the magazine in connection with an exhibition of works of art from his collection at the Art Gallery of Toronto, Hirshhorn’s stated interest in collecting Canadian art raised questions about control of the

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30 Azzi 1999, 33.
country’s artistic resources. Referred to as Canada’s “uranium king” because of his involvement with uranium mining in Northern Ontario, Hirshhorn’s appreciation for Canadian artists Emily Carr and Kazuo Nakamura implied that, as well as natural resources, Canadians might lose control of cultural assets to the U.S.

The focus on Canadian artists and other Canadian themes continued throughout the decade in new projects and features. In the fall of 1961 and into 1962, for instance, the magazine embarked on a series of profiles of contemporary Canadians called “Canadians Worth Knowing,” which consisted in each case of a full-page photograph of the subject and a brief text. Several artists were included in the series, and the size and composition of the photographic portraits suggest that the intent was to forge a personal connection with the reader, again promoting notions of celebrity in connection with Canadian cultural figures. A limited number of canonical Canadian artists were included in a similar project the next year, “The Canadian Album,” a scrapbook for collecting images of notable Canadians provided by the magazine. Once again, the feature appears intended to foster notions of celebrity, fame and national pride.

The intense focus on Canadian artists alongside other notable Canadians, beginning in 1957 and continuing throughout the decade, appears to have been deployed to promote Canada and Canadian achievements. As a whole, the coverage demonstrated elements of what historian Leonard Kuffert has described as middlebrow nationalism, advancing the artists’ merit “simply

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32 Hugh Thomas, “‘Pictures Must Excite Me Twice,’” SW May 18 1957, 16, 17, 19 (M).
33 “Free…In the Star Weekly: Canada Album, the first pictorial record of great Canadian achievements in the 20th century” with selections made by “noted Canadian educator, Dr. Carl Williams, Director of Division of Extension, University of Toronto” (SW 19 Jan. 1963, 5 [R]). The Album included photographs of artists A.Y. Jackson and Emily Carr.
34 Artists in the series included CBC graphic designer and Hungarian immigrant George Iro, Québec sculptor Robert Roussil and recent English immigrant and Canada Council grant recipient Toni Onley.
because they are Canadian.”35 This impulse was also extended to concerns for foreign ownership of works of art by Canadian artists that appeared from time to time over the decade. Advancing the idea that Canadians were neglectful and unappreciative of Canadian artists, this perspective stood in for accusations of wider neglect and apathy among Canadians. Ironically, the campaign to promote pride in Canada by fostering awareness of Canadian achievements appears to have faltered following the nationalist celebrations of centennial year.

**Visual Art and Economic Development in Canada**

In addition to increased attention to Canadian art and other Canadian subjects, expanded educational opportunities for adult Canadians and the education of artists as a component of economic development continued to be important themes in visual arts coverage in the magazine. This concern informed the magazine’s announcement of funding for the Canada Council in 1957, its support for adult education and its growing attention to contributions made by individual artists to the economy. By the end of the decade, Canadian contemporary artists were celebrated in the magazine, their production used to suggest a dynamic and cosmopolitan atmosphere in Canadian cities. In this context, abstraction and non-objective art were briefly accepted and promoted as indications of innovations and progress in the arts, until undermined by association with U.S.-based abstract expressionism. Although there was little direct criticism or analysis in the magazine, abstraction appears to have been rejected by the early 1960s primarily because it was associated with U.S. artists. While the training and education of artists remained an important subject, linked to competition with other industrialized nations at the beginning of the period, in time the achievements of Canadian contemporary artists were recognized and promoted

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as indicators of the expanding cultural sector perceived necessary for economic development, particularly in Toronto but also within the country as a whole.

Contributions made by artists to the Canadian economy and Canada’s international reputation were essential components of the description of the New Brunswick potters cited above, and the popularity of evening classes in painting and aircraft construction at a Toronto high school was similarly tied to economic interests. Once again displaying liberal ideals founded in notions of self-betterment for the benefit of capitalist enterprise, the magazine claimed that adult Canadians were “working to gain new skills and knowledge to make them more efficient in their jobs or to increase their enjoyment of cultural and recreational activities.”

At the same time, this support for educational opportunities linked to industrial productivity may have been tempered by anti-communism, the choice of an activity (aircraft construction, radio communication) and emphasis on the importance of adult education prompted by the launch of Sputnik two months earlier. The practical contributions that artists were making to the economy, and to society as a whole, by producing anatomical parts for medical training and textbooks and by working on identification and restoration of art works at the National Gallery laboratory were also foregrounded at this time.

The link between visual arts, education and business interests was also featured in other ways. For instance, an article on Brooke Claxton, “vice-president and general manager for Canada of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co.” and newly appointed head of the Canada Council

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37 Lester Pearson, “Canada’s Role in the Sputnik Age,” SW 28 Dec. 1957, 10-11 (M). Russian progress in science and technology was the subject of several editorials in Nov. and Dec. following the launch of the Russian satellite on 4 Oct. 1957. North America’s focus on developing and perfecting consumer products was also criticized by the magazine as a waste of talent and resources. See for instance, “Sputnik vs. Tail Fins,” Editorial SW 30 Nov. 1957, 43 (M).
focused on the close ties between government and business. This relationship, embodied by Claxton, was emphasized in the profile in which the former Minister of Defense was particularly emphatic about the importance of teachers to society and the need to attract talented people to teach in the arts and humanities. The role of the new agency in encouraging research and development was an important element of the article, despite the Weekly’s assertion that the goal of the Council was to promote culture “now that material prosperity is assured.”

A new acknowledgment of the potential for visual artists to contribute to economic development was also a prominent feature of an article describing the Canadian works of art selected for the 1958 World’s Fair in Brussels. According to journalist Morris Duff, 125 paintings, drawings, sculptures and photographs were chosen for a series of weekly shows in Brussels by a committee chaired by Donald W. Buchanan, then associate director of the National Gallery. Alex Colville’s Child and Dog (1952) and Jack Shadbolt’s Flowers (n.d.), among the works selected, were reproduced for the article, as was a traditional portrait by Kenneth Forbes. According to the text, the pieces were chosen from different schools of art, and included the work of “figurative and landscape painters, non-figurative or abstract and others in between.”

Perhaps drawing on Canadian insecurities in cultural matters, Forbes reappeared in the article to lead the opposition against modern art under the headline, “Will They Laugh at Us in Brussels?” The artist claimed that “the selection will make Canada a laughing stock,” and he recounted (once again) the story of an abstract painting created by a donkey’s tail dipped in paint. Labeling the committee members “dupes,” Forbes alleged that “the only reason modern abstract

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40 Morris Duff, “Will They Laugh at Us In Brussels?” SW 12 Apr. 1958, 26 (M).
41 A writer and curator, Donald Buchanan (1908-1966) was Director of the Industrial Design Division of the National Gallery of Canada (1947 to 1953), Chief of the National Gallery’s Industrial Design Centre (1954-1955) and first Director of the International Fine Arts Exhibition at Expo ’67 (1965 to 1966).
and grotesque art survives is that it is backed by a powerful and profitable international racket with headquarters in Paris.” Defending the selections, Martin Baldwin, Buchanan and Alan Jarvis argued, in contrast, that the artists’ work was “forward looking” rather than reminiscent of the pre-war era, the gallery representatives claiming as well that recent international exhibits by Canadian artists had been popular and well received.

Giving voice to uncertainty and suspicions regarding non-objective art, the article exposed the concern for “world opinion” and the fear that abstract art was a “scam” or swindle perpetuated on the Canadian public from without. The opinions of cultural authorities from Canadian institutions were deployed, in this instance, to allay fears of inferiority and to support the idea of Canada as a “modern,” progressive country. National attributes such as these were perhaps most crucial in the context of a World’s Fair; a venue for encouraging international economic development at a moment of extreme anxiety in Canada over economic matters. As such, the World Fair demanded innovative, “cutting-edge” art to promote Canadian products abroad. In other instances, the Weekly avoided open discussion of abstraction, substituting a focus on design and consumer products for analysis or critique of the mode of painting. Abstract paintings installed at the Art Gallery of Toronto, for instance, were used as a backdrop to a fashion shoot showcasing Canadian fashion designers. The location, works of art, artists and photographer were not identified, but the abstract paintings, pictured in conjunction with Auguste Rodin’s tête de l’homme and the neo-classical fountain in the Walker Court, suggested cultural sophistication and positive associations between modern art and commerce, targeted at a female readership.

Photographs of fabric prints and unconventional shapes “that ape the efforts of our

43 Paintings by Jean-Paul Riopelle, Alfred Pellan and Paul-Emile Borduas were included in an exhibition of loans from private collections at the AGT, Oct. 1959.
most advanced abstract sculptors” demonstrated how abstraction and the avant-garde, stripped of any political intent, was increasingly employed in fashion and design as a marker of sophistication and youth culture.44

Other examples of the close association between visual art and commercial activity in the magazine emerged in overlapping issues concerning photography. Promoted as a hobby and amateur pursuit for Canadian adults in the decade following the war, with Kodak and other manufacturers an important source of advertising revenue for the magazine, photography was increasingly presented as a professional activity in the late 1950s. The work of freelance photographers such as Michel Lambeth and Lutz Dille, employed by the magazine as photojournalists, suggested to readers the possibility of a career in the field.45 In addition, lengthy profiles of photographers Yousuf and Malek Karsh showcased commercial photography as a profession.46 Alongside the description of Malek’s successful Ottawa studio and his work on government publications, greeting cards, bank calendars and publicity photographs for industry, Yousuf’s celebrity status and connections to the political, cultural and intellectual elite in Canada suggested the possibility of a successful career in celebrity photography.47 Described as “the

44 John Thornton Caldwell has described this as a feature of American consumer culture in the late 1950s; see Caldwell, Televi


47 Karsh was shown at his home in Ottawa with Canadian Art managing editor Paul Arthur, preparing for a portrait of Christine Bissell (wife of University of Toronto President Claude Bissell), with actors Julie Harris and Bruno Gerussi at Stratford, Ontario, with artist Philip Aziz in London, Ontario, and with the French Ambassador to Canada and his wife. The text described other encounters such as an interview with the director of University of Toronto Press Marsh Jeanneret and a visit by Ed Murrow (Edward R. Murrow)
world’s most famous photographer,” he appeared in photographs signing his recent book and in the company of well-known Canadian personalities. At the same time, new advertisements for camera equipment, supplies and retail camera stores augmented earlier ads, the message being that photography was no longer merely a hobby but an activity that, with the right training, technical ability and equipment (purchased from Star Weekly advertisers), might lead to an interesting and lucrative career. In short, while photographs might be “artfully composed” (as the magazine’s captions frequently described them), the Weekly made a clear distinction between photographers and artists.

Links between visual arts and commercial activity were also prominent elements of articles about artists. Coverage of Harold Town is one such example because both the economic value of his art work and his career as a commercial artist were important elements of the magazine’s focus. Described in a profile by Alan Phillips as “Canadian painting’s angriest young man”—“the hottest sales property in English-speaking Canada”—the magazine’s initial coverage offset notions of the artist-rebel with assurances that drawings and prints by the artist were a good investment. The artist was also among the painters featured in a full-page group photograph of artists assembled for an “international touring exhibition” titled “Toronto ’61,” which situated him in the context of the commercial gallery scene in Toronto. The growth of commercial galleries in the city and what the magazine described as Toronto’s dynamic art scene were presented as exciting developments in the context of economic expansion. Framed within liberal

for the CBS television program Person to Person; Mordecai Richler, “The Man Behind the Camera,” SW 1 Oct. 1960, 6-10 (R).
48 One article claimed that three million amateur photographers in Canada spend one hundred million dollars on photography each year, on film, developing charges and equipment; see “Everybody’s Taking Pictures,” SW 12 Aug. 1961, 22 (R).
notions of material success, contact between artist and patron at commercial galleries was presented as a positive development, and commercial activity a constructive influence on art production. At the same time, the notion that a Canadian artist such as Town might profit from sales of his work was consistently denied and this characteristic, of disinterest in financial gain, was extended to other Canadian artists.51

Other articles similarly deployed visual arts to project an atmosphere of economic development and civic boosterism in Toronto.52 In the early 1960s, the commercial success of artists such as Town and the increasing number of commercial art galleries in the city were used to bolster evidence of what was described as a new “cosmopolitan” atmosphere of coffee houses and bohemian culture.53 Economic interests were also prominent features of an article on art fraud and art forgery in Canada, one that promoted awareness that paintings by members of the Group of Seven and other historical Canadian artists were valuable commodities.54 While the article presented the growing material wealth of Canadians as part of the success of the expanding capitalist economy, it also suggested that rising wealth and prosperity brought risks to Canadians but that police and national institutions could be trusted with the job of protecting the Canadian public.

A different kind of risk, of the menace posed to the Canadian way of life by the consumption of products designed and fabricated elsewhere, was projected in a lengthy profile of

51 For instance, “[Fred] Varley today cares so little for money he often turns down portrait commissions if he doesn’t find rapport with the subjects. His art now commands high prices in terms of the Canadian market but his wants are simple. He is more preoccupied with values than a bank account” (Angela Burke, “Canadian Art Comes into Its Own,” SW 28 Dec. 1957, 26-28 [M]).
52 Among these were articles concerning sculpture commissions in the city by Gerald Gladstone and others; see for instance John O’Keefe, photos Clive Webster, “The Art World’s Welding Wonder,” SW 11 May 1963, 14 (R).
54 Roy Shields, “The Great Canadian Art Fraud,” Canadian Weekly 23 May 1964, 10. This new magazine was distributed as an insert in the Star Weekly and by other newspaper chains across Canada.
Andy Warhol. In the article, the first extensive coverage of a U.S. artist, reporter Jeanine Locke emphasized his growing influence not only in the visual arts but also on fashion, home furnishings, interior decorating and entertainment. According to Locke, Warhol’s design aesthetic had influenced home appliances, furniture, women’s clothing and shoes; the artist was even deemed responsible for the popularity of men’s hairdressing salons. The reporter framed the profile of Warhol in negative terms, proposing the risks to Canadians if they failed to buy Canadian products, invest in Canadian companies, and take back control of the economy from the U.S. The implication was that Warhol and his ilk would dictate the design of Canadian consumer products. The reporter identified the mass-marketing potential of what was described as the “camp” aesthetic promoted by Warhol, for instance, and noted that elements of the style could be purchased from Gimbels and Macy’s department stores in New York in addition to Eaton’s in Toronto. As an alternative to what was presented as a foreign influence, Locke proposed a Canadian version of “camp,” claiming that a local “camp” sensibility was still affordable, unlike similar objects from the United States. A full-page photograph of Warhol in front of Elvis Presley from the contemporary Warhol exhibit at the Art Gallery of Toronto accompanied the article, as did examples of various products deemed typical of the “camp” aesthetic (fig. 6).

Figure 6: “Kitchen Shows Pop Art Influence”

An alternative Canadian source was presented more explicitly to readers a month later in a photo story on Arnaud Maggs, “graphic artist of distinction” from Don Mills, Toronto. Referring to the artist and his wife’s home décor as pop art, the article described the “unusual treasures” in the home, effectively substituting a Canadian example of the pop phenomenon and a Canadian alternative to Warhol (fig. 7).

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Figure 7: “Young Caitlin Maggs (above), stands on stairs and looks gravely between pop-art treasures displayed on cut-down entry wall. View from kitchen (right) takes in green wooden balls from a hardware store, used for sticking penknives in, and 18th-century French mannequin and a blow-up, on wall, of Elizabeth Taylor. In the master bedroom (below), Laurie, the Maggs’ eldest son, stands between a Union Jack bought at a Salvation Army shop, and an iron bedstead rescued from an attic.”

In important ways, the description of Warhol projected concern about the impact of foreign artists on Canadian manufacturing and, as such, it was an extension of the argument for
economic nationalism advanced in the magazine’s promotion of Canadian culture. Similar concerns were expressed in a subsequent profile of Canadian realist painter Alex Colville, in which economic interests were projected onto the visual arts community and infrastructure of dealers and art galleries. Serving as publicity for the commemorative venture, Colville’s designs for centennial coins were presented as an opportunity for Canadians to own “Colville’s latest masterpieces,” the idea accompanying a claim that Colville’s work was not appreciated by Canadians. According to the article, while Colville’s paintings might sell quickly in New York, they did not do well in Toronto or Montréal because “neither the connoisseurs nor the casual visitors to art galleries have much influence in establishing what’s desirable in this country.”57 The sharply-worded criticism of Canadian art dealers and institutions, and the accompanying assertion that the art community in Canada was dominated by abstract expressionism, appears directed at U.S. influences in the Canadian art world. The article framed its accusations of neglect by omitting important details; for instance, it emphasized the international reputation enjoyed by Colville by noting his participation in the 1966 Venice Biennale, but neglected to inform the reader that Colville had been chosen by the National Gallery to represent Canada in the international exhibition. Instead, illustrated by several reproductions, including “one of the few Colvilles to remain in Canada,” the article implied once again that Canadians should be concerned about foreign attention because it would mean the loss of an important cultural resource.

By the end of the decade, the framing of art and artists within the promotion of economic development in Canada was expanded to other cities. Once again, art production was positioned as an important component of commercial activity, broadened to include notions of visual arts as

entertainment for Canadians. Signaling an important break with the past, the *Weekly* also tentatively exposed evidence of oppositional art practices and notions of the artist as outsider and rebel at this time. Economic concerns remained important elements of the magazine’s presentation of visual arts as entertainment, however, and of the creative industries as evidence of a dynamic and cosmopolitan North American city.

**Art Patronage in Canada**

In addition to promoting intersections between visual arts and economic development in Canada, the magazine continued to project elements of Canadian identity and life in Canada. Notions of classlessness, advanced by the magazine in the immediate post-war period as characteristic of Western democracies generally, were identified specifically with Canada during the late 1950s; and, again, art patronage and collecting were employed to promote the idea. An extension of the cultural nationalism that was increasingly apparent at this time, attention in the magazine to art patronage and to collectors of Canadian art was expressed in terms of national pride and education, rather than as expressions of patrician sensibilities or great wealth. In visual arts coverage, collecting art was presented as a hobby and reward for hard work and prudent investment, prompted by altruism and patriotic attachment to Canada. A transition in the magazine away from a focus on individual patrons to the patronage of the Canadian state and state institutions over the decade also supported an image of classlessness in Canada; it projected an ideal of equal access to funding and resources. By the end of the decade, acknowledgment of a degree of rebellion against the “heavy hand” of the state in guiding visual arts production in

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58 In an article by Barry Lord, what he described as the “explosion” of art galleries and boutiques, experimental theatre and performances by the Nihilist Spasm band in London, Ontario, was presented as a positive development and an economic benefit to the city; Barry Lord, photos John Reeves, “Swinging London (Ontario),” *SW* 13 Jan. 1968.
Canada signaled an important shift in the projection of classlessness and conception of the state’s role as patron of the arts.

Descriptions in the magazine of individual acts of patronage by wealthy individuals provide an example of how the Weekly promoted a sense of classlessness in Canada at the beginning of the decade. The magazine’s account of Lord Beaverbrook’s gift of funding for an art gallery and art collection to New Brunswick, for instance, was presented as an example of patriotic altruism and as symbolic of national pride. The characterization of the Canadian-born press baron as a passionate and energetic collector and businessman was very different from the magazine’s depiction of corrupt and decadent European art patrons identified in visual arts coverage during the immediate post-war period. In its announcement of the new “cultural treasure” Beaverbrook was giving the nation, the magazine also effectively reminded its readership of Canada’s historic place in the British Commonwealth while emphasizing the idea that Canada represented its future, the article relating the patron’s desire “to create a collection which would be representative of English and Canadian art from the 18th century through the modern schools to the generation of painters now rising.” In this instance, the projection of civic mindedness and patriotic attachment to Canada, along with the perceived educational benefit of the collection to the Canadian public, overshadowed art historical accuracy; the story’s emphasis on the contributions of British artists to the history of art to the exclusion of those from France or

59 The author described the donation as “the latest and most munificent of Lord Beaverbrook’s many gifts to his native country” (W. G. Matters, “An Art Gift to Excel Them All,” SW 2 Aug. 1957, 2, 37 [M]). Lord Beaverbrook (1879-1964) formerly Max Aitkin, was a press baron, publisher and politician in Great Britain.

60 Bob Brooks, “The Beaver Visits His Old N.B. Home,” SW 7 Nov. 1959, 3-4 (R).
elsewhere was a highly selective historical reading designed to enhance the significance of the donation.⁶¹

A similar construction of art collectors as civic-minded and patriotic Canadians informed “Capital Taste in Art,” an article describing the tastes and preferences of members of the governing elite in Ottawa who loaned paintings for an exhibition at the National Gallery.⁶² An important element of this account was the celebration of art collecting as an astute investment, with Canadian art presented as an affordable commodity in comparison with its European counterpart. Against these middlebrow preoccupations, lowbrow collecting activities were featured in a description of Toronto scrap metal dealer Joe Heuberger and his collection of Meissen china.⁶³ The article on Heuberger also projected a claim of Canada as a haven for refugees, in this case Jews fleeing Nazi Germany, a representation that glossed over Canada’s limited response to the Holocaust and lent support to the idea that financial success in Canada followed hard work and sacrifice. A related focus on collecting art as an expression of creativity and personal expression was established in articles ranging from a description of the opening of

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⁶¹ For instance, “Constable was a revolutionary. He painted in the open air, long before the later 18th [sic] century impressionists began taking themselves into the countryside to capture the light they could not get in their studies. A seascape by Alfred Sisley, Côte d’Angleterre, will give gallery visitors a sample of the work of one of the leaders of the impressionist movement” (Bob Brooks, “The Beaver Visits His Old N.B. Home,” SW 7 Nov. 1959, 3-4 [R]).

⁶² Anne Francis, “Capital Taste in Art,” SW 20 June 1959, 3(R). Lenders Hamilton Southam, Vincent Massey, J. E. Coyne (governor of the Bank of Canada), Lester Pearson, Davidson Dunton (former CBC chair and President of Carlton University), Brooke Claxton, Alan Gibbons (National Gallery Association President), Alan Jarvis and A.Y. Jackson were pictured in photographs with examples of paintings by Canadian artists in the exhibition. Although the controversy was not mentioned, the article was published during the period of intense parliamentary debate over the purchase of the Liechtenstein paintings in the spring and summer 1959.

⁶³ James Y. Nicol, “Scrap Dealer with Fine China Tastes,” SW 14 Nov. 1959, 10 (R).
the Queen’s private art collection at Buckingham Palace to the public to one devoted to the
collecting preferences of Vancouver-born actor Raymond Burr.\textsuperscript{64}

In contrast to the \textit{Weekly’s} endorsement of the activities of individual patrons, the
patronage of the Canadian state in supporting and promoting visual art in Canada was a minor
concern in the magazine at the beginning of the decade. As in the immediate post-war period, the
\textit{Weekly’s} primary interest lay in promoting expanded educational opportunities for Canadians,
and the magazine continued to stress the need for funding to enhance scientific research and
industrial development in Canada. The founding of the Canada Council in 1957 received little
attention, apart from an editorial following the announcement of the first scholarships and
fellowships granted by the new agency.\textsuperscript{65} It was only in time that the magazine endorsed a model
of state support for the arts represented by the Canada Council as a vehicle for funding of
individual artists.\textsuperscript{66} It emerged in criticism of a conference organized by the Canadian Arts
Council (now the Canadian Conference of the Arts) and charges by novelist Mordecai Richler
that the conference was merely a social event. Richler proposed that artists receive direct funding
through the purchase of books, paintings and commissioned symphonic works rather than wasting
taxpayers’ money on conferences. The magazine’s sympathetic treatment of the author’s
complaints suggests that the magazine endorsed the interpellation of the state on an individual
basis rather than through an intermediary of artists’ groups or other organizations.

Support for state patronage was initially managed in the magazine through an emphasis
on middletbrow values such as hard work, thrift and patriotism. In visual arts coverage, the

\textsuperscript{64} Peter Mitchel photos, “The Queen Reveals a Gorgeous Legacy,” \textit{SW} 13 Oct. 1962, 2 (R); Peter J.
Levinson, photographs by Doris Nieh, “The Case of the Moonlighting Lawyer,” \textit{SW} 10 Nov. 1962, 16 (R).
\textsuperscript{65} The editorial was critical of the awarding of fellowships and grants to established academics rather than
what it described as “unproved” artists and “oddballs and eccentrics” (“Will Canada Council Shun the
Oddballs?” Editorial, \textit{SW} 14 Sep. 1957, 47 [M]).
\textsuperscript{66} Mordecai Richler, “The Canadian Conference of the Arts was a BIG FLOP,” \textit{SW} 24 June 1961, 8-10 (R).
awarding of a Council grant was presented as a practical means of supporting individual artists, rather than as recognition of artistic accomplishment or indication of talent. In the magazine’s description, the grants appeared modest and required grant recipients studying abroad at taxpayer expense live frugally and demonstrate a strong work ethic, a construction apparent in an article on sculptor Maryon Kantaroff, a student at the Chelsea School of Art in London, England. In the article, the magazine did not suggest that winning the grant in itself was a significant achievement, but instead it included a positive assessment of the artist’s work by a British authority at the art school. The article, “Girl Rebel with a Cause,” also indicated qualified support for the grants as a means of state intervention to prevent youthful rebellion. Similar accounts typically included the artist’s expression of patriotic nationalism and a desire to return to Canada following the experience abroad. Support provided by the Canada Council for experimentation and research was similarly presented as a positive development in the Weekly.

Significantly, gradual acceptance of the need for state support for visual arts in Canada mirrored the magazine’s increasing emphasis on cultural nationalism as the decade advanced. The contrast between the magazine’s description of Lord Beaverbrook and art collector Joseph Hirshhorn, a U.S. financier with extensive business dealings in Canadian mining, highlighted this perspective. An excerpt from Aline Saarinen’s book on Hirshhorn, The Proud Possessors (1958), was featured in the magazine, and Hirshhorn’s “voracious buying style” and refusal to act as an art patron for established Canadian cultural institutions were important elements of the published

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69 A photo story and text concerning Jean-Paul Mousseau’s mural for Hydro-Quebec was supportive of the role of the Canada Council in funding innovation and research in the service of contemporary architecture and modern industrial production. For Marcel Cognac’s photographs, see SW 17 Mar. 1962, 14-17 (R).
Saarinen’s account positioned Hirshhorn as an independent art connoisseur, and the collector’s disdain for the work produced by the Group of Seven, exposed in a profile in the magazine two years earlier, reinforced the perception that he would not provide unconditional support for Canadian art and cultural institutions in Canada. Hirshhorn’s other interests, including a failed attempt to build a model community in Northern Ontario, complete with art museum and public sculpture program, were also recounted in the excerpt. The inclusion of a quote from Hirshhorn, “Maybe they won’t be different because of the beauty, but their kids will,” reveals a middlebrow impulse on his part to improve the lives of area miners by exposing them to modern art. The miners apparently did not appreciate the effort, according to the article, and were blamed for the failure of the project.

As far as support for Canadian artists was concerned, a more accommodating art patron was suggested by the example of Canadian marketing executive Robert McMichael. The donation of McMichael’s art collection and home to the Metropolitan Toronto Region Conservation Authority Foundation in 1963 was presented in the magazine as an act of patriotic benevolence prompted by an intense love of Canada and Canadiana. Accompanied by a full-page photographic layout that included shots of Group of Seven member A.Y. Jackson in conversation with McMichael and interior views of McMichael’s home, the article described the setting as beautiful and “authentically Canadian.” Reference in the article to fake Group of Seven and Tom Thomson paintings, in what was described as an “international art world scandal,” served to

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70 Aline Saarinen, “The Tenement House Kid Who Dreamed Big,” SW 28 Feb. 1959, 18, 19, 36, 43 (M).
71 The group is described as “the dauntless band of native painters who went into the wilds and painted the unspoiled grandeur in forthright, muscular fashion. Such ‘crude, raw painting’ finds no sympathetic chord in Hirshhorn’s aesthetic soul” (Hugh Thomas, “Pictures Must Excite Me Twice,” SW 18 May 1957, 16, 17, 19 [M]).
enhance perceptions of the value of the donation. A description of the prices of individual paintings belonging to McMichael, part of the donation, further emphasized the significance of the gift. The article also included an account of the relocation of Thomson’s shack from downtown Toronto to the McMichael property and of the restoration of “wallboard panels which Thomson’s friends had painted, Gaugin-like [sic], on the walls and cupboards of the shack during their midnight revelries.” Perhaps to signify the masculinity of the group, to forge a connection with contemporary lowbrow male culture, and to offset hints of upper class patronage, the destruction of “nude murals” of “hussies” in the shack’s interior was lamented in the article as well.

Patriotically inspired benevolence on the part of the Canadian capitalist class, suggested by the description of McMichael and Beaverbrook, were important elements in the projection of classlessness in Canada. The articles describing gifts did not include information on tax benefits or other financial considerations that may have prompted the donations but, instead, projected altruism and “love of Canada” as the prime motivation for philanthropy. The altruism of art patrons was also projected in an article dealing with Nova Scotia artist Maud Lewis; it described the plan of a Halifax art dealer to sell reproductions of paintings by Lewis as a means to provide the artist with a steady income. The description of the artist’s poverty and joy in selling her paintings for a few dollars to tourists and other collectors, coupled with the article’s paternalistic tone, also suggests a conception of the female artist in terms of a pre-modern past, uncontaminated by contemporary culture, preserved and protected through the application of commercial processes. The timing of the article, mid-July, suggests that promoting cross-Canada travel and other touristic activities informed the profile, and the popularity of Lewis’s work

among local collectors, such as then-Nova Scotia Premier Robert Stanfield, was cited as endorsement.

Emblematic of the projection of classlessness in Canada, the gradual transition in the magazine from approval of individual patrons to state support for visual art was accomplished in part through positive accounts of the actions of public institutions. The magazine’s description of the purchase of two Old Masters paintings by Canadian institutions, one by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and one by the Art Gallery of Toronto, are important examples of this shift. Signaling a sustained attachment to British cultural authority, the magazine stressed the fact that the authenticity of the painting by Tintoretto, purchased by the Art Gallery of Toronto, was assured by Sir Anthony Blunt, Surveyor of the Queen’s Pictures. The price of the painting, and assurances that public institutions in New York, London, Venice and Madrid owned similar canvasses by the artist, were key elements of the announcement. Drawing on the cultural authority of prominent connoisseur Bernard Berenson and notions of scarcity and “value for money,” the author also presented the purchase as subject to popular approval by noting that the public was invited to view the painting prior to the purchase. A similar event at the Montreal Museum of Fine Art—the purchase of the “magnificent 15\textsuperscript{th} century altarpiece by the Florentine master Neri di Bicci”—which was shrouded in secrecy until the moment of unveiling, was also presented as a significant acquisition that would benefit Canadians.

Important elements of the magazine’s presentation of the acquisitions at both the Art Gallery of Toronto and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts were references to both middlebrow

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75 Photographs by Marcel Cognac, “What Are They Trying to Hide?” SW 27 Apr. 1963, 16 (R).
and lowbrow cultural values and norms. The articles’ treatment of the purchases, for example, tempered the perceived exclusivity of highbrow culture by projecting a sense of openness and accessibility in public art institutions in Canada, which, in turn, reinforced a message of classlessness in Canada. This was also apparent in a description of the National Gallery of Canada in an article that featured a fashion shoot in the gallery’s newly constructed quarters in the Lorne Building. In this instance, the location was deployed in the text to suggest glamour and was accompanied by information regarding appropriate dress for gallery openings. The article noted, “the National Gallery in Ottawa, where these photographs were taken, is supported by public funds and anyone wishing to get his name on the mailing list for all invitations has only to make the request.” The magazine also emphasized the fact that cross-country travelling exhibitions organized by the National Gallery made the collection accessible to all Canadians.

References to lowbrow cultural products, behavior and attitudes, along with notions of classlessness in Canada, were deployed in connection with other artists. Québec artist Arthur Villeneuve, for instance, was described by locals as “the fool of Chicoutimi” in an article on the opening of the artist’s house as a museum, the artist’s use of non-art materials and “spontaneous child-like work” positioning him as a pre-modern “primitive.” In the article, National Gallery employee Claude Picher was credited with identifying the artist’s potential and rescuing his home in Chicoutimi, reference to the nation’s premier art institution serving to legitimate the artist even

76 According to the article, the painting in Toronto could be viewed “for the price of a milkshake” and the unveiling of the altarpiece in Montréal was presented as a mystery. Education and “value for money” were also important elements of the descriptions.
78 Although not addressed in the Weekly, the emphasis on accessibility may have been a response to controversy over the dispersal of public money for acquisitions at the Gallery in 1959 (over which director Alan Jarvis was fired) and the cost of the new building.
as the author of the article situated the events of Villeneuve’s discovery within notions of marital conflict popularized in lowbrow cultural products such as comic strips and television shows. In this instance, the “hen-pecked husband” was rescued by the timely intervention of a National Gallery employee and, as a result, an important Canadian cultural resource was preserved for public access. The article, published during the summer travel season, served to publicize the house-museum as a Québec tourist attraction. In short, the actions of the art gallery employee were credited with identifying and rescuing an important cultural treasure with significant tourist appeal and commercial potential.

In addition to its support and promotion of public art institutions in Canada, the magazine also projected an ideal of classlessness in coverage of the newly created national awards for achievement in the arts, humanities and social sciences—the Canada Council Medals. The magazine’s description of the awards ceremony for the medals projected an explicit message of classlessness by once again employing elements of both the middlebrow and lowbrow.⁸⁰ Tempering associations with elite culture with a reference to the “faint odor of mothballs” at the gala (which suggested rarely-donned formal attire), author Kildare Dobbs described the Canada Council Medal as “the only national honor this country bestows.” Writing against the existence of class in Canada, Dobbs emphasized the fact that the country had no official system of honours, “not even military honours,” and no honorary titles. The medals were necessary, he maintained, because “even in a democracy of free and equal citizens inequality must be saluted.” Accompanied by photographs of medal winners taken by Yousuf Karsh and Kryn Taconis, the “special album” of recipients included the four members of the Group of Seven who had been given medals since the awards were created in 1961.

Dobbs’s account of the circumstances of the founding of the Canada Council by then Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent with an endowment of $100,000,000 reinforced notions of benevolent patronage transferred to the state. And, while the description of medal winner Vincent Massey acknowledged the patrician attributes of the wealthy Toronto “former professor, politician, diplomat, philanthropist and viceroyalty,” a mocking and indulgent tone was employed to offset any suggestion of upper-class privilege. The author claimed, for instance, that Massey “grew up in a city of cold-water Methodism and in a rich family” and quipped “No wonder both the young Masseys loved dressing up—Raymond in the strut and glamour of the stage and screen, Vincent in the gorgeous pomp of empire.” The patrician sensibilities and privileged background of Group of Seven member Lawren Harris, termed “one of Massey-Harris Harrises,” was similarly balanced by details of the working-class origins of other members of the Group.

The perceived benevolence of the Canadian state was an important aspect of the magazine’s description of the awards ceremony and other government initiatives publicized at this time. The generosity and compassion of the government of Canada was emphatically projected in the profile of late Kwakwaka’wakw artist Mungo Martin, the first article in the Weekly encountered thus far to feature an Indigenous artist, although (perhaps not coincidentally) one no longer living. The profile of the medal winner began with an evocative description of Martin’s funeral, positioned as emblematic of a “dying culture” and “dying people,” and the transportation of his body to Alert Bay in British Columbia “aboard the RCN destroyer-escort Ottawa.” References in the article to the artist’s work with Canadian anthropologists and other academics in Canada projected the idea of the state as protector and

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81 “It happened that the deaths of two immensely rich Maritimes tycoons, Sir James Dunn and Izaak Walton Killam, had left the national kitty with an embarrassing surplus of just that amount in succession duties” (Kildare Dobbs, “Canada’s Highest Award,” SW 4 Apr. 1964, 1-15 [R]).
preserver of Indigenous cultural heritage in Canada. A similar message appeared in the magazine’s account of a new government initiative for Canadian youth, the Company of Young Canadians, which was described by the Weekly as having been “conceived along the lines of the U.S. Peace Corps.” In this instance, the magazine emphasized the positive impact of the government-funded program in providing encouragement and assistance to Indigenous artists such as Henry Speck, in preserving what the magazine described as Kwakiutl heritage in the community at Alert Bay, and in providing an outlet to engage young Canadians in social welfare initiatives.

By the end of the decade, however, the magazine’s endorsement of state patronage for visual arts appeared in question and a degree of rebellion against the authority of state initiatives was supported and even encouraged in the magazine. In one article, a group of artist “rebels,” who gathered regularly at the Pilot Tavern in Toronto, openly mocked an invitation to meet with Judy LaMarsh, then Secretary of State and head of the Canada Council. The article’s inclusion of defiant claims by the artists of being too busy to meet with the former Cabinet Minister and government official in Ottawa suggest the magazine’s interest in reporting arguments that the patronage of the state was no longer essential for artists in Canada. At the same time, the method of projecting classlessness in the magazine was increasingly shaped by references to lowbrow interests rather than with middlebrow preoccupations. The image projected at this time, of the artist as non-conformist and independent rebel, would have been unrecognizable to earlier readers of the Weekly.

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84 Aspects of the description of the artists included accounts of afternoons spent consuming alcohol, divorce and common-law marriages, behaviour that did not conform to middlebrow values.
Evolving from an emphasis on such middlebrow values as patriotism, hard work and equal opportunity in the projection of Canada as a classless society, increasing prominence of lowbrow preoccupations at the end of the decade signaled important changes in the magazine. Established models for projecting notions of classlessness and the role of artists in Canadian society appeared in doubt in visual arts coverage in the Weekly following the centennial year, replaced by a celebration of individuality and non-conformity. The image of the artist as outsider, in rebellion against both state and corporate North America, presented a new profile of the artist in the public imagination and a new vision of the artist’s place in Canadian society. In the end, it was a romantic ideal of the artist, a radical revision of ideas from the past, which would remain in place for the coming decades, until the decisive end of the Cold War in 1989.

**Visual Arts, Gender and Ethnic Diversity in Canada**

Rooted in an interest in economic nationalism and in growing awareness in the magazine of the economic value of visual artists was a related project of promoting ideas about Canada and Canadian society. A particular vision of the country emerged in visual arts coverage at mid-century, one extending beyond consideration of class to Canada’s ethnic makeup and gender identity. The majority of artists profiled in the magazine from the late 1950s and into the 1960s were immigrant males, and emphasis in the Weekly’s pages on contributions to the country made by artists from other nations helped define the image of the artist in Canada at this time. In this instance, as in the past, the magazine’s treatment of the artist points to the use of visual arts coverage as an expedient, not only in advancing ideas concerning immigration and citizenship but also in promoting ideas of gender. This was a dual project, involving the application of strict notions both of masculinity and femininity in the construction of the identity of the artist and of
gender roles within Canadian society. Significantly, this project displayed an increasingly misogynistic tone as the decade advanced, a reflection, perhaps, of both a changing audience demographic and resistance to the burgeoning feminist movement in the 1960s.

In its profiles of individual artists, the magazine emphasized the contributions made by immigrant artists from Europe to the cultural landscape of Canada. This presentation was based on a contemporary presumption that Europeans were more culturally advanced than Canadians and that Europe was the civilizing source of “high” culture. It is a discernible element, for example, in the magazine’s 1956 profile of New Brunswick potters Erica and Kjeld Deichmann, and a claim that the new Canadians were making significant contributions to both the Canadian economy and Canada’s international reputation figured prominently in the piece. According to the article’s author, “nowhere is more and better experimental work done in stoneware than in their pottery.” Reference to a family connection between Kjeld Deichmann and Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard, and information on the occupations (nursing and forestry management) taken up by the couple’s Canadian-born offspring, worked to promote a sense among readers of both the intellectual heritage of Europe brought by immigrants and the practical contributions they were making to the Canadian economy. In other words, articles dealing with visual arts also projected positive ideas concerning immigration to Canada.

The introductory article for the series on Canadian art, published in the magazine in late 1957, presented a similar conception of Europeans as more culturally advanced than Canadians. In the article, the magazine emphasized the value of the Art Gallery of Toronto, which stood, presumably, for other such institutions in the country, as a useful venue for the assimilation of immigrants because it was a site where new Canadians might learn about Canadian heritage and

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Celebration of the contributions made by newcomers to Canada at this time, however, did not extend to non-European immigrants. In this piece, for instance, reference to the director of the gallery “at his desk examining a new abstract he had just bought from a Japanese-Canadian artist” suggests as much, in that the artist’s name and the art work’s title remained unidentified and the “new abstract” was withheld from view.

As this example indicates, the magazine projected a particular vision of the ethnic makeup of Canada in visual arts coverage at mid-century, publicizing a narrow range of countries as a source of immigrants. The selection of artists profiled in the magazine throughout the decade was largely restricted to white Europeans and U.S. Americans, and typically presented evidence of assimilation along with an assertion of the immigrants’ contributions to the country. An immigrant’s interest in hockey, for instance, was implied by a photograph of Frances Loring’s *Goal Keeper* (1935) in a profile of the U.S.-born sculptor and her partner Florence Wyle. A summary of their completed commissions, including “some war-record work” (presumably for the Canadian War Records Office) solidified the connection the magazine was making between the artists and their new country by providing evidence of their patriotic contributions to the well-known World War I war-art project. The profile was not exclusively positive, however, writer Robert Fulford’s negative assessment of Loring’s work capped by his sarcastic comment that “her contribution to art is about on a par with President Eisenhower’s contribution to political

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87 The reference allowed for a claim of racial tolerance, in theory. In his study of NFB films from the same period, Christopher Gittings has identified a reluctance to show racial diversity in visual images and a similar caution may have informed Burke’s article; Christopher Gittings, *Canadian National Cinema: Ideology, Difference and Representation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 90.
88 At the time, government agencies had shifted emphasis away from assimilation to multiculturalism; Richard Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 166.
oratory,” transforming the fact of her U.S. birth into an expression of anti-Americanism, a growing presence in the magazine at this time.\footnote{The former military officer and U.S. President was considered a very dull public speaker.}

In a demonstration of how the magazine participated in the construction of ideas about immigration, its treatment of immigrant artists typically included evidence of assimilation, suggestion of a growing attachment to place, and expressions of gratitude for life in Canada. At the same time, the magazine included reference to how immigrant artists were frustrated with native-born Canadians who complained of lack of opportunities in the country. These types of references suggest that the articles were directed at both reassuring Canadians regarding the presence of immigrants and their contributions to Canada and influencing behavior and attitudes among Canadian-born readers. This focus was evident in the profile of photographer Malek Karsh, for instance, an account that also gave a sympathetic cast to the immigrant experience by including an account of the persecution he suffered as an Armenian before arriving in Canada, his subsequent illness as an immigrant due to overwork and his eventual “triumph over adversity” as a Canadian citizen.\footnote{Malek’s enthusiastic response to the Canadian landscape and fall colours and an account of Yousuf Karsh’s contributions to the war effort during World War II, which were included in the profiles of the photographers, also projected a patriotic attachment to Canada; Bill Stephenson, “Malek, the ‘Other Karsh,’” \textit{SW} 5 Mar. 1960, 25-27; Mordecai Richler, “The Man Behind the Camera,” \textit{SW} 1 Oct. 1960, 6-10 (R).}

Over time, notions of artistic and cultural sophistication previously associated with Europe in the \textit{Weekly} were increasingly identified with Canada. The shift is evident in an article on Dutch immigrant artist Yosef Drenters, who was profiled in a special Dominion Day (now Canada Day) series entitled “New Faces of Canada.” In the article, the artist claimed “in the Netherlands, I would have been a farmer,” his statement suggesting that Canada now provided greater opportunities than his homeland in Europe. An essential component in his expression of
appreciation was his interest in Canadian history, and the article highlighted his efforts to preserve “Canada’s pioneer past” by collecting Canadiana and purchasing a Canadian historic site, “a famous school for boys” for his home and studio. An article about Toronto artist Albert Franck, who was described as a “hardworking Dutch immigrant,” similarly projected the idea of the immigrant artist as appreciative savior of Canadian heritage. In short, the articles endorsed these artists and reassured Weekly readers that immigrants were conforming to contemporary expectations regarding both assimilation and the contribution of immigrants to Canadian life.

The articles also argued, by way of example, for the need for greater interest in and engagement with Canada’s past on the part of Canadians generally, an important element of the cultural nationalism promoted in the magazine at this time.

The significant attention to immigrant artists indicates a particular preoccupation with the subject of immigration, which coincided with the prominence of cultural nationalism in the magazine during these years. This interest also indicates, once again, that the magazine employed visual arts as a way of addressing concerns outside of the realm of visual arts proper.

Recurring attention to artist William Kurelek, a second-generation Canadian whose parents emigrated from a communist-controlled country, provides a particularly rich example of the range of issues explored by the magazine through the person of an artist. He was the subject of one profile by Sylvia Fraser, which described the experience of immigration and details of the artist’s life and family in Canada, and of another that dealt with issues of religious devotion, communism, gender identity, family relationships and mental illness, side by side with discussion of the artist’s work. In fact, Fraser’s profile of Kurelek described immigration as “part of a vital

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92 James Knight, “The Netherlands’ Young Sculptor Enriches Canadian Art,” SW 1 July 1961, 11(R).
story of Canadian history,” and included several reproductions from his series of paintings, *A Ukrainian Immigrant in Canada*, which were then on view at the Isaacs Gallery in Toronto. According to the magazine, this “series of realistic-primitive paintings” illustrated the journey undertaken by Kurelek’s father as he travelled from Europe to Canada. The reporter used them as a touchstone in her discussion, not only of the first two waves of settlers from Ukraine, but also of the most recent arrival of refugees from communism. Fraser’s attention to the details of the immigrant’s life and experience in Canada promoted a positive perception among readers of Canada as a haven for refugees fleeing war, persecution and communism.95

While also discussing Kurelek’s art, the author focused attention on the contributions made by Ukrainian immigrants to what she described as the “Canadian mosaic,” crediting the Liberal Party of Canada for encouraging and facilitating immigration that had, presumably, produced it.96 Reference in the article to Ukrainian culture and “gay costumes, folk dances and songs” projected notions of ethnic diversity as entertainment for Canadians. This effort to promote specific aspects of cultural diversity, stripped of threatening or controversial elements, was an essential feature of early multiculturalism in Canada.97 Indeed, despite the fact that it was not addressed in the article, the interest in Kurelek may have been prompted by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism which was established in 1963 by the minority Liberal government under Prime Minister Lester Pearson. The failure to acknowledge the historic role of Ukrainian Canadians as a founding nation, along with Anglo and French settlers,

95 “(I)t is a quiet life, but a good one—the kind that Metro Kurelek and thousands of other disillusioned Ukrainian’s left their homeland to find: the kind that millions of other people all over the world, are still looking for and don’t expect ever to find” (Sylvia Fraser, “A Ukrainian Immigrant in Canada,” SW 17 Oct. 1964, 23).
96 Immigration, including attempts to limit immigrants sponsored by family members, was a contentious issue in federal elections at the time, particularly following the economic recession of the late 1950s.
was an issue of concern identified in public hearings undertaken by the Commission, and the
Ukrainian community’s negative reaction to the idea of a bilingual and bicultural country is
frequently cited as a contributing factor in the decision to promote multiculturalism as state
policy.98 In other words, by recognizing and celebrating the work of a Canadian-born artist and
Ukrainian heritage and culture in Canada, the article helped to promote ideas about ethnic
diversity in Canada as the Royal Commission hearings were underway.

An essential component of the groundwork for multiculturalism at this time was the
repositioning of all Canadians as immigrants and Anglo-Canadian heritage as merely one of a
number of different ethnicities within the Canada. The close relationship of Canada to Britain
and British heritage, so long embedded in the fabric of the magazine, began to subside after 1957
and was replaced by an emphasis on a multicultural Canadian heritage in a maturing independent
nation.99 Possible British influences in the art of Harold Town and other members of Painters
Eleven were not identified, for instance, and the magazine emphasized the relationship of the
group’s work to international art trends in abstraction, while describing Town as “the leading
exponent of abstract expressionism and advance-guard art.”100 Other visual arts-related events
were also presented in a context of internationalism, such as the installation of English sculptor

98 Bohdan Bociurkiv, “The Federal Policy of Multiculturalism and the Ukrainian Canadians,” Ukrainian
Canadians, Multiculturalism and Separatism, ed. Manoly Lupul (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press,
1974), 104.
99 Lingering associations with Anglo-British culture in Canada were projected in the profile of Harold
Town, together with reference to the artist’s penchant for “Edwardian elegance” and “Harris tweeds” (Alan
Phillips, “Canadian Painting’s Angriest Young Man,” SW 2 Apr. 1960, 12 [M]).
100 Ibid., 12 (M). Roald Nasgaard has identified the close ties to Britain in the commercial art world and
publishing industries in post-war Toronto, arguing that British post-war modernism was an important
source of influence for members of Painters Eleven. Nasgaard also maintains that artists such as Harold
Town were exposed to modern British art through design and advertising journals and important
exhibitions of contemporary British art at the Art Gallery of Toronto in the 1940s. He also argues that the
collecting patterns of Anglo-Canadian public galleries such as the National Gallery and the Art Gallery of
Ontario and reproductions of British painters available in Canada from the early 1940s helped to solidify
the influence of British art on Canadian artists; see Roald Nasgaard, Abstract Paintings in Canada (Halifax
Henry Moore’s *The Archer* (1966) at Toronto City Hall a decade later, his work—cast in West Germany and shipped to Arnhem, Holland, before arriving in Canada—described by the *Weekly* as a fitting addition to Finnish architect Viljo Revell’s innovative design for the city hall.\(^1\)

The effort to project a multicultural perspective and international outlook in visual arts coverage was supported by an interest in Québec artists at this time, a development that highlights the magazine’s previous neglect of the subject. The magazine employed a paternalistic and condescending tone, however, in its description of a young artist from Montréal, Belgium-born Michèle Bastin, projecting an image of pre-modern Québec society steeped in religious superstition. The fourteen year-old artist was described as painting in “a fever of inspiration” and the author emphasized the artist’s naivety and frequent illness, her “fever spells,” and what was described as her “typically childish interest in painting children and flowers.”\(^2\) At the same time, the absence of articles on other Québec artists posited this single profile, by default, as representative of artistic accomplishment in the province as a whole.\(^3\)

A more positive, forward-looking image of a Québec artist was projected in a 1960 article on Alfred Pellan. The contrast between the magazine’s presentations of the two artists exposes the gender dynamic deployed by the magazine in the construction of ideas concerning artists, which was intertwined in its visual arts coverage with attention to the new vision of ethnic diversity in Canada. In the profile, the author described Pellan as “the sophisticated intellectual, the bold experimenter, the very successful engineer of picture-making” and focused on his

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\(^1\) Photographs by Roloff Beny, “The Knuckleheads Said No To Modern Art,” *SW* 2 July 1966, 8-9. The denial of the longstanding attachment to Britain and British institutions was also evident in Robert Fulford’s review of the National Gallery’s centennial exhibition, “A Pageant for Canada.” Canada’s close ties to Britain and the dominating influence of British immigrants on Canadian cultural institutions was obscured through a reference to curator Roy Strong, director of the National Portrait Gallery in London, as “an outsider”; Robert Fulford, “Where We Came From,” *SW* 11 Nov. 1967, 24-26.


\(^3\) A series of photographs of Montréal artists by Marcel Cognac was the only other reference to artists in Québec; see “There’s Nothing Like Montréal’s Art Colony,” *SW* 15 Mar. 1958, 14-16.
depiction of the female nude.\textsuperscript{104} The author generously and effusively praised the artist in the piece, but nonetheless emphasized Pellan’s sensual and romantic nature and relationships with women, linking these personality traits to French-Canadian identity.\textsuperscript{105} The resulting portrait of Québec culture as French was underscored by a reference to Pellan as “the only Canadian ever honored by having a full one-man show in France’s National Museum of Modern Art.”\textsuperscript{106} Supporting this evidence of international prestige and approval for the artist were full-page photographs of the artist, a close-up colour portrait and a black-and-white photo featuring Pellan in conversation with Dr. Evan H. Turner, director of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.\textsuperscript{107} These features also worked to promote notions of celebrity, once again doing so in the context of ongoing interest in promoting cultural nationalism, which was now being extended to an artist from Québec.

The profiles of the two Québec artists illustrate the gender dynamic at work in the construction of ideas about artists, with the magazine employing a paternalistic tone in the description of the female artist and emphasizing international prestige and acclaim in its treatment of the older male. In addition to this projection of ideas about artists, gender discriminations were apparent in the magazine’s treatment of works of art, particularly with respect to abstraction. In the early-post war period, the identification of abstraction as a feminine interest was used to disparage it, and this tendency remained a feature of the magazine into the late 1950s. The description of art patron and collector Joseph Hirshhorn’s interest in psychoanalysis and

\textsuperscript{105} The author described the artist as “a robust wiry man with the face of a Norman farmer, the hands of a veteran carpenter and the earthy ebullience of Rableais [sic]” (Herbert Steinhouse, “Alfred Pellan: Painter, Poet and Dreamer,” \textit{SW} 6 Aug. 1960, 13-17).
\textsuperscript{106} \textit{Ibid.}, 13.
preference for abstraction over artwork by the Group of Seven was typical of this construction.\textsuperscript{108}

In this instance, abstraction was presented as a troubling and potentially unpredictable new
development, although coverage of the paintings selected for the 1958 World’s Fair in Brussels
suggested tentative associations in the magazine between abstraction and forward-looking
innovation.

In time, the association of abstraction both with pleasure and personal expression was
promoted. Such a conceptualization was projected, for example, in a short story that suggested
that anyone, regardless of experience or training, might enjoy looking at abstract art.\textsuperscript{109} The role
of women in understanding and interpreting artistic vision was both positive and explicit in the
fictional story of romance between a “powerful, rugged but sensitive” male artist and a young
woman who described his paintings as “too deep and beautiful for words.” In the story, set in an
art gallery in New York, the younger woman acted as a vehicle to convey understanding to an
older female character, and both women were presented as sensitive to what was described as the
beauty in abstraction, despite their lack of familiarity with contemporary art and art criticism.

In other instances, a presumed feminine interest in abstraction was combined with
associations of the avant-garde with fashion and design, both presented in the magazine as
markers of cultural sophistication. These ideas were foregrounded, for instance, in features on
designer clothing (among them the 1959 fashion shoot at the Art Gallery of Toronto) and in a
food column that described how to prepare oysters. The piece featured artist Harold Town
enjoying a feast of the shellfish, their consumption aligned with luxury food items such as caviar

\textsuperscript{108} Hugh Thomas, ““Pictures Must Excite Me Twice,”” \textit{SW} 18 May 1957, 16, 17, 19 (M).

\textsuperscript{109} Percy Marks, “The Unsold Picture,” \textit{SW} 27 Apr. 1957, 23 (M). Marks was an American writer and
teacher. His most famous novel \textit{The Plastic Age} (1926) was an exposé of student life at Stanford.
and “pate de foie gras” (fig. 8).110 A full-page photograph, which accompanied the article, was composed as if to position the (presumed female) reader as dinner companion, seated opposite Town, who was described as “one of Canada’s leading artists and certainly the most controversial.” The artist’s status as “enfant terrible” was tempered by a description of his quiet

Figure 8: “Gracious dining means being able to open an oyster without stabbing yourself, artist Harold Town says. Here’s how to perform the feat and enjoy every morsel. Stewing tips too.”

home life as husband and father, although his comparison of himself to “the ancient description of
the oyster as ‘secretive, self-contained and solitary, leading a dreadful but exciting life’” also
hinted at gender ambiguity.  

Associations between abstraction and avant-garde fashion combined to promote notions
of pleasure and entertainment in connection with the style, and working in abstraction was
increasingly presented as an expression of an artist’s personality. As a counterpoint to the
feminine sensibility associated with abstraction, the magazine emphasized masculinity as an
essential characteristic of the Canadian male artist, particularly with respect to representational
painting. Echoing the long-standing characterization of members of the Group of Seven as hardy
outdoorsmen, in contrast to effete European artists, the magazine emphasized traits that
conformed to conventional notions of masculinity in descriptions of artists working in a
representational mode of painting. Kildare Dobbs, for instance, claimed that Lawren Harris
regretted that his reputation was made with the Group of Seven “Old Masters,” rather than with
his work in abstraction, but “respects the muscled masculine adventuring on which his youthful
successes were built.” A lack of pretension, hardiness, “love of the bush” and “simple needs”
identified by the magazine in descriptions of artists helped to project an ideal of the Canadian
male artist as stalwart northern adventurer/explorer, fighting off grizzly bear attacks and
venturing “within 100 miles of Soviet Russia’s Siberian coast.” Such characterizations also
projected associations between Canadian artists and a military tradition of masculinity, which

111 Ibid., 14.
112 Fred Housser set out this dichotomy in his 1926 monograph, A Canadian Art Movement: The Story of
the Group of Seven (Toronto: Macmillan and Co. Canada, 1926).
114 R.E. Lougheed, “An Artist’s Arctic Adventure,” SW 16 Nov. 1957, 23 (M). Similar attributes were
featured in the photo story on the “art colony” in Montréal that described the artists as “hard working” and
“impoverished” (“There’s Nothing Like Montréal’s Art Colony,” SW Mar. 15 1958, 14 [R]).
were advanced, in this instance, by way of the article’s reference to travel in the far North in the context of the Cold War. Associations between Canadian male artists, masculinity and representational painting may have been deployed by the magazine to conform to the expectations of a particular audience demographic and also to mitigate popular associations between artists and homosexuality. With a similar objective, tales of hardship overcome by rugged determination were augmented by an emphasis on marriage and devotion to family in articles concerning the visual arts.115

In time, the characterization of the Canadian male artist as hardy outdoorsman faded and this association was increasingly presented as an artistic attribute of the past.116 In its place, notions of masculinity were projected through descriptions of relationships between male artists and women, a treatment characterized by an increasingly misogynistic tone as the decade advanced. A profile of Toronto sculptor Gerald Gladstone, for instance, included a description of the artist as hard working, full of “staggering energy”—“a fighter” who employed “space age technology” in his work.117 According to the profile, his reputation as a “scrapper” was forged in fights with his seven brothers and father, as well as by fifteen years in the advertising business. In the article, male domestic violence was normalized through reference to the artist’s “occasional temperamental outbursts (he smashed all the crockery in his house just before his opening in Toronto).” Also suggesting potent masculinity, Art Gallery of Toronto director William Withrow

115 This was particularly evident in articles on Harold Town; see for example Sylvia Fraser, “Harold Town, Genius at Work and Play,” SW 18 June 1967, 16-26.
described the purchase of Gladstone’s abstract sculpture, *Female Galaxy* (1961), in the article as “a fairly brave thing.”

A similar treatment of the male artistic personality and violence against women as an indication of masculinity were elements of the magazine’s coverage of other artists at this time. An article concerning an important Picasso exhibition in Toronto, for instance, included an account of an assault against early twentieth-century French artist Marie Laurencin. Although the exhibition marked an important moment of cultural co-operation because the Soviet Union had loaned several paintings to the exhibition, the author of the article focused on Picasso’s relationships with women, the theme of the exhibition. In the article, author Kildare Dobbs reported that, at a party the “hot Spaniard” had thrown for French artist Henri Rousseau, “Apollinaire’s estranged mistress, Marie Laurencin, fell into some treacle tarts and then, finding herself next to her former lover, threw a fit of hysterics. Apollinaire dragged her into another room to beat manners into her.” This unattributed story, significantly, involved Picasso indirectly and was projected under a gloss of humor at one remove from the famous artist. The author also failed to identify Laurencin as an artist. A large photograph of Picasso in the act of teaching “neighborhood children” accompanied the article, projecting an image of the artist as a father-figure transmitting his genius to a new generation (fig. 9).

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119 The Weekly published an abridged version of Betty Freidan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) two weeks later; see SW 25 Jan. 1964, 2 (M).
Figure 9: “Children have always been a joy to Picasso. He often invites neighborhood youngsters in to draw.”

As this description of Picasso indicates, women continued to serve primarily as artist’s muse in visual arts coverage in the magazine and, in this, a site for the ongoing projection of masculinity. This conception was evident in the article concerning Alfred Pellan, where references to Pellan’s depiction of the female nude were accompanied by photographs of the fifty-three year old artist and his young wife.\(^{121}\) Artist Florence Vale was similarly relegated to a supporting role of wife and companion to husband Albert Franck, although the Weekly noted that

\(^{121}\) Photograph captions, for instance; “Fun on the beach: Pellan and wife Madeleine join in some hood-humored horseplay as he traces her outline in sand on shore of St. Lawrence river near studio-home,” and “Wife rolls cigarette for artist, wets it on his tongue as he talks” (Herbert Steinhouse, “Alfred Pellan: Painter, Poet and Dreamer,” SW 6 Aug. 1960, 13, 14).
Franck had only recently become successful and that his wife “who’s been painting surrealistically as Florence Vale for 10 years was mentioned in Canadian Art before he was.” Photographs of Toronto artist Dennis Burton, shown in a junkyard scavenging for materials and at work with a soldering torch, also emphasized the artist’s strength and resourcefulness, women presented as silent observers to this male, creative force.

The magazine increasingly emphasized masculinity in its treatment of male artists, and associations between artists and homosexuality were not openly addressed. Implied homosexuality, however, was an important element of the 1965 article on Andy Warhol and the “camp” aesthetic in consumer products, perhaps deployed to add substance to the negative portrayal of the impact of new trends on design in Canada. Claims in the article that Warhol had become “a way of life” (emphasis in original) were perhaps intended to reinforce a sense of an imperiled Canada, under threat from U.S. corporate interests at this time. The article included a description of the artist’s interest in “camp” and identified the “fad for artificiality, for decorativeness” as a New York phenomenon initially “synonymous with homosexuality.” At the same time, direct acknowledgment of the artist’s sexual orientation was avoided through a reference to the idea that, although the artist was “pure camp,” he “likes girls.” Homosexuality and the suggestion of a dissolute lifestyle were nevertheless implied in the description of the artist’s studio and assistants. In the article, reference to the highbrow criticism produced by “Columbia University philosophy professor” Susan Sontag and the atmosphere in the home of New York collectors Ethel and Robert Scull were projected against mass-produced objects described as “camp” and silkscreens created by Warhol. These elements of highbrow and

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123 “Junk Artist,” SW 27 June 1959, 23.
lowlowbrow worked to distance the description of both the New York art scene and intellectual
debates from middlebrow preoccupations and values.

Associations between artists and homosexuality were also implied in an initial profile of
William Kurelek, published to coincide with Easter in April 1963. In the article, the ideologies of
liberalism and anti-communism were once again intertwined through references to contemporary
debates regarding mental illness and the recurring notion that working as an artist was a venue for
rehabilitation. Paintings from his series, *The Passion of St. Matthew* (1957-63), were reproduced
along with an account of the artist’s struggles with religious conviction and mental illness.125 The
author described Kurelek’s work with prospective converts at the Catholic Information Centre in
Toronto where “he makes a point of seeking out the most stubborn non-believers. Right now he’s
got a young Communist—if he helped bring about his conversion it would be the greatest triumph
of his life.”126

While the artist’s work was characterized as “somber” and “menacing,” elements of the
description suggest a gendering of Kurelek as feminine, possibly drawing on contemporary fears
that parents were to blame for homosexuality. A directive from his father to “wake up and be a
boy. Don’t be a girl” was quoted in the article and the author’s description of the artist’s
relationship with his parents and suggestion of sexual dysfunction in marriage indicates that
sexual orientation was an important element of the profile. In this sense, the article participated
in contemporary debates regarding authoritarian parenting, with the artist employed as a site to
project support for greater indulgence and understanding from parents toward children who might

126 Ibid., 3.
be “different.” In this example, the figure of an artist was used to address current debates concerning liberal ideals in childrearing and family dynamics, while at the same time continuing to support the idea that working as an artist was a means for rehabilitation, in this case of an individual suffering from mental illness (fig. 10).

Figure 10: “Kurelek works at a table in a small room, turns out a painting in as little as three hours. His 160 works of art illustrating the Passion of St. Matthew depict Christ’s sufferings vividly, are full of the realistic detail shown in his picture of the potters’ field today, left.”

127 In a study of the institution of the family in post-war Canada, historian Mona Gleason has identified the prevalence of these discussions at the time and argues that the authoritarian models of discipline and control were discouraged because they suggested dictatorship and totalitarianism; Mona Gleason, “Psychology and the Construction of the ‘Normal’ Family in Postwar Canada, 1945-60,” Canadian Historical Review vol. 78 no. 3 (1997), 442-477.
Although under assault from the growing feminist movement in North America by the late 1960s, masculinity remained a formidable construct in the magazine’s conceptualization of the artist as independent rebel and outsider. The projection of “manliness” informed the construction of notions of artistic independence, for instance in the articles describing the artist rebels at the Pilot Tavern in Toronto and at the “Ladies & Escorts Room of Eddie Assaf’s York Hotel” in the burgeoning art scene of London, Ontario.\(^{128}\) The magazine’s description of the mocking rejection of government assistance, signified by the refusal to meet with then-Secretary of State and Canada Council head Judy LaMarsh, was similarly infused with male bravado. It was evident as well in the \textit{Weekly}’s contemporary treatment of the institution of marriage, the magazine reporting on “broken marriages and relationships of a less formal nature…[on those who have] children, but don’t live with them…wives who work, [and] girls who are committed to helping their husbands reach that tenuous success.”\(^{129}\) At the same time, however, the projection of masculinity remained an essential component of the identity of the Canadian male artist and the exclusion of both non-European and women artists remained secure. Instead, an early meeting between Group of Seven member Fred Varley and several of the younger artists at the Pilot Tavern projected a white, Anglo-Canadian, male, artistic lineage as validation for the next generation of artists. Significantly, this encounter took place in the city.

\textbf{The Artist in Canada}

The dramatic increase in attention to Canadian artists and visual arts in Canada that began in the magazine in 1957 produced an expansive field for the presentation of ideas about artists and their

\(^{128}\) The Pilot was described as an “artist’s bar” where a series of male artists gathered “almost every evening” to drink alcohol and discuss their work; Barrie Hale, “The Real Headquarters of Canadian Painting,” \textit{SW} 28 Sep. 1968, 12-14.

\(^{129}\) \textit{Ibid.}, 14.
role in Canadian society. In this surge of interest, earlier conceptions of Canadian artists as professionals who were making important contributions to the economy in both commercial art and teaching, in contrast to the longstanding presentation of European artists as eccentric dilettantes, remained in place. Across the decade, the Weekly continued to project an ideal of the professional Canadian artist as diligent, hard-working, altruistic, non-materialistic (and male). This conceptualization worked to offset suspicions of questionable behavior and attitudes associated with artists in the popular imagination and to reinforce awareness of positive contributions made by artists to the economy. Tentative signs of the artist as rebel and outsider identified at the end of the decade, however, did not appear overnight. Instead, the magazine’s support for the notion that creativity was an important element of a dynamic and expanding economy, and gradual inclusion of descriptions of artists as independent thinkers, helped to validate a new conception of the artist in Canada. Significantly, the first and only hint in the magazine that artists might engage with contemporary political debates appeared in an account of an artist who was openly critical of the United States.

The longstanding practice of presenting contemporary European artists such as Salvador Dali and Pablo Picasso as eccentric and frivolous in the magazine, established in the immediate post-war period, was expanded in the subsequent decade to include other European artists. French artist Georges Mathieu, depicted in a photo-story in the magazine in the act of throwing a paint brush at a canvas “like a javelin,” provided an updated example of this presentation. In the magazine’s description, Mathieu’s material success and popularity among collectors in New York, Paris and London appeared based on little more than eccentric behavior. In addition, Dali

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130 “France’s Throwing Painter,” SW 5 July 1958, 26-27 (R). A photo-story on young artists in Madrid, shown destroying their paintings before a crowd of spectators, projected similar ideas; see “A Smashing Art Show,” SW 24 Mar. 1962, 22 (R).
remained a prominent example of frivolous and unconventional behavior, a conception augmented by new concerns for the artist’s popularity among “impressionable” youth.131

In contrast to these examples of the purported decadent and unproductive behavior of European artists, tentative signs that the non-Canadian practitioner might also make positive contributions to society gradually appeared in visual arts coverage in the magazine. A socially responsible role for European artists was suggested, for instance, in an account of a charity fundraiser in Paris published in a photo-story. The magazine projected an air of bewilderment with respect to the upcoming auction of refrigerators decorated by now little-known artists, which were exhibited in photographs at the Museum of Modern Art in New York prior to the sale.132 In this instance, the magazine publicized the efforts of European artists who had donated works of art to raise money for the French Centre for the Protection of Childhood. Although presented at the same time as an example of the self-indulgent and unusual behavior of European contemporary artists (and U.S. collectors), the magazine’s description of the event projected a new and positive role for contemporary art and artists.

Despite this tentative acknowledgement in the magazine of ways that European artists were contributing productively to contemporary society, the place of the artist was restricted to the world of visual art. Both within visual arts coverage and in the magazine as whole, artists expressing ideas of a political or philosophical nature, particularly ideas that posed a challenge to Western liberal ideals, were typically ignored or met with mocking humor. An exception to this tendency appeared in articles and editorials dealing with the threat of nuclear war, for instance an

132 “Parisian Painters Form Real Cool School,” SW Oct. 18 1958, 14 (R).
article by English author and anti-war activist J.B. Priestley.\textsuperscript{133} Citing as evidence the “antics” of a young artist in London whose recent work involved bitumen and asphalt poured onto a board and set on fire, Priestley sought to expose what he saw as the pervasive nihilism and pessimism in contemporary art. In the article, he employed this apparent example of provocative and unproductive behavior to expose a wider problem in contemporary life and to voice his disapproval of philosophically challenging ideas they appeared to pose.

However, the publication of Priestley’s lengthy and engaged critique of contemporary art, artists and art critics was unusual for the magazine at this time. The \textit{Weekly} more typically employed humor and sarcasm to skirt intellectual debate. Its photo story on “beatnik” culture in London, England, for instance, situated that phenomenon as an export from the U.S. and the youthful adherents as merely \textit{poseurs}.\textsuperscript{134} Similar concerns regarding Canadian students living in Paris were deflected by reassurances that the “postwar existentialism craze” had dissipated and the “young bohemians” had been co-opted by the tourist industry.\textsuperscript{135} Youthful rebellion in Toronto was also downplayed through reassurances that the “so-called beat generation” was in fact composed of hard-working wage earners.\textsuperscript{136}

This practice of deflecting attention away from individuals engaged in critical or philosophical enquiry was similarly employed in the magazine’s presentation of Canadian visual artists. Often these portrayals would involve the projection of associations between artists and popular or lowbrow forms of entertainment. The magazine assumed an air of indulgence, for instance, in a 1962 description of a public performance at the London Public Library and Art

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\textsuperscript{133} John Boynton Priestley, “Here’s What’s Wrong with Modern Art,” \textit{SW} 11 Oct. 1958, 12-13 (M). An English novelist and playwright, Priestley was a founding member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.  
\textsuperscript{134} “Beatniks have a Picnic,” \textit{SW} 12 Nov. 1960, 24 (R).  
\textsuperscript{136} Don Goudy, photographs by Kryn Taconis,” “We’re Not Beatniks in Toronto,” \textit{SW} 23 May 1959, 6 (R).  
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Gallery. In a photo-story published in the Weekly, artist Greg Curnoe and friends were depicted assembled as a marching band in the street and in the gallery following the collapse of a temporary installation (fig. 11). The event was described by the magazine as “a celebration in

Figure 11: “Signs without words are prominently displayed by Toronto delegation. They marched to the gallery through London’s streets, led by their band.”

commemoration of the fining of Lawrence Lee in the amount of $2 for sprinkling salt on the icy sidewalk…in contravention of a city ordinance, Feb. 3 1922.” 137 In other words, the possibility that the artists were engaged in an alternative artistic investigation with precedents in dada and

conceptual art was effectively denied by the magazine’s presentation of the event as an evening of entertainment and lowbrow farce.

While evidence that artists engaged with contemporary social and political issues remained outside the magazine’s visual arts coverage, in time the Weekly began to endorse the notion of the contemporary artist as an intellectual and cultural authority. The shift was evident in the magazine’s coverage of Picasso, for instance, the value of the artist closely allied with his popularity among collectors and, increasingly, the museum-going public. The artist’s communist sympathies and membership in the French Communist Party were not revealed to readers of the Weekly, and articles in the late 1950s concerning the increasingly well-known artist stressed the investment value of the artist’s work instead.138 Described by the magazine as “this century’s most publicized, productive, influential and wealthy artist,” Picasso’s material success was an important part of his identity in the magazine.139 By the mid-1960s, accounts of the Picasso exhibition, “Picasso and Man” at the Art Gallery of Toronto, “the most ambitious in Canadian history” according to the magazine, were deployed to project notions of a cosmopolitan atmosphere in Toronto.140

Similar notions of Canadian contemporary artists as cultural leaders and intellectuals gradually appeared in the magazine in the early 1960s. This suggestion of authority, however, was also restricted to matters related to visual arts. The conceptualization was an element of the 1960 article on Alfred Pellan, for instance, in which the artist was described as the “audacious

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conjurer” who “often sits long times ‘just studying.’”¹⁴¹ The portrait of Pellan that emerged in this profile suggested an artist engaged with experimentation, innovation and discovery, the piece also projecting associations between Pellan’s art practice, space exploration and atomic research. At the same time, notions of the artist as an intellectual were mediated by the portrayal of Pellan as sensual and romantic, a conception that established an opposition between scientific objectivity and romantic notions of creativity and art as personal expression. Indications of international prestige, cited in the article, such as the artist’s exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in Paris, and his role as a catalyst for change in Montréal upon his return, suggest developing ideas of the artist as an influential leader who might make significant contributions to Canadian society.¹⁴² Key to their development, however, was the restriction of his authority to matters related to visual arts.¹⁴³

So, although the profile of the Canadian artist as intellectual and cultural leader was growing in strength, the idea that Canadian artists might engage more broadly with contemporary issues and debates was usually brushed aside in the magazine in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The possibility that the Canada Council might award a grant to a communist, for instance, was raised in a 1957 editorial concerning the first Canada Council grants, only to be dismissed as absurd.¹⁴⁴ The mere suggestion of the possibility, however, functioned both to alarm observers and to call for reassurance against such an occurrence.¹⁴⁵ Employing a humorous tone in a

¹⁴² “[A]fterwards came Montréal’s famed poet-artist group, the Automatists, and half the city’s painting was off on a new course” (Herbert Steinhause, “Alfred Pellan: Painter, Poet and Dreamer,” SW 6 Aug. 1960, 15).
¹⁴³ For instance, Pellan’s remark regarding the theme of a recent exhibition; “They’re trying to send monkeys up there [to the moon]. Men talk of going. I thought I’d send some women” (Steinhause 1960, 13).
¹⁴⁵ The editorial quickly dismissed the notion and grants to communists were perhaps unlikely in any case, since, according to Mark Kristmanson, the Canada Council requested file checks from the RCMP on
description of artists as “eccentrics, the chaps who are inclined to be irregular about such things as meals, haircuts, clothes, baths, rent payments or marital arrangements,” the magazine deflected the idea of politically engaged art practice. Instead, it cast challenging ideas as the product of artistic personality.\footnote{146}

Gradual acknowledgment in the magazine during the late 1950s of the importance of creativity and of the role of visual arts in building a dynamic and expanding economy helped to forge new attitudes toward Canadian contemporary artists at this time. Toronto artist Harold Town, for instance, was presented as an independent thinker and rebel in accounts in the magazine, glowing reports of the artist’s talent and potential supported by positive comments from the art director at local advertising and printing agency Rous and Mann, local critics such as writer Robert Fulford, and fellow artists Jack Bush and Albert Franck.\footnote{147} Such endorsements, and reports of Town’s commercial success and popularity among collectors, helped to balance the magazine’s account of the artist’s work in abstraction, which was described as an expression of the artist’s individuality and personal response to the world.

In addition to providing evidence of commercial success and popularity among collectors, the Weekly increasingly presented Canadian artists as eccentric individualists, similar to the way European artists had been described in the immediate post-war period.\footnote{148} Notions of individual creativity, and of visual art as personal expression, were increasingly powerful

\footnote{146} This construction was evident in the attribution of Refus global to Borduas’ “explosion of temperament” in the 1958 series on Canadian art; see Alan Jarvis, “Canadian Paintings,” SW 8 Feb. 1958, 24-25 (M).

\footnote{147} Alan Phillips, “Canadian Painting’s Angriest Young Man,” SW 2 Apr. 1960, 12-16 (M).

\footnote{148} John Sebert’s photograph Harold Town Flying, Seaway Mural CNE, Toronto (1958), depicting the artist leaping into the air in the act of painting, which was included in the article, was perhaps inspired by the widely disseminated portrait of Salvador Dali, Dali Atomicus (1948), by Philippe Halsman, that was featured in Life magazine and in Philippe Halsman’s Jump Book (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1959).
elements of the artistic personality that was taking shape in the magazine at this time. Similarities between artists such as Harold Town and Salvador Dali, however, were mediated by assurances that Town shunned publicity (an ongoing complaint made against the publicity-seeking Dali) and that his behavior was linked to his personality, rather than a desire for self-promotion. The magazine’s description of the Canadian’s “disdain for money and success,” reference to his “fist fight with his art teacher,” manly pursuit of a purse-snatcher in downtown Toronto, and life as a “deeply conservative family man” helped stabilize conflicting opinions regarding the artist’s production, particularly his work in abstraction, and a list of international exhibitions and prizes served to bolster support for what the magazine described as “the world’s most influential art form.”

In this presentation of the artist as individual creative thinker and independent iconoclast, links to art trends in the United States and elsewhere in Canada remained hidden. The Weekly only briefly noted Town’s membership in the group Painters Eleven, for instance, describing it as “an advance-guard group” and abstraction as an “international phenomenon.” Failing to publicize details of the group’s existence or to provide information concerning other members, the magazine also did not refer to U.S. abstract painters or European influences, an absence that reinforced the impression of artists such as Town as independent, and of Canada as in step with the international art world. While the influence of Hans Hoffman and New York painting on Toronto painters was established in a 1957 article in Canadian Art and remains an important

149 This was perhaps particularly important in light of the negative reaction from politicians in the Ontario Legislature, publicized in the magazine, to Town’s 1959 mural for the St. Lawrence Seaway.
150 For instance Town’s friend and fellow artist Albert Franck was quoted as saying, “so much has been done in abstraction…that invention is rare. It takes a brain to be different. Town is tremendous, our greatest talent” (Alan Phillips, “Canadian Painting’s Angriest Young Man,” SW 2 Apr. 1960, 14 [M]).
151 Harold Town was a member of the group Painters Eleven, formed in Toronto in 1953 and disbanded in 1960.
feature in analysis of the group, the Weekly emphasized Town’s work in commercial art and advertising and stressed abstraction’s international roots.152

The connection between developments in Canada and abstract expressionism in the United States, when revealed to Weekly readers in the early 1960s, was presented as an indication of Canadian artists’ deference to the U.S. school of painting and, by extension, as an indication of lack of originality. This negative conception, which informed a bias against abstraction in the magazine’s account at this time, appeared in an announcement concerning the exhibition “Toronto ’61.” Described as an opportunity to showcase Toronto painters in an internationally-touring exhibition, the announcement positioned local work to date as obscured by “the shadow of New York painting.”153 Projecting a sense of a new and dynamic trend in visual art, the Toronto artists in the exhibition were presented as successors to both “early 50s Quebec masters Riopelle and Borduas” and Painters Eleven.154 The characteristics of youth and independent vision were deployed at this time to support a claim of originality and the artists’ substantive achievements.

This selective reading of the progress of abstraction in Canada remained deeply inflected by anti-Americanism well into the 1960s. By the end of the decade, Town’s popularity among collectors and galleries in New York and Chicago, for instance, was deployed as evidence of the Canadian artist’s success in an atmosphere of competition with U.S. influences and, for the first time, in a 1967 profile references to Town’s exhibitions in the U.S. were included along with

154 This despite the fact that several members of Painters Eleven, including Town, Nakamura and Jack Bush, participated in the touring exhibition “Toronto ’61.”
international exhibitions. Increasingly, at this time, the magazine emphasized a conception of the artist as non-conformist and, perhaps in an attempt to appeal to contemporary youth culture, the forty-three year old artist’s attire, formerly Anglo-British, now suggested the influence of 1960s counterculture, the artist resplendent in “corduroy jacket with five-button sleeves, velvet vest, gold watch fob, stovepipe pants.”

Description of the artist’s eccentric behavior drew on associations with lowbrow and popular culture in television and films, with these characteristics tempered by accounts of international art-world acclaim. While the magazine stressed the artist’s strong work ethic, increasingly Town’s unconventional behavior and irreverent attitudes were deployed to support a claim to his position as an independent outsider.

Associations between visual art and lowbrow cultural products and the conceptualization of visual art as personal expression were also prominent features of the magazine’s profiles of other artists at this time. Drawing on associations between craft and folk art production as lowbrow cultural products in an article on Joyce Wieland, for instance, reporter Elizabeth Kimball identified the artist’s desire to “make art accessible to everyone.” In the profile, published in the magazine within a context of fashion and design features in the women’s pages of the Weekly, the author deflected potentially unsettling and challenging subjects addressed by Wieland in her art practice through a description of the artist’s personality and her reported reputation as a Canadian nationalist. Wieland was described as “one of Canada’s most significant artists” and her “preoccupation with sex and disaster” downplayed through a reference to family, marital values and “romantic hearts.” At the same time, the artist’s exploration of “disaster and grotesque happenings” was described as an “American fascination.” The opinions of critics,

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156 Elizabeth Kimball, photographs by Michel Lambeth, “Art You Can Use…to Keep Warm…to Cover a Table…to Hang on a Wall,” SW 14 Jan. 1967, 29-30.
quoted in the article, suggest that the artist’s engagement with issues of class and gender in Canada had not gone unnoticed; however, the author overlooked the challenge posed by such critical investigations.157

While not directly associated with contemporary political or philosophical debates, artists served as important touchstones in the magazine to remind readers of the cultural achievements of Western civilization, particularly at moments of crisis during the Cold War. A renewed emphasis on religious devotion following the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, and realization that the world had been on the brink of nuclear war, for instance, may have prompted the 1963 article on William Kurelek, timed to coincide with the Christian celebration of Easter. According to the article’s author, Kurelek produced the Passion series, based on Tissot’s Life of Christ and following pilgrimages to Lourdes and Palestine, to be used as lantern slides by missionaries. The author also claimed that the artist ignored pressure from collectors who preferred “disturbing images of farm life” over his religiously themed work and also that Kurelek sought to emulate the pious life of a medieval artist. These attributes provided a model in the magazine for Canadian-born artists and for art production in the service of Christian faith and missionary work at a moment of heightened international tension.

Despite growing public debate in Canada over U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia and the rise of the counterculture in Canada, hints of oppositional visual art practices and the intrusion of contemporary political debates into the field of visual arts remained largely contained in visual arts coverage in the Weekly. Arts reporter Barry Lord, for instance, in a 1968 description of the growing art scene in London, Ontario, stressed the economic benefits of the entertainment and

157 Wieland’s art work was characterized as “commonplace vulgarity and sick humor” and “a thumb-nose at pomposity and fastidiousness in art and society” (Elizabeth Kimball, photographs by Michel Lambeth, “Art You Can Use…to Keep Warm…to Cover a Table…to Hang on a Wall,” SW 14 Jan. 1967, 30).
commercial potential associated with the expanding number of galleries and exhibitions. Ignoring the presence of young U.S. artists in the city, Lord maintained that activities in London were very different from the situation in other North American cities and claimed that the “Twenty cents magazine… provides lively review of exhibitions, performances, film showings, poetry readings, radio shows and local political events in town...[but] is not an ‘underground’ publication dealing with psychedelics, sex and Viet Nam.” Nevertheless, the issues brushed aside in this account were increasingly laid bare in the magazine. Awareness that artists engage with political issues was acknowledged by writer Barrie Hale in a column concerning the censoring of Greg Curnoe’s mural at the Montréal airport. Forced to remove parts of the mural by Canada’s Federal Department of Transportation, the artist was presented as unrepentant and even pleased with the effect.

Significantly, this example of an artist engaged in political critique, the first to be openly acknowledged by the magazine, was directed at the United States. The events surrounding the mural were described in a column in the Weekly, a new feature introduced in the magazine in 1968, and while the introduction of a column devoted to visual arts signaled the magazine’s recognition of the importance of the visual arts sector, the feature also functioned as an effective way of containing coverage within a format of opinion and commentary by one individual. In this era of non-conformity, the possibility that artists might engage in political critique remained unresolved, sidestepped, for instance, in an account of controversy surrounding Québec artist

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158 Barry Lord, photographs by John Reeves, “Swinging London,” SW 13 Jan. 1968. In contrast, the magazine published a profile of these new Canadians including artist Daniel Solomon, working in advertising, design and marketing in Toronto; see “Five Draft Dodgers—in the Flesh,” SW 18 Nov. 1967, 22.

159 “The Department of Transport had sections of the mural removed because they were deemed ‘un-American’” (Barrie Hale, “The painting That Said Too Much,” SW 8 June 1968, 4).

160 Hale included a quote from Curnoe: “I think it’s beautiful, . . . having all these immigrants coming down that tunnel to the land of the free past a censored painting. Beautiful.”
Armand Vaillancourt’s sculpture *Je me souviens* (1968). Similar to reports in other press sources at the time, the *Weekly* attributed difficulties and delays in the completion of the installation of the sculpture, created for the 1968 Sculpture Symposium in Toronto, to poor planning and inadequate funding. Ignoring the politically provocative title of Vaillancourt’s sculpture and reference to rising Québec nationalism, the magazine also skirted details of the origins of Sculpture Symposia as venues for cultural exchange between artists in different countries during the Cold War. Instead, the magazine focused on the growing cosmopolitan atmosphere in Toronto and the commercial potential of the completed project which was envisioned as a potential tourist attraction in the city.

Although the artist had emerged as an intellectual and independent rebel by the end of the decade, the possibility that visual artists might engage in contemporary political issues and that visual arts might serve as a forum for political discussion remained outside of the magazine’s conception of the place and role of artists in contemporary Canada. The description of the artists gathered at the Pilot Tavern in Toronto, for instance, projected an ideal of visual art as personal expression and a valorization of the contributions made by artists to commercial development. In this conception, behavior and attitudes—to family relationships, women, jobs and money, rather than ideas—stood in for a claim of artistic independence and rebellion. At the same time, the new public profile of artists and recognition of their contributions to both intellectual and

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161 Photos Arnaud Maggs, “How the Golden Age of Sculpture Came to Toronto (or Maybe it Will, Any Day Now),” *SW* 23 Mar. 1968, 8-15.
162 John K. Grande, *Playing With Fire* (Montréal: Zeit and Geist, 1999), 34. The title, *Je me souviens*, was identified with Québec nationalist aspirations.
economic life signaled an important shift in perception and, with it, the emergence of a new conception of the role and place of visual artists in Canada.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I identify a dramatic increase in attention to Canadian artists and visual arts in Canada in the magazine beginning in 1957, and link this to an interest in economic and cultural nationalism. The instrumentalist conception of visual arts as a means of encouraging certain behaviors and priorities that was prominent in the previous decade was augmented, in succeeding years, by an interest in the economic value of visual artists and their potential contributions to the economy. I argue that the magazine’s promotion of Canada and Canadian achievements in visual art and other fields resembled an advertising campaign, and link this project to the economic interests of the owners of the magazine. Further, my analysis exposes ways that the magazine engaged with contemporary debates and, in the process, helped shape attitudes to issues such as foreign ownership of Canadian companies and resources, to immigration, gender and class in Canada. I argue that the preoccupation with promoting Canadian nationalism faltered at the end of the decade, replaced by a new emphasis on artistic individuality and the image of the artist as rebel and outsider.

An interest in Canadian artists and cultural nationalism throughout the second decade following the war is consistent with the established narrative described by many Canadian art historians. This focus, one that asserts cultural maturity and nation-building as the dominant themes in art production, has been the main preoccupation of Canadian art history about the post-war era. My analysis of the *Weekly*, however, reveals the limitations of this interpretation because, in this instance, an interest in using art production and artists to promote nationalism
dates to a specific moment in the late 1950s. In addition, art historians have overlooked how the active participation of business and commercial interests, in supporting and encouraging visual arts, was received at the time. This participation has been interpreted as a necessity, forced by an underdeveloped visual arts sector and limited state patronage, notions that support the idea of artistic individuality and the artist as rebel and outsider. In effect, this interpretation has redirected the impetus for experimentation and innovation away from both commercial interests and public policy initiatives onto the artists themselves, who are conceived as independent intellectuals and creative genii. The question of agency is further complicated by the way the magazine mediated contentious or challenging debates in visual arts and skirted evidence of oppositional ideas or alternative art practices in Canada through the use of humor and associations with lowbrow entertainment.

The conception of Canadian visual artists as independent rebels and outsiders that emerged in the Weekly’s visual arts coverage at the end of the decade was emblematic of the rise of the counterculture in the late 1960s. It was a significant departure from the middlebrow model linking art production by Canadian artists with nationalism and participation in commercial enterprise that dominated previous conceptions of the role of visual artists. Economic considerations, however, remained an important part of the Weekly’s construct at the end of the 1960s because the presence of these independent iconoclasts was used to promote the idea of Canadian cities as dynamic and cosmopolitan. In contrast, acknowledgement that visual arts and artists were significant assets to both intellectual life and the Québec economy were essential components of visual arts coverage in Le petit journal almost from the beginning of the post-war period, my subject in chapter five.
Chapter 5

*Le petit journal 1945-1956*

My investigation of visual arts coverage in the *Star Weekly* has revealed specific interests and preoccupations in the English-Canadian publication, interests projected from a central Canadian perspective to a vast hinterland. A corresponding analysis of the French-language magazine *Le petit journal*, following a similar time-frame, exposes a parallel narrative in Québec, one that both mirrored and challenged the hegemonic perspective of English Canada. Although there were fundamental differences in content originating in the respective metropolitan centres of Ontario and Québec, a number of similarities emerge in analysis and comparison of the two magazines.

In the French-language publication, extensive, wide-ranging and lasting attention to visual arts, from the early post-war period, indicates the extent of the magazine’s interest in the subject and a very different source of ideas about visual arts. The depth and substance of coverage throughout the decade following the war, including weekly exhibition reviews beginning in 1947, suggests that visual arts were considered an important element of Québec society with a critical role to play in the intellectual and economic life of the province. At the same time, the magazine’s attention to visual arts was largely restricted to promoting the pleasurable consumption of art-related products. Although less decisive than the change in orientation noted in the English-language magazine, support for Québec nationalism in the late 1950s mirrored the *Star Weekly*’s promotion of Canadian cultural nationalism at this time.

The tremendous interest in visual art in the magazine, beginning in the early post-war period, was underpinned by support for the sector as a component of the overall economy. This focus suggests the use of visual art as an expedient to promote economic growth in the province,
an approach consistent with the values and preoccupations of liberalism. The contributions made by artists to the economic base in the province of Québec, in areas of tourism, leisure and entertainment, were publicized and encouraged in the magazine from the beginning of the decade, as was the need for expanded educational opportunities for artists. Other liberal preoccupations, for instance visual arts as a means of rehabilitation, were overshadowed by the Journal’s attention to economic growth. The direction and intensity of the magazine’s visual arts coverage suggests an interest in promoting the potential financial benefits associated with the arts sector that far surpassed the outlook in the Weekly. At the same time, while anti-communist perspectives were a strong presence in the Journal, the two ideologies remained largely separate in visual arts coverage. The positive contributions made by visual art were emphasized instead, while potential links between artists, intellectual inquiry and communism in Canada were rarely developed in print.

Particularly during the early post-war years, visual arts coverage suggests the magazine’s support for the maintenance of Catholicism and traditional values in Québec society. At the same time, growing debates among artists and intellectuals exposed the potential disruptions to Québec institutions posed by new ideas. Perhaps for these reasons, the magazine appears to have carefully managed information concerning art debates. Initially met with mocking humor and little substantive analysis, followed by resistance and hostility, the challenge of new ideas and new approaches to art production was in time deflected into an emphasis in the magazine on the production and consumption of art within an atmosphere of cultural appreciation that included music, theatre and literature as sources of pleasure and enrichment.

The magazine’s presentation of visual art as a pleasurable and rewarding pursuit was troubled, not only by debates among artists, but also by evolving French-English relations in
Québec. The role played by Anglophones in the cultural life of the province was initially acknowledged and celebrated in the magazine but this recognition gradually declined. By the end of the decade, the achievements of Francophone Quebecers were increasingly prominent features of visual arts coverage, employed to promote notions of cultural sophistication in Québec as a point of contrast with the rest of Canada. Negative criticism and neglect of art production in the United States as the decade advanced suggests a corresponding interest in promoting Québec artists as innovative and independent from trends developing elsewhere.

An additional element of the magazine’s endorsement of traditional values in Québec society was the projection of ideas concerning artists. Participation in political discussions and debates was either discouraged or ignored and artists were instead presented as agents of spiritual renewal and economic growth with key roles to play as teachers and mentors. Within this conceptualization, marriage and children were initially emphasized as fundamental to the life and experience of the male artist in Québec. In time, this preoccupation was replaced by a vision of Francophone artists as intellectuals and a developing association between male artists and the hardy Québec habitant, a vision that was supported by the magazine’s presentation of not only European artists, but also professional women artists. This subject received significantly more attention than in the Weekly; however, interest in women artists centered on identifying a distinct feminine sensibility and feminine approach to art production, a focus that sustained and supported traditional gender stereotypes in the province. A strengthening of the valorization of male Francophone artists in the late 1950s, and increasing promotion of their contributions to the unique culture and identity of French Canada, suggests the impact of Québec nationalism on visual arts coverage in the magazine. This nationalist project intensified significantly in the next decade, the subject of chapter six.
Liberalism and Anti-communism

The ideologies of liberalism and anti-communism, while intertwined within visual arts coverage in the Weekly in the decade following the war, remained largely separate in the Journal. The main area of interest in the French-language magazine was the promotion of visual arts as an element of economic development in the province, indicating recognition of the economic value of the sector that did not emerge in the English-language publication until the late 1950s. In this sense, the education and training of artists in support of industrial productivity was not a significant facet of the Journal’s interest in visual arts. Instead, the French-language magazine focused more on promoting educational opportunities in areas of commercial art and design, in addition to artisanal production in the province. For similar reasons, apparently related to economic development, the education and training of professional artists, and publicity for an infrastructure that included commercial galleries and dealers in Montréal and Québec City, were prominent aspects of visual arts coverage in the Journal. Within this conception of visual art as a component of economic development, anti-communism remained a separate concern, contained by extensive publicity regarding the threat posed by internal subversion and political dissent.

Recognition of the links between visual arts and economic development, particularly with respect to tourism in Québec, was apparent in the magazine even as World War II drew to a close. The economic benefits associated with visual arts were significant elements of the magazine’s description of the resumption of work on the basilica at Ste. Anne de Beaupré, for instance, a project that, the magazine reported, had been halted for some time due to lack of funds.¹ In the article, the central importance of Catholicism in the province was underscored by a description of the embellishment of the pilgrimage church, and it also identified the growing number of pilgrims

¹ “Sculptures d’un artiste de Montréal à la basilique nationale de Beaupré,” LPJ [Le petit journal] 22 July 1945, 6.
making the journey to the shrine, information that clearly served as justification for the continuation of the project. Other examples of cultural tourism, and ways that visual artists might contribute to this industry, were also promoted in the magazine, for instance in reproductions of paintings depicting historic buildings, quaint city views and local monuments. Advertisements similarly supported the link between Québec culture and history and economic development associated with tourism and promoted artisanal production as an essential element of the tourist industry. These facets of visual arts coverage attest to the magazine’s recognition of the importance of Québec heritage for tourism, an increasingly significant industry in the province.

Economic concerns central to liberalism informed, not only the promotion of visual arts as a component of tourism, but also the magazine’s interest in artists working in artisanal production and commercial art. Severe over-crowding in post-war Montréal and the resulting lack of studio space, for instance, in addition to limited educational opportunities for visual artists, were the focus of the magazine’s attention to these subjects, its coverage stressing the impact that these constraints would have on the vocation and, consequently, economic growth.

The magazine also promoted sales of works of art in anonymous exhibition reviews in the years immediately following the war. In one example, the commercial potential of an exhibition and

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2 *LPJ* 14 Jan. 1945, 6 and 30 Sep. 1945, 37. A series of advertisements for O’Keefe’s Brewing Company Limited, Connaissiez mieux le Québec, described the longstanding tradition of artisanal production such as wood carving and weaving in Québec. The innovative advertising campaign employing Québec cultural heritage was a response to laws prohibiting beer and liquor companies from advertising their products openly, according to the editorial in the *Journal* (17 Mar. 1946, 23). In another example, a weaving sampler and illustration of a woman spinning wool appeared in a series of advertisements for cigarettes; “Nos belles traditions; entre nous il est traditionnel de fumer Grads,” *LPJ* 2 Mar. 1947, 39. Successful artisans were also celebrated in an article on wood carving in Saint-Jean Port-Joli which claimed that the increasingly lucrative work of local artisans was being recognized across Canada (*LPJ* 8 Dec. 1946, 16.)

3 The description of a 200 year-old ex-voto painting in Rivière-Ouelle for instance, began with an account of the thousands of tourists, many of them Americans, who visited the church to see the paintings; “Un ex-voto de 200 ans attire des milliers de touristes,” *LPJ* 31 Aug. 1947, 18.

sale of paintings and ceramics was a key element of the review published in the magazine, a review that included a description of the techniques employed by the ceramicist and a brief history of the medium. These elements of the piece suggest an interest in educating the readership in order to enhance the salability of the objects.

Participation of visual artists in commercial ventures, and their contributions to an expanding economy, continued to be an important element of visual arts coverage in subsequent years. A photograph of prominent artists Paul-Émile Borduas, Robert LaPalme and Stanley Cosgrove at Morgan’s Department Store in Montréal, for instance, publicized the fact that designs by these artists had been used for drapery and upholstery fabrics. A related valorization of visual arts and culture associated with capitalist economic expansion was an element of the magazine’s recurring attention to summer art schools and the post-war growth of art centres across the province. Initially justified in the magazine as both diversion and self-improvement, the educational offerings at le Centre d’Art de Ste-Adèle, for instance, including courses in ceramics, painting and sculpture, were advanced later as an opportunity for economic development, the magazine emphasizing that it was not only a venue for art exhibitions but also the site of festivals that showcased fashion and automotive design.

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6 According to the caption, “les quatre artistes montréalais de la haute reputation” appeared pleased because of the price tag for fabric made from a design by artist Maurice Raymond; “Sourires d’artistes,” LPJ 4 June 1950, 40. Information about the professional status of the artists was included in the brief report. Cosgrove and Raymond were identified as professors at the École des beaux-arts, LaPalme as a caricaturist for the magazine Canada and Borduas as leader of the automatiste group. According to the chronology developed for an exhibition catalogue, Borduas was “horrified” by the idea and only agreed to allow Canadart’s owner Peter Freygood to use a design taken from a gouache that he owned; Borduas 1905-1960 (Ottawa: National Gallery, 1962), 57.
The intersection of art production and commercial activity was central to the magazine’s presentation of visual arts as a source of economic growth in Québec. Echoing ideas identified in the Star Weekly, liberalism also emerged as a theme in the magazine’s attention to increased leisure and the promotion of visual arts as a hobby for adults. The notion that the sector might provide an outlet for problem behavior, however, was not advanced with the same intensity in the Journal. Instead, art production was presented in a more celebratory fashion, as a venue for personal growth and enrichment, even as it was envisioned as both a solution to the perceived problem of increased leisure and a means of overcoming class differences. In an article concerning art classes for working-class youth in Montréal, organized by a professor of design at the École des beaux-arts, for example, the magazine cited the popularity of painting as a hobby and included the claim that Winston Churchill and Lord Alexander were both amateur painters. Support of art education and endorsement of painting as an enriching hobby remained key elements of visual arts coverage as the decade advanced and the expanding visual arts sector was increasingly linked to the promotion of Montréal as the art capital of Canada.

Threaded through the magazine’s support for arts education and adult hobbies were liberal notions of self-improvement and the developing post-war interest in channeling increased leisure into activities that would promote personal growth. Other state-facilitated, social welfare initiatives, such as adult rehabilitation, were similarly endorsed in the magazine’s visual arts coverage. Articles concerning visually challenged artists and those with other perceived

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9. “À Montréal, la jeunesse ouvrière apprend à peindre, en plein parc,” LPJ 20 Aug. 1950, 40. At the time, Churchill was Leader of the Opposition in the Government of Great Britain and Lord Alexander was the Governor General of Canada.

10. An article on a new school in Montréal for painting, drawing and sculpture, École Leonard-de-Vinci is typical of this perspective, the growing number of hobbyists, amateur painters and art collectors in the city also presented as an indication of the degree of culture to be found in the province; PG “Une heure avec le directeur de l’école Leonard-de-Vinci,” LPJ 14 June 1953, 60.
handicaps promoted liberal notions that working as an artist was a means of rehabilitation, an idea similarly advanced in the *Weekly*.\(^\text{11}\) Unique to the *Journal*, however, was attention to the subject of residential schools and the claim that the system had produced positive results. Employing the example of artist Alex Janvier, in a rare description of a named Indigenous artist, the magazine publicized aspects of the artist’s life and experiences at a residential school in Alberta.\(^\text{12}\) Significantly, the piece was written, not by the magazine’s art critic at the time, but by one of the magazine’s journalists, Dollard Morin, and the central focus of the account was on presenting the experience of residential school as a positive influence on the artist and his community.

While the *Journal* appeared to endorse social welfare initiatives in ways that paralleled the perspective in the *Star Weekly*, anti-communism remained largely hidden in the French-language magazine. Both liberalism and anti-communism were potential topics of published accounts concerning artists from communist-controlled countries; however, unlike the practice in the *Weekly*, the *Journal* did not refer to communist activities in these articles. In the late 1940s and early 50s, for instance, reviews of the exhibitions and art of Ukraine-born artist André Zadorozny focused noticeably on his status as a Ukrainian immigrant in Canada without acknowledging the communist regime in the artist’s home country. At the same time, the number of articles on the artist, little known today, suggests an underlying interest in Zadorozny’s life as an immigrant, the magazine publicizing details of his experience teaching in a Ukrainian school in Alberta and service in the Canadian military.\(^\text{13}\) In one account, radio journalist and columnist Henri Poulin expressed regret that immigrants like Zadorozny were forced to work at menial jobs.

\(^{11}\) *LPJ* 26 July 1953, 43.

\(^{12}\) Dollard Morin, “Le jeune Alex Janvier révèle ses beaux talents de peintre,” *LPJ* 26 July 1953, 57.

\(^{13}\) “Un jeune peintre ukrainien expose chez Tranquille,” *LPJ* 12 June 1949, 56.
rather than contributing to Canadian society through their talents and training. This attention to subjects such as immigration paralleled similar interests identified in the Weekly, but contemporary events and political concerns regarding communist activities in Canada or elsewhere were not addressed. The Journal did carry numerous articles exposing purported efforts by communists in Canada to coerce Ukrainian immigrants to either return to Russia or to become spies. And it publicized events such as a successful police raid on a Ukrainian school in Montréal in an article that included a description of seditious materials condemning capitalism, the clergy and the government seized by police during the raid. In other words, despite the fact that the magazine did not make a direct link between the artist and communism, ideas about the artist were formulated in a climate of suspicion and fear associated at the time with members of the Ukrainian community in Montréal.

The overall tone of the magazine in the late 1940s supports this contention of an underlying climate of fear and suspicion because anti-communism dominated the news pages throughout this period. Reports of art-related events and cultural affairs were perhaps intended to suggest that life in Québec was returning to post-war normalcy, but beginning in the fall of 1945 the magazine carried aggressive reporting on the threat posed to world peace by communism, the possibility of a third world war, and the spy scandal unfolding in Montréal and Ottawa following the defection of Igor Gouzenko. News stories and editorials warned of the Soviet menace and the need for Canada to be vigilant against the “fascistes rouges,” and the arrest of Fred Rose.

17 “La guerre des cerveaux,” Editorial, LPJ 24 Feb. 1946, 19; “Gouzenko expose les rouages de l’espionnage,” LPJ 24 Mar. 1946, 1-2. Beginning in September 1945, each issue carried at least three items related to Soviet aggression, espionage, the atomic bomb and world peace. These included news items, editorials and other commentary.
Ouvrier-Progressiste Member of the Canadian Parliament for Montréal-Cartier, under suspicion of espionage, and accusations against other citizens implicated in the spy ring, added to the turmoil reported in the magazine. Articles concerning communists purged from a federal civil service allegedly “riddled” with spies, from unions where strike activity threatened to derail reconstruction and from the Canadian Legion were perhaps intended to reassure the public that authorities had the situation well in hand.¹⁸ Headlines in the magazine trumpeted renewed efforts to use the Padlock Law to combat communism and reported the possibility that it would be extended across Canada.¹⁹ In addition, efforts by police and RCMP to root out communists in Canada received extensive coverage and high praise. At the same time, and in the midst of this turmoil, the magazine projected a sense of calm in its coverage of arts and letters, music and theatre.²⁰ From reports in the magazine, it appeared that artists continued to produce work and exhibitions continued to open, even as the editor-in-chief speculated as to whether the Soviet Union was preparing an attack across the Arctic Circle.²¹

The separation in the magazine between the wider political realm, communist activities and visual art applied only within Canada. The magazine followed a different practice with respect to contemporary art and artists elsewhere, particularly in Europe. In the late 1940s, for instance, the *Journal* devoted considerable attention to Picasso, an interest that centered on the artist’s political beliefs and activities in support of communism. The articles appear to have been

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¹⁸ ““Les agents de Moscou chasses de nos unions,” *LPJ* 22 Sep. 1946, 1; “Vaste purge dans le service civil à Ottawa,” 3 Nov. 1946, 1; “La légion canadienne veut débarrasser ses rangs des communistes,” 3 Nov. 1946, 4.
¹⁹ “Nouvelle offensive anticommuniste: La loi du cadenas serait bientôt remise en vigueur,” *LPJ* 17 Mar. 1946, 3. The Padlock Law, officially the *Act to protect the Province Against Communist Propaganda*, was passed in Québec in 1937.
²⁰ As noted with respect to the *Star Weekly*, Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse argue that the press, controlled by business interests, played a vital role in shaping perceptions of the Cold War in Canada and that the use of “dramatic prose” in the media heightened awareness of the dangers of communism; Whitaker and Marcuse 1994, 14.
directed at diminishing the artist’s stature and on raising doubts concerning both his commitment to the working classes and the political goals of communism. The artist’s purchase of a home in the “communist-dominated” town of Vallauris on the French Riviera, for example, was presented as a sham because the artist purportedly preferred Paris. 22 Picasso’s interest in ceramics following the war was similarly cast as a venture to support communism. 23 Other articles concerning contemporary European art noted the relationship between communism and realism in art. In one example, the magazine published a reproduction of La Parisienne (1952) by French artist and communist André Fougeron; the work described as an example of the “dullness, weakness and insipid nature” of socialist realism, the style of art sanctioned by the Communist Party of France. 24 The accompanying article also highlighted the growing political activism of French artists and intellectuals and reported that a number of artists had signed a letter protesting bacteriological warfare in Korea, the military aggression of the United States and the atomic bomb. 25

Although not openly discouraged, activism and participation in the realm of politics was not endorsed in the magazine’s visual arts coverage. In this sense, various accusations against

22 Gault MacGowan NANA, “Devenir potier, Picasso contribue à enrichir la caisse communiste,” LPJ 19 Dec. 1948, 47. The front page of the issue in which the article appeared announced, in bold headlines, an imminent congress of communists in Montréal.
23 Picasso joined the Communist Party of France (CPF) in October 1944 and remained a member until his death. According to art historian Gertje Utley, Picasso’s interest in ceramics and lithography following the war was an attempt to withdraw from the role of celebrity painter in order to engage directly with artisanal and craft production associated with the working classes. Utley credits the revival of the pottery industry in Vallauris to Picasso’s interest, similar to the revival of mural art and tapestry by Jean Lurçat and efforts to promote “art for the people” advocated by the French Communist Party; Gertje Utley, Pablo Picasso: The Communist Years (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 96.
25 The letter demanded that Henri Martin (a French communist arrested for sabotage) be released from prison and denounced the French Government’s support for the execution of Beloyannis (a Greek communist leader).
Picasso were perhaps intended to provide a cautionary example for Québec artists. In addition to casting doubt on the artist’s commitment to the communist cause, subsequent articles published in the *Journal* positioned Picasso within notions of bourgeois decadence by describing the artist’s purported successful manipulation of the art market. The mocking and derisive tone employed in articles such as these was typical of the response to Picasso’s continued support for communism in the 1950s. Another response, perhaps evident in articles published in the *Journal*, was to accuse the artist of provocatively mocking his public and patrons while profiting from his popularity among collectors.

Publicity concerning Québec artists involved in the post-war peace movement provides an important exception to the separation between visual art and politics in the pages of the magazine. Described by art historian Gertje Utley as “an effective public relations operation in the struggle for public opinion during the Cold War,” peace initiatives were linked by many in the West to Soviet foreign policy and communist-led activities. These associations received significant attention in the magazine in the early 1950s, although direct links between artists and

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26 As Serge Guilbaut has suggested, Picasso “could be seen successively as a role model for the Communist Party, as a savior of the beleaguered American modern art, as anti-American in his many appearances on podiums with Communist Party dignitaries in the Peace Offensive campaign, and also as the major France-based artist being sold in the States by Samuel Kootz”; Serge Guibault, “Postwar Painting Games,” *Reconstructing Modernism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 67.

27 The author claimed that Picasso decided to launch a “psychological trap” to seduce the public with his “oddities and distortions” because he was fed up with poverty and failure; Carlos d’Aguilla, “Voilà les bases sur lesquelles Picasso a élevé sa renommée,” *LPJ* 19 July 1953, 58.

28 Gertje Utley has argued that Picasso’s membership in the CPF damaged the artist’s reputation in the United States, particularly during the McCarthy era but he was also attacked by writers on the left for his “ivory tower” intellectualism and bourgeois art; Utley 2000, 207.

29 According to Utley, the Picasso exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art at the outset of World War II and the success and notoriety of *Guernica* (1937) fuelled Picasso’s fame and reputation as an artist engaged with contemporary issues, and his subsequent membership in the Communist Party of France appeared incomprehensible to many. The response was to rationalize the artist’s activities as support for peace, to simply ignore it, or to promote the idea that Picasso was an independent thinker who would not allow dogma to influence his work; Utley 2000, 209.

communism were implied rather than specified. A 1952 review of an exhibition of art work by Québec artist Robert Roussil, on view at Librairie Tranquille, is a case in point. An anonymous writer, noting the influence of Mexican artist and communist Diego Rivera on the Québec artist’s work, described Roussil’s style as “réaliste progressiste,” suggesting an affiliation with the communist party in Québec, formally titled the Parti Ouvrière-Progressiste. Even Roussil’s choice of drinks at the exhibition opening, reported in the magazine as a “vodka-cola,” may have aroused suspicion. The Journal also reported that Roussil was one of the signatories to an invitation to the proposed 1952 Peace Conference in Vienna, and outlined accusations made by the RCMP and other police organizations against the peace initiative and all those who offered financial support to the delegation from Québec, claiming it was the work of communists.

These broad associations between Roussil, communist activities and the peace movement were augmented by a more explicit statement in the magazine, one that provided a cautionary example because it exposed potential consequences for artists involved in politics. In a 1954 article concerning the eminent demolition of the studio and exhibition space in Montréal called

31 For instance, a summary of a radio broadcast in which a local anti-communist leader explicitly linked the 1950 Peace Conference in Toronto, and founding Chairman James Endicott of the United Church, to communist subversion; “Congrès de la Paix, qualifie de manœuvre communiste,” LPJ 7 May 1950, 36. The journal also reported that many unsuspecting Quebecers, including agricultural societies and municipal councils, had been duped into signing the Stockholm Peace Petition; “Nos sociétés agricoles tombent dans le piège communiste,” LPJ 4 Feb. 1951, 35. Journal columnist Janette Bertrand also linked the peace movement to communism, explaining that, although “like all women she supports peace,” she refused to attend peace conferences because “they are supported by the opponents of freedom and democracy” (Janette Bertrand, “Le communisme,” LPJ 15 June 1952, 67). In addition, the magazine reported that communists, perhaps encouraged by the Toronto Peace Conference, had embarked on a program of cultural propaganda across Canada and had organized painting exhibitions, youth exchanges and foreign language courses, described as the “greatest Soviet propaganda offensive” ever seen in Canada; “Moscou moussera sa cause, camouflé sous la culture,” LPJ 25 May 1952, 35.

32 The title of Roussil’s nude sculpture group La Paix (1951), and the artist’s statements calling for peace were exposed in articles in the Journal, although the main focus of the reports was on prudery and public morality; “Cette guerre de pureté est assez dure,’ dit Roussil,” LPJ 22 Apr. 1951, 59.


34 “La Police dénonce une initiative pacifiste,” LPJ 26 Oct. 1952, 34.
Place des arts, reporter Jean-Louis Morgan claimed that Roussil’s “unorthodox political affiliations” had angered municipal officials. The artist was one of several sculptors with studios in the building and had organized an exhibition at the site the previous year and, according to the report, Roussil’s involvement with politics was one of the reasons that Place des arts was slated for demolition. The reporter employed a mocking tone in his description of artists “scratching at an oak tree for more than a week to produce nothing more than a shapeless form and bloody hands,” adding flippantly, “here was born what is pompously called ‘the only temple of thought in Montréal.’” Despite the dismissive tone, the piece ended with an explicit statement that artists should concentrate on art rather than politics, if they wanted official support. This message was augmented by reference to a promise made by Mayor Jean Drapeau to “do everything in his power to help the artists,” implying that a replacement site would be provided if the artists behaved themselves.

This example of direct intervention and condemnation of artists involved in politics, however, was atypical of visual arts coverage in the *Journal*. Throughout the decade, political controversy and dissent were largely hidden and, instead, the format of exhibition reviews published in the *Journal* promoted specific ideas about acceptable styles and identified what should be avoided in artistic production. Artists working in abstraction were lumped together

36 According to Ray Ellenwood, Roussil’s “Stalinist friends” were a concern for participants in the 1953 exhibition at *Place des Arts*; Ray Ellenwood, *Egregore: A History of the Montréal Automatist Movement* (Toronto: Exile Editions, 1992), 238.
37 While liberalism and anti-communist perspectives were presented separately in visual arts coverage, in rare instances the magazine exposed overlapping concerns. An article about the Massey Commission hearings, for instance, a subject that received little attention in the *Journal*, included a description of a “violent controversy” that erupted from business interests opposed to the notion of publicly funded radio and television. The magazine also published a report that the youth submission to the hearings was written
with “rebels, anarchists and idealists” under the rubric of “sterile formalism” in a blanket condemnation of modernism, and reviews also routinely praised artists who avoided anything “disquieting or confusing.”

Other information, for instance notice of commissions for Premier Maurice Duplessis and members of the provincial Cabinet, supported the projection of acceptable types of art by establishing individual artists as well connected and approved by the provincial establishment. The support given to visual arts by various business leaders, in collecting art, providing exhibition space and sponsoring art and design competitions, was also publicized and endorsed in the magazine. This practical encouragement for visual arts was presented as altruistic, as though art dealers and the business community were performing a civic duty by supporting artists and not benefitting financially or otherwise from the activity. This example suggests the presence of an idealized conception of visual arts as uncontaminated by the marketplace, a point of conflict in light of the magazine’s emphasis on the potential contributions made by the sector to economic growth.

By the end of the decade, emphasis on economic development and the positive contributions made by visual arts to an expanding economy increasingly dominated coverage in the Journal. Economic concerns, for instance, shaped the magazine’s presentation of the rationale for the Canada Council, described as an initiative to help the country “regain a position

38 For instance, a review of work by Francesco Iacurto praised artists who do not “deform” but who “retain the humanity of the subject” (LPJ 8 June 1952, 59); see also Pierre Saint-Germaine, “Deux inquiets et un joyeux,” LPG 16 Nov. 1952, 62.
41 Gallery dealers, for instance Agnes Lefort in Montréal, were also described in this way in exhibition reviews; see PG, “La gravure, cet art savant et populaire,” LPJ 2 Dec. 1956, 65.
of industrial development at a rapid pace.”\textsuperscript{42} Cautionary directives against political activism subsided significantly at this time and were replaced by endorsements of the contributions made by Francophone artists as agents of intellectual and economic growth in the province of Québec.\textsuperscript{43} Support in visual arts coverage, for what was presented as a dynamic and expanding cultural sector in Montréal, was bolstered by an emphasis on the creativity and professionalism of artisanal production in the province at this time.\textsuperscript{44} In the arts pages, the magazine also increasingly encouraged the general public to attend exhibitions, purchase works of art by Québec artists and otherwise participate in the visual arts sector. This conception of visual arts as a component of the expanding provincial economy carefully sidestepped the complex philosophical and stylistic debates underway at the time.

\textit{Visual Arts and Intellectual Debate}

The tendency to avoid controversial subjects and to focus on what were presented as positive contributions made by artists underscores the magazine’s emphasis on traditional values in Québec following the war. The strong presence of the Catholic Church and enduring force of Catholicism is apparent in the extent of advertising in the magazine for products associated with church rituals and support for both early marriage and large families. In articles concerning new approaches to art production and art education, the Journal endorsed established arts institutions and existing authorities, particularly in the first part of the decade. Contemporary debates

\textsuperscript{42} “M. St-Laurent se rappelle qu’il fut déjà un boursier,” \textit{LPJ} 18 Nov. 1956, 36.
\textsuperscript{43} The significant role that both artists and artisans played in the life of the city of Montréal and the intersection of economic with artistic concerns formed the basis of a plea for more exhibition space in an open letter to Mayor Jean Drapeau; PG, “Plaidoyer en faveur des artistes,” \textit{LPJ} 16 Jan. 1955, 58.
\textsuperscript{44} In this project, the example of Picasso is also instructive, because attention was redirected away from the artist’s associations with communism toward publicizing his interest in pottery and other artisanal production as a model for similar production in Québec.
concerning abstraction and challenges to the status quo, posed by artists as intellectuals, were
publicized in the magazine but received little, if any, substantive analysis. Initially met with
derision and acrimony, by the end of the decade these challenges were embraced as indications of
innovation and creativity in visual arts and as part of what the magazine presented as an
expanding and dynamic provincial economy.

Recognition of the prominent place of Catholicism within traditional Francophone culture
was particularly strong in the magazine throughout the early part of the decade. As World War II
ended, for instance, an article describing an exhibition of Old Master paintings in New York
emphasized both the Christian theme of the exhibition and the drama of events in the Bible,
employing these elements to convey a sense of hope and to provide spiritual comfort and
inspiration for readers in the final months of the war.\footnote{LPJ, 7 Jan. 1945, 5.} At the same time, other articles forged
associations between art, leisure and entertainment as the conflict drew to a close, in contrast to
graphic coverage of the war elsewhere in the magazine. An account of the annual ball at the
École des beaux-arts and a review of an exhibition of clothing at the Museum of Modern Art in
New York are typical of the presentation of visual arts as a pleasurable diversion, a perspective
that intensified in the magazine over time.\footnote{LPJ, 21 Jan. 1945, 4, 35.}

Emphasis on traditional values and support for the status quo were also apparent in the
way the magazine presented information concerning intellectual debates among artists. Although
reviews of books and essays briefly exposed readers to external developments in modern art for
instance, these features in the magazine provided little discussion of the impact of new ideas on
local artists. Typically, the magazine included few details and only superficial analysis of art debates, at the same time that it promoted the need for artists in Québec to adopt the “middle way,” rather than what it described as “extreme tendencies” such as abstraction. This approach was evident in the magazine’s presentation of information concerning challenges to both existing institutions and approaches to art education, and also in its coverage of the manifesto *Refus global*. This manifesto, a critical document in the history of post-war Québec, was written by artist Paul-Émile Borduas with contributions from other artists and writers. Published in 1948 in Montréal, the manifesto was both anti-establishment and anti-religious and was endorsed by a diverse group of artists and intellectuals, although principally members of the artists’ group *les automatistes*.

The magazine’s coverage of *Refus global* is a prime example of the way it presented art debates and other controversial subjects to readers. Details of the manifesto, including a summary of the contents and information about the artists involved, were announced in the *Journal*, although the magazine provided little analysis of the motivations behind its production.

The authors of the text, influenced by the writings of French surrealist André Breton, were critical of the domination of the Catholic Church and advocated “total refusal” of established values, institutions and traditions in Québec society. The stream-of-consciousness writing style

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47 In a review of artist Irene Legendre’s *Petite histoire de l’art moderne* (1947) for instance, critic Pierre Saint-Germain described and summarized the contents of the book, providing readers with an overview of the development of modern art through the various movements. In the review, the critic briefly mentioned the February 1948 exhibition of paintings by the group Prisme d’yeux; PSG, “Au Fils des Lettres,” *LPJ* 21 Mar. 1948, 46.


49 See Ellenwood 1992 for a history of *Refus global*.

50 “Écartèlement et jus de tomates: Nos automatistes annoncent la décadence chrétienne et prophétisent l’avènement du régime de l’instinct,” *LPJ* 15 Aug. 1948, 28. **Écartèlement** (drawn and quartered/dismembered) was a method of medieval torture, perhaps a reference to punishment for religious heresy, and also a wrestling hold. Yvon Robert was a wrestler and popular celebrity in Québec.
employed by the authors, combined with its “apocalyptic vision” and explicit challenge to Catholic dogma, rendered the text a powerful document.\textsuperscript{51} The \textit{Journal}, however, announced the publication of \textit{Refus global} employing humor and references to lowbrow culture, a strategy that paralleled similar efforts in the \textit{Star Weekly} to deflect or downplay potentially challenging subjects. The article describing the pamphlet began, for instance, with a statement reassuring “young ladies that the headline does not mean Yvon Robert has given up his crown” but was instead the “war cry of a group of young Montréalais.” According to the account in the \textit{Journal}, the manifesto declared that “automatism has left the existentialism of Sartre behind, surrealism is out of date and the new movement is also a successor to Marxism.” Paul-Émile Borduas, identified as a painter and teacher “too old to play the adolescent,” was given as the author of the manifesto. The other signatories were listed, along with their professions, and playwright Claude Gauvreau, identified as the spokesperson for the group and quoted in the article, provided an overview of \textit{automatistes} principles.

Although mediated through the application of humor, the headline for the article, “Drawn and quartered and tomato juice: Our automatistes announce the decline of Christianity and predict the advent of the reign of instinct,” suggested the manifesto was an attack on Christianity. This aspect of the announcement would have been controversial enough at the time, and excerpts from three of Gauvreau’s plays, included in the report, would have been additionally troubling. Gauvreau’s writing, influenced by surrealism, may have appeared to readers of the magazine as nonsense or gibberish, and the playwright’s study of revolution and expulsion from college for arguing against the existence of Hell, duly noted in the article, would also have caused consternation in the predominantly Catholic province. Despite the humorous cast, the length of

\textsuperscript{51} Ellenwood 1992, 134-5.
the article in a non-art publication is an indication of the perceived seriousness of the discussion and depth of interest produced by the manifesto. The following month the magazine carried news of Borduas’s dismissal from his teaching position at l’École du meuble and the threat of protest by members of the automatiste group. According to the magazine, the artist was fired following the publication of “the famous manifesto in which Borduas was highly critical of our masters, our institutions and our beliefs.”

As Ray Ellenwood has described, fears concerning disruptive influences on young adults in Québec informed the decision to dismiss Borduas from his teaching position following the publication of Refus global. These fears were given graphic exposure in the Journal in an article describing widespread cynicism and atheism among European youth as “one of the greatest problems facing post-war Europe.” Perhaps intended as a cautionary example, the author of the report claimed that, in Europe, “parental authority and the Catholic Church are publicly mocked,” describing this as the consequence of widespread neglect of children and youth. While publicizing these purported problems in Europe, however, the magazine did not make a direct link between Borduas’s dismissal and the artist’s potential influence, as a teacher, on young adults. Under a gloss of humor, the magazine focused instead on the surrealist sensibility in Refus global and its promotion of instinct and intuition over reason. Skirting details of the explicit challenge to Christianity, Catholicism and Québec institutions made in the manifesto, the magazine also avoided discussing the implications of Borduas’s firing. In effect, its silence lent support to traditional values and authorities and endorsed the status quo.

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52 “Le fameux maniesto dans lequel Borduas critique amèrement nos maîtres, nos institutions et nos conceptions” (“Les automatistes s’élèvent contre l’affaire Borduas,” LPJ 19 Sep. 1948, 26).
While avoiding direct censure of the individuals involved in producing the manifesto, in other ways the magazine supported critics of the artists and their ideas. It publicized criticism of surrealism, for instance, identifying it as a violation of the principles of Catholicism. Les automatistes, who had been influenced by surrealist practices, such as automatic drawing and writing, were thus implicated by association, even though the criticism was directed at European artists such as Picasso and Salvador Dali. In one example, the magazine included an account of a young Catholic novitiate in Paris who initially painted “in the manner of Picasso,” but was forbidden to paint because “surrealism has no place in a convent,” the article claiming that Picasso was both a surrealist and a communist. In addition to such serious allegations against surrealism, however, the Journal at times adopted a humorous tone when presenting information on the style to readers. It quoted the musings of Salvador Dali on “surrealists made of caviar,” for example, and described the artist as flamboyant and self-absorbed.

Apart from criticism and dismissal of surrealism, the Journal provided little, if any, substantive analysis of the automatistes or the attacks against church-dominated Québec society launched in Refus global. It continued to employ humor and sarcasm in its ongoing coverage of the group, including the mocking caption, “Il parait que ‘ça se sent’” to a reproduction of Borduas’s abstraction, Réunion des trophées (1948), so as to play on the verb se sentir, the

55 “Après 5 ans de pénitence, une artiste maintenant religieuse pourra recommencer à peindre,” LPJ 27 June 1948, 54.
56 Ellenwood 1992, 12.
57 LPJ 27 June 1948, 54.
59 The seriousness of the reaction to the group is indicated by the fact that two collegians at a Jesuit College were expelled for merely attending an exhibition at Comptoir du Livre featuring sculptures by automatistes J.P. Mousseau and Marcelle Ferron, perhaps because Mousseau was known to be sympathetic to communism; Ellenwood 1992, 210.
caption claiming “apparently it feels (or smells).” The magazine also maintained a separation between developments in the field of visual art and the wider political sphere, forgoing links that were made in other publications.

In addition to the use of humor, information concerning visual arts was couched in the Journal’s assertion that change was underway. The magazine’s review of the Ministry of Youth and Social Welfare’s 1949 edition of les Ateliers d’arts graphiques, for instance, claimed the booklet was “a signal that powerful members of the political elite are taking an interest in efforts to renew the arts.” Because it was produced by students at various art schools in Montréal, including Borduas’s former employer l’École du meuble, and was published by the Ministry that orchestrated his firing, the positive comments in the review were perhaps an attempt to diffuse criticism of these institutions and the state of visual arts education in the province. At the same time, columnist Roger Rolland, a rising Québec intellectual, cautiously endorsed surrealism in his column in the magazine, criticized the linking of visual arts and economic development, and commented that “if the only purpose of art is to demonstrate that pretty houses in the countryside are charming then it serves only the agencies of tourism.”

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60 “Il parait que ‘ça se sent,” LPJ 1 May 1949, 47. A first for the magazine, the small black-and-white reproduction produced a flurry of comments from readers.

61 For example Le Devoir published a protest against censorship written by automatiste artist Pierre Gauvreau with a list of supporters; “Cadenas etindiens, une protestation,” Le Devoir 5 Feb. 1949, 4 and Le Canada 8 Feb. 1949, 4. According to Ray Ellenwood, Borduas was associated with communism through publication of an interview in Combat, a French-language worker’s magazine in 1947; Ellenwood 1992, 82. Esther Trépanier has identified accusations against Borduas and the automatistes in the anti-communist pamphlet Art et Bolshevism (1946), by René Bergeron; see Esther Trépanier, “La Réception Critique de Marc-Aurèle Fortin: Entre les méandres du nationalisme et la construction de la figure de l’artiste maudit,” Journal of Canadian Art History vol. 28 (2007), 67. In 1953 Borduas was initially refused entry into the United States due to suspicions of communist sympathies.


63 According to Ray Ellenwood, the director of l’École du meuble acted on orders from the Ministry of Youth and Social Welfare in dismissing Borduas; Ellenwood 1992, 148.

64 Roger Rolland, “À propos d’une exposition,” LPJ 6 Mar. 1949, 50. Rolland was a professor of French at UBC and a close friend and later speechwriter for Pierre Elliot Trudeau.
These elements of visual arts coverage suggest the magazine supported an opening-up of intellectual debate in the late 1940s and promoted a sense of progress and modernization in the province. Despite these signs of change, however, the magazine continued to avoid potentially troubling or contentious debates concerning visual arts. Humor remained a crucial strategy in containing hints of controversy, a strategy evident in the magazine’s coverage of a new opera written by automatist playwright Claude Gauvreau. A review of the piece was accompanied by photographs of various animals with mouths open as if in song, a photograph of a dog wearing a dress and playing the piano, and a claim that “the text was so incomprehensible that even the composer did not understand it (fig. 12).”

Figure 12: “Deux chiens dans un opéra automatiste”

65 “Deux chiens dans un opéra automatiste,” *LPJ* 20 Nov. 1949, 35.
Questions concerning censorship of art works were similarly managed in the magazine. It used humor, for instance, in its description of the “arrest” of a Robert Roussil sculpture, the magazine reporting that police seized the sculpture in response to a complaint from a citizen who was offended because it was composed of oversized nude figures. Photographs of the twelve-foot high sculpture in the process of being loaded into a police van prior to “incarceration” at the local police station, and another of the offending nude, modestly draped with a cloth, were featured in the magazine (fig. 13). The notoriety of the affair was also presented with a humorous

Figure 13: “La Police a coffré cette statue”

66 “La police a coffré cette statue,” LPJ 13 Nov. 1949, 35.
cast in a subsequent article that claimed that details of the incident were being discussed in Paris and New York.

That an article about the sculpture was published on the same page as news items describing a purge of suspected communist sympathizers from the National Film Board and a blacklist compiled by the RCMP suggests the darker currents of the political atmosphere—indeed, the front page of the issue dealt with the perceived communist threat more broadly in full-page headlines announcing a “blacklist of suspicious citizens.” Once again, however, a link between the artist and these troubling developments, or the implications of censorship of works of art, was not addressed. A follow-up article did announce that a public tribunal of interested persons was being established to debate the issues raised by the incident, although this was presented as something of a social event rather than a serious investigation of censorship.

On the surface, coverage in the magazine of visual arts and debates among artists may have appeared unrelated to the political sphere. As episodes involving challenges to the existing order, however, with the potential to disrupt the political hegemony, they were potentially dangerous and required containment. This was particularly critical during the era of Duplessis, one of the most notoriously anti-communist politicians in Canada. The use of humour and ridicule in the magazine, and its tendency to avoid or deflect the substance of the ideas put forward by artists can be seen as a response to the potential for political turmoil such ideas might generate.

The magazine’s use of humour, seemingly employed as a strategy to downplay troubling or controversial subjects, also worked to create a bond between reader and text. In effect, a gloss

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69 Other interested parties included René Lévesque, and the organizers hoped to enlist the aid of sports figures to challenge police using laws on the protection of public monuments and works of art; “La sculpture de Roussil, jugée devant un ‘tribunal du peuple,’” *LPJ* 19 Feb. 1950, 39.
of humor established the reader in a position of privilege in the debate concerning prudery and censorship of art works. Used in this way, humor helped to build support for the magazine’s position on politically-charged issues, a strategy that was aided by the practice of limiting information provided to the reader. For example, a protest launched by members of the automatistes against the Musée des beaux-arts, following the rejection of their art work by jurors for the 1950 annual spring exhibition, was described as “restrained and sedate” in an article in the *Journal.* A photograph of a jovial-looking group of guests at the opening and another of the protesters was included with the article (fig. 14). The magazine, however, did not reveal the

Figure 14: “Guerre…et paix chez nos artistes”

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70 “Guerre…et paix chez nos artistes,” *LPJ* 19 Mar. 1950, 54. Artist Marcelle Ferron’s eyewitness account supports this depiction of the low key response; Ellenwood 1992, 212.
vulgar nature of some of the texts. Instead, the protest signs featured in the photograph were indistinguishable or relatively innocuous, one that read “Pauvre Goodridge Rubber”—a reference to juror and prominent artist Goodridge Roberts—appearing alongside an equally temperate one suggesting that the jurors were “old men.”

In addition to concealing from readers the depth of animosity directed at the Musée by the rejected artists, the magazine limited information and informed debate in other ways. It did not provide any justification for the rejection of art work submitted by the automatistes, for instance, nor did it report specific criticism of their work in abstraction; instead, it published an article about an amateur artist whose representational art work was accepted by the jury. Significantly, art critic Pierre Sainte-Germaine’s profile of the artist included reference to exhibitions in London and Paris that reportedly featured abstract paintings made by a child, a cat and donkey. Under a gloss of humor, these purported scandals denigrated both abstraction and the creation of paintings according to the principles of automatism, which foregrounded the spontaneous, the unplanned and the improvised. The magazine also published an article about a blind artist and included a description of other art works completed while blindfolded. Such articles, whether dealing with amateur or visually impaired artists, or abstract paintings produced by children and animals, suggest a critique of automatism, despite the absence of direct discussion of the movement in the magazine.

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71 According to Ellenwood, other signs read “de Tonnancour le cul(bis)” (de Tonnancour the cubist asshole [repeat]); “Poor Goodridge tired” and “À bas Cosgrove le putain” (Down with Cosgrove the whore). Ellenwood’s account suggests that Anglophone attendees may not have understood the full meaning of some of the signs; Ellenwood 1992, 212.
72 Artists Goodridge Roberts, Stanley Cosgrove and Jacques de Tonnancour were the jurors for the spring salon.
73 PSG, “Je n’ai pas voulu vendre cette toile $1,000,000,” LPJ 19 Mar. 1950, 57.
75 Publicity in the magazine for what it presented as “successful” artists provided further indications of the magazine’s views on contemporary art. For instance, the magazine indicated that members of the
By limiting information it provided to readers, and using humor to shape what it did disclose, the magazine controlled awareness of ongoing debates concerning automatism, abstraction and other experimental work. In time, the magazine’s approach to new directions and challenges changed, and an emphasis on personal expression emerged in descriptions of artists and their work. This new focus was subsequently extended to abstraction, for instance a review of an exhibition of paintings in Québec City by artists from France included reference to the “poetry, humanity and beauty” of abstract paintings. Although the reviewer noted “a disconcerting tendency toward extreme abstraction” in the work on display, this criticism was softened by the suggestion that it should be seen instead in terms, not of the local, but of the “contemporary world situation.” Other reviews similarly linked expressions of melancholy or uncertainty in art works to a generalized anxiety, described them as “a sign of the times” and stressed the honesty, integrity and patriotism of Québec artists.

These methods of describing artists and their work helped to convey a positive sensibility regarding visual arts, and this sensibility was supported by an absence of certain details concerning artists. At times, the magazine provided only a superficial analysis or description of provincial elite, including the Solicitor General and the president of the Conseil Canadien des arts, had attended the opening of an exhibition of representational paintings by Stanley Cosgrove, one of the jurors for the contentious 1950 salon at the Musée. While neither the spring salon nor the controversy was mentioned, the listing of powerful and well-connected friends provided (unstated) support for the artist; Andrée Pierre, “Cosgrove expose,” LPJ 17 Dec. 1950, 72.

Other examples of the use of humor include a photograph depicting a young woman the magazine claimed was “interpreting” the rejected paintings and an announcement that the rebels had collected fifteen dollars and twenty-eight cents in donations; “L’esprit rebelle,” LPJ 26 Mar. 1950, 26, and “Les rebelles récoltent $15.28,” LPJ 2 Apr. 1950, 57.


an artist’s work, particularly those working in abstraction, and omitted details of influences that
might prove controversial. Artist Charles Daudel in was a case in point; in a 1950 review, the
magazine included vague reference to a “new direction” in his art work but omitted mention of
his period of study with French surrealist Fernand Léger in New York and Paris, as well as his
prior interest in surrealism.80 Paintings by Fernand Leduc were described in a 1953 review as
“compositions” and “constructions,” rather than abstract or non-objective, and reviewer Paul
Gladu failed to mention that the artist was both a member of les automatistes and a signatory to
Refus global.81 Similarly, the magazine’s coverage of Paul-Émile Borduas and the progress of
the artist’s career gradually evolved into a celebration of the artist as an intellectual who had
made important contributions to Québec society.82

The tendency to ignore debates and other troubling developments in visual art was even
more pronounced in the Journal following a change in art critics in 1953.83 Significantly, the
magazine began to display a new seriousness in articles concerning Québec artists at this time.
Contentious debates between artists received less attention in subsequent years, and the magazine
provided few indications that artists engaged with contemporary issues, for instance by
organizing a fundraising effort to support striking workers.84 Hostility toward les automatistes
and other artists working in abstraction subsided significantly at this time, humorous and mocking
references to their work declined, and the magazine focused instead on what it presented as

81 PG, “Fernand Leduc,” LPJ 7 June 1953, 78.
82 An account of a radio interview with Borduas, by columnist Roger Rolland, suggests tentative support
83 Following a series of acrimonious exchanges published in the magazine, between the former art critic
and automatist playwright Claude Gauvreau, Paul Gladu assumed the role of art critic.
84 The magazine published a brief mention of an automatiste performance organized by Jean-Paul
Mousseau, Marcel Harvey and Claude Gauvreau in support of striking department store Dupuis Frères
workers in the spring of 1953. This strike was long and divisive, second only to the 1949 Asbestos Strike
for its impact on labor and politics in the province; Paul André Linteau, Québec Since 1930 (Toronto:
Lorimer, 1991), 224.
contributions made by artists to both economic development and cultural life in the province. Following the change in writers, the emphasis in the magazine shifted decisively away from controversy toward supporting the consumption of art, promoted in articles that encouraged readers to attend exhibitions, purchase works of art and otherwise participate in an expanding visual arts sector in Québec.

The transition to a new valorization of visual artists in the magazine, however, required careful management due to lingering unease concerning artists and intellectual debates. While it ignored potentially troubling associations and influences, for instance, the Journal presented les automatistes and abstraction in a more positive light. In this, the magazine made an effort to separate automatism from philosophical debates and beliefs associated with existentialism. Under headlines announcing a “wave of crime committed by youth” and a description of an epidemic of drugs and juvenile delinquency in Montréal, for instance, the magazine made a connection between what it presented as problem behaviors and ideas imported from Europe. A subsequent article described the concerns of parents confronted by “rebellious and disrespectful children” and cited the opinions of an educator who claimed that young people interested in existentialism “typically come from difficult home situations and they take their revenge by reading immoral books.” According to an expert quoted in the article, students “sink into despair because their beliefs are destabilized under the influence of the writings of [André] Gide

For instance, both the influence of Salvador Dali and Joan Miro and potentially troubling references to war and destruction in art work by Jean Dallaire were deflected through a description of the “elegance and splendor” of the artist’s work, which was also described as the product of “fantasy and imagination” (Paul Gladu “L’espègle…ou l’enchanteur?” LPJ 30 May 1954, 56).


“Un autre son de cloche,” LPJ 15 Nov. 1953, 35.
and [Jean-Paul] Sartre. The report included comments by a theologian who had studied the philosophy and who explained that suicide was perfectly acceptable within the beliefs of existentialism.

The magazine distinguished such perceived problems and negative influences, however, from the intellectual investigations underway in the visual arts sector in Montréal. In a companion article on the same page, journalist Dollard Morin described a popular new café in the city but downplayed aspects of rebellion among the “young intellectuals” who gathered there with “artists, writers, musicians and dilettantes.” Characterizing the birth of the automatistes as “originally a social group,” Morin explained to readers of the Journal that the young people who frequented the café included automatistes, existentialists and surrealists who simply wanted to “socialize, listen to music and drink coffee.” In the article, artist Guido Molinari—described amicably as a young painter and poet—provided an explanation of the distinction between existentialism and automatism: according to the artist, automatism was a “positive and creative approach to aesthetics,” while existentialism was fatalistic. Simultaneously alarming and reassuring, the articles appear, in other words, to be an attempt to separate what were seen as the positive and life-affirming interests of the Montréal automatistes from the dark currents of European existentialism.

Subsequent developments in the visual arts sector were similarly presented in a positive light in the magazine. According to the Journal, the formation of a new group of non-objective artists, les plasticiens, was motivated by contemporary issues such as fear of nuclear war, the

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88 The Roman Catholic Church placed Gide’s writing on the Index of Forbidden Books in 1952.
89 Dollard Morin, “Ces garçons et filles veulent la mort de toutes conventions,” LPJ 15 Nov. 1953, 35.
90 The front page of this edition of the Journal announced, “Un cénacle de jeunes révoltés dans Montréal” LPJ 15 Nov. 1953, 1.
desire for “order” and a wish to “counter the disorder and uncertainty of the times.” In addition to presenting these types of investigations as positive, the description of the new group skirted contentious discussions among artists at the time concerning approaches to abstraction.

Acrimonious debates among former automatistes, as members of the group went their separate ways, had no place in the magazine’s new conception of artists as the heroes of the modern age, always searching, working and experimenting to produce objects of beauty. Rather than exposing divisions and debates among artists, the magazine focused instead on celebrating and demystifying visual art, employing the figure of Monsieur tout-le-monde to encourage the readership to be adventurous and embrace contemporary art, including abstraction.

The new celebratory atmosphere projected in the magazine was supported, as the decade ended, by the magazine’s coverage of politically-motivated initiatives in visual arts. The Journal presented the origins of the Greenshields Foundation, for instance, a foundation established to provide financial support to artists, within a context of civil debate among artists and intellectuals. The justification for the Foundation appeared in a review of landscape paintings by founder Charles Greenshields, reviewer Paul Gladu claiming that the amateur artist and philanthropist was not opposed to modern art, “as had been reported by other newspapers,” but only wanted to assist artists to further their training before launching into “extreme tendencies” like abstraction. As

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92 This type of inspirational prose was used to describe automatisme in a review of the 1954 exhibition, “La matière chante,” organized by Claude Gauvreau. In his account, Gladu evoked a sense of being in the presence of a great master as Borduas selected paintings for the exhibition, describing “the artist’s delicate appearance, his charming manner, the great pleasure of watching him work and how wonderful it is that he was available to visit from New York” (PG, “Borduas, Paul-Emile, et l’accident,” LPJ 25 Apr. 1954, 58). The submission of a “faux-abstract” painting by artists Edmund Alleyn and Jean-Paul Lemieux, however, and the challenge thus posed to both Borduas’ authority and the principles of automatism, was presented as merely a prank and a harmless joke; LPJ 6 June 1954, 56.
proof of this openness, in addition to support for artists working in a representational style, Greenshields claimed to have also offered financial assistance to one of the *automatistes*, although no name was provided.

In its account, the magazine refrained from publicizing associations made by Greenshields between modern art and communism and also downplayed the implications of what was, in effect, an attempt to control art production through financial incentive. The announcement in the *Journal* was very different from the inflammatory language and humorous cast used by the *Star Weekly* to present details of the project and sponsor to its readership. But the *Journal’s* approach to the Foundation was typical of ongoing efforts to deny political motivations and redirect controversial subjects away from close scrutiny.

By the end of the decade, the former artist rebels were reconstituted as critical components of an expanding visual arts sector, itself a site of pleasure and enrichment in Québec. While it had evolved from an initial position supporting traditional values and institutions, the magazine continued to control access to the substance of debate and maintained its silence concerning the presence of challenging ideas in the visual arts sector. Further, in its announcement of the Greenshields Foundation, the *Journal* shielded the actions of the wealthy Anglophone philanthropist from critique. In the next decade, this tactful silence eroded, along with the tendency to avoid politically-charged debate, both ultimately displaced by the magazine’s support for rising Québec nationalism.

*French-English Relations and the Rise of Francophone Artists in Québec*

Initially a minor element of visual arts coverage in the *Journal*, divisions between Anglophone and Francophone Canadians were increasingly prominent as the decade advanced. Contributions
made by Anglophones to cultural life in Québec, for example, in founding the Musée des beaux-arts in Montréal and providing ongoing financial support, were acknowledged and celebrated in the early post-war period. This recognition gradually subsided and was replaced by allegations that the Musée was an exclusively Anglophone institution, out of date with contemporary trends in visual arts. English-speaking artists in the province received similar treatment and were presented as either old-fashioned or amateur, or both. As these examples suggest, visual arts coverage helped to differentiate the two cultures and emphasize divisions between them, the magazine in time promoting the accomplishments of Francophone artists to suggest greater cultural sophistication in French Canada. Evidence of international recognition of Québec artists, particularly in Paris, was similarly employed to support a claim of an ascendant visual arts sector in the province. Due, perhaps, to the challenge it posed to the idea of a Québec-based avant-garde, the magazine conveyed little or no information on art-related developments in the United States.

A preliminary comparison of coverage in the Journal to that of the Star Weekly reveals significant differences in attitudes and approaches to the visual arts sector, differences that reinforced a sense of Québec as a distinct community. For instance, the French-language magazine typically turned to prominent local authorities for their opinions on art-related matters, and this practice advanced a claim of support amongst elites for cultural initiatives within the province. At the same time, this process of consultation built awareness of the stature of members of the community, particularly Francophones.\textsuperscript{95} In contrast, through much of the initial post-war period, the Star Weekly turned to external authorities in London or New York for commentary. Another difference was that the English-language magazine employed visual arts to

\textsuperscript{95} This practice was also extended at times to Anglophone Quebeckers, for instance art critic Robert Ayre and Dominion Gallery owner Max Stern.
promote a sense of classlessness in Western countries, an idea that was far less prominent in the
*Journal*, although hints of a class dimension dividing Anglophones and Francophones
occasionally surfaced in the magazine, a class dimension that reinforced a sense of an
increasingly acrimonious relationship between the two cultures as the decade advanced.96

The ethnicity of different artists, although often identified in the *Journal*, was not an
explicit element of criticism in the early post-war years. Ceramics artist George Hutchison, for
instance, was described as “*Canadien français* (with a Scottish ancestor)” in an exhibition review
in the late 1940s, the author of the review claiming the artist’s clientele was “English-speaking,”
even though he lived in a part of Montréal that was predominantly French-Canadian.97 In the
review, the author emphasized the popularity of hobbies among Anglophone Canadians, a point
of comparison that subsequent critics would employ to dismiss English-speaking artists as
“hobbyists” and “Sunday painters” rather than professional artists.

In time, the *Journal* featured increasingly negative commentary concerning both English-
speaking artists and the chief Anglophone arts institution in the city of Montréal, the Musée des
beaux-arts. While ethnic divisions between French and English were not an element of the
magazine’s coverage of the 1950 spring salon, for which art work by members of the
*automatistes* and other artists was rejected by the jury, the issue surfaced soon after. Several
paintings in an exhibition at the Musée, by members of the predominately Anglophone Canadian
Group of Painters, for instance, were described as merely “empty exercises” in a subsequent
exhibition review, the artists accused of engaging in a “con game” by charging high prices for

96 See for instance coverage of the purchase of old master paintings from the Prince of Lichtenstein; Paul
Canadiens français ne sont-ils que des ignorants et des paresseux?” *LPJ* 19 Sep. 1954, 62.
their work. Criticism of the Musée, targeting its conservative exhibition policy and succession of foreign-born directors, became more prominent in the early 1950s, evident for example in a reference to it as “an institution that otherwise acts as a cemetery for works of art.” The magazine also publicized a purported lack of interest in visual arts and culture in the rest of Canada at this time, in contrast to what was presented as a dynamic and expanding sector in Québec.

Throughout the decade, the magazine’s treatment of the respective colonial centres enhanced awareness of divisions between Anglophones and Francophones in Québec. Unlike the Star Weekly, for instance, events in Great Britain received little attention in the Journal. The 1949 Royal Academy dinner in London was a noteworthy exception, and the scandal surrounding Sir Alfred Munnings’s speech at the event, discussed in the Weekly, was also publicized in the Journal. In the English-language publication, however, the affair was relayed to readers several months later through a British observer who, employing a humorous and indulgent tone, presented the incident as a minor indiscretion at the end of a storied career. In contrast, the Journal provided greater detail, such as Munnings’s state of inebriation, the size of the radio audience, the presence of a member of the royal family at the event, and the raucous response of the other guests at the dinner. Concerns regarding the impact of modernism on cultural institutions and art education were not addressed in the Journal’s account, however; the piece served instead to disparage English cultural institutions and reinforce a sense of a post-war Britain in decline.

99 “Une réserve indienne qui fait peur au visiteurs,” LPJ 18 Mar. 1951, 75.
100 This last point was an essential element of the article on Ukraine-born André Zadorozny, for instance, and the artist’s appreciation for his new life in Montréal; “Un jeune peintre ukrainien expose chez Tranquille,” LPJ 12 June 1949, 56.
101 “L’élite anglais a été ameutée par un noble,” LPJ 1 May 1949, 34.
In contrast to the limited attention to affairs in Britain, the cultural validation of Paris was a touchstone in the magazine throughout the decade. Publicity surrounding the 1950 exhibition of contemporary paintings from France at the Musée in Montréal, however, suggests the tension between this historic relationship and the magazine’s growing valorization of independent artistic accomplishment in Québec. Perhaps to downplay any hint of deference to Paris and to deflect attention from the nature of the art work on display, the Journal employed humor in its account of the exhibition. Characterizing it as “an invasion, an attack and a bombardment” on the Musée, it reported that a rumor was circulating that some observers were considering “asking the United Nations to intervene” in order to protect the city.¹⁰²

The exhibition in Montréal occurred at a moment when, according to Serge Guilbaut, the centre of the art world in the West had already moved from Paris to New York.¹⁰³ This shift was not acknowledged in the Journal, although as early as 1945 it was quick to report the situation in the financial world and the transfer of power and money from London to New York.¹⁰⁴ Further, and despite the humorous treatment of this exhibition, the cultural validation of Paris was an essential element of the magazine’s coverage of art and artists, and studying in Paris remained an important component of an artist’s career. This was apparent, for instance, the following year, when the exhibition “Paris, peintres nouveaux” toured to Québec City, a review in the Journal focusing on a group of Québec artists who had studied together in Paris.¹⁰⁵ A photograph of the artists at the exhibition opening accompanied the review, the image projecting an atmosphere of warmth and congeniality among friends gathered to reminisce about the past, while the text reinforced the idea that the experience had been an extraordinary opportunity.

Such emphasis on what were presented as positive aspects of the visual arts sector strengthened in the magazine’s coverage in the early 1950s. At the same time, divisions between French and English in Québec were increasingly apparent, particularly in articles written by art critic Paul Gladu. While glossing over thorny subjects such as abstraction, for instance, Gladu often identified the ethnicity of different artists. In fact, a focus on Francophone artists was apparent from the beginning of his association with the Journal in 1953 and his first published review hinted at future contentious ground. In it, Gladu lamented the absence of more Canadien-français in the exhibition he was reviewing and misspelled the names of Toronto-based participants Harold Town (Towne) and Kazuo (Kazvo) Nakamura.\textsuperscript{106} The review was positive, but the critic noted a number of what he identified as “foreign” names in the exhibition catalogue.\textsuperscript{107}

Considered a successful “popularizer” of visual art throughout his career as an art critic, Gladu typically presented contemporary Francophone artists as daring intellectuals, and their presence in the province a marker of cultural sophistication. In a related strategy, he minimized any sense of controversy by suggesting that disputes were all in the past—that debates concerning art teaching and abstract and non-objective painting were ancient history.\textsuperscript{108} He also promoted the importance of developing a “distinctly Canadian art,” offering encouragement and praise for artists such as Marc-Aurèle Fortin, whose work he perceived as free of the influence of European

\textsuperscript{107} For information of Paul Gladu’s perspective on art, see Carani 1990, 37.
trends. This preoccupation with promoting an independent artistic tradition in Canada (by which Gladu appears to have meant Francophone Québec) intensified in subsequent years. Against this ongoing publicity for Francophone artists, efforts by the Canadian government to encourage artists in the province were downplayed in the magazine’s visual arts coverage. In an instance that exposed growing tension in the mid-1950s between federal and provincial officials over control of cultural production, travel awards given in 1954 to artists Alfred Pellan, Stanley Cosgrove and Goodridge Roberts—following recommendations made by the Massey Commission that artists be granted travel awards—were presented as the product of political interference and a waste of money. Although not identified in the magazine, the respective ethnicities of the artists may have prompted dismissive comments in the article concerning the work of Anglophones Cosgrove and Roberts; according to Gladu, Roberts showed “nothing new or original” in his landscape paintings and Cosgrove was stuck painting the “stereotypical head of a woman.” The central point argued by the critic, however, was that federal money had been misdirected and should have been spent to encourage young artists rather than functioning as a “legion of honor.”

As this example suggests, visual arts coverage mirrored the increasingly contentious political sphere in Québec as the decade advanced. While typically positive and supportive of Francophone culture, however, criticism was also occasionally directed at Francophone

110 In a review of paintings by Clarence Gagnon, for instance, Gladu identified Gagnon (“la contre-partie québécoise du Groupe des Sept de l’Ontario”) as one of the artists who had turned toward the landscape in order to develop painting that was “typically Canadian.”
111 In the article, Gladu claimed that the artists “spent a nice vacation in Europe without much benefit to their work and also accomplished nothing for Canada” (PG, “Pourquoi des bourses aux Pellan, Cosgrove, Roberts, Jones, etc.,?” LPJ 28 Nov. 1954, 64).
112 In contrast, Gladu offered high praise for Cosgrove as a “rigorous and conscientious thinker” prior to his departure the previous year; PG, “Cosgrove exécute une fresque en trois jours seulement,” LPJ 13 Dec. 1953, 62.
Quebeckers, perhaps in an effort to encourage more active participation in the visual arts sector. Writing from the perspective of a Francophone himself, Gladu countered complaints that the English “run the show” and “control the money” by laying the blame on fellow French-speaking Canadians: “we leave school too early,” he stated, “we are only interested in passive entertainment like sports, we are lazy and soft and play hooky and we admire bombastic politicians.” 113 At this time, the critic acknowledged that the Musée had grown due to the private generosity of English-speaking patrons and that it received little financial support from either the city of Montréal or the province of Québec. In the article, Gladu employed this last point to raise questions concerning the spending on infrastructure underway in the province at the time and accused politicians of giving little thought to the spiritual and intellectual health of Quebeckers. In this instance, the positive endorsement of Anglophone largess in the field of visual arts appears intended to function as a point of comparison, to encourage local officials to direct more attention and money to supporting the sector.

Alleged differences between Anglophone and Francophone artists in Québec became more prominent in the Journal over time. The growing number of hobbyists, amateur painters and art collectors in Montréal, initially presented as an indication of cultural sophistication in the province, developed into a site to assert differences between the two cultures. Reinforcing negative perceptions of English-speaking Quebeckers, for instance, Gladu identified activities such as model making, soap carving and match-box collecting as popular hobbies among “Anglo-saxons,” although he admitted, grudgingly, that some also painted.114 While these “hobbies” pursued by Anglophones in Québec were dismissed as trivial, the magazine promoted artisanal, folk art and craft production by Francophone Quebeckers as important cultural and economic

resources.\textsuperscript{115} It emphasized the increasing popularity and appreciation of this production among tourists, publicizing a need to encourage Canadian talent and products that would reflect a local sensibility.\textsuperscript{116} At the same time, efforts were made to promote equivalence between artisans and artists by employing similar words of praise for both.\textsuperscript{117} This helped to blur the boundaries between Francophone artists and artisans in the \textit{Journal} and to promote knowledge and appreciation of craft production within Québec.

Alongside publicity for Francophone artists and artisans, acknowledgment of the contributions made by Anglophone Quebecers to cultural life in the province gradually faded. At the same time, the \textit{Journal} provided little or no information about visual arts and artists in the rest of Canada, and presented the interests of Anglo-Canadian artists in Québec in a highly selective manner. This was accomplished by focusing on Anglophone artists working in what the magazine presented as the outmoded genre of landscape painting. In a review of an exhibition at the Arts Club in Montréal, for instance, Gladu described the art work as “mostly landscapes and almost all English.”\textsuperscript{118} In doing so, he also identified the lingering influence of the Group of Seven “(from Toronto)” on these artists and claimed that the still-life genre was “dangerous ground” for Anglo-Saxons. In short, he disparaged the paintings in the exhibition and underscored a sense that the work was dated and \textit{retardataire}, a position reinforced by the

\textsuperscript{115} PG, “Une visite de bonne santé…,” \textit{LPJ} 13 June 1954, 60.
\textsuperscript{116} The \textit{Journal} promoted artisanal production such as wood carving using the example of Médard Bourgault in Saint-Jean-Port-Joli and stone carving by anonymous Inuit sculptors; PG, “L’artisanat qui nous fait honneur…” 1 Aug. 1954, 50; “Nos Esquimaux…des grands artistes,” 8 Aug. 1954, 50; “Belle exposition…jugement bizarre,” \textit{LPJ} 29 May 1955, 60; “Il était un petit navire…” 24 July 1955, 54; “Bourgault s’attaque aux loupes et aux souches…,” 7 Aug. 1955, 56; “Trois jeunes céramistes exposent,” 27 Nov. 1955, 60.
magazine’s practice of showcasing art by Anglophone members of clubs for amateur artists, the work characterized as “pedestrian and old-fashioned.”

The description of Anglophone artists as old-fashioned and amateur provided a compelling contrast to what the magazine presented as the strength and originality of art work by Francophone artists in the province. In addition, the growing valorization of French-speaking artists was supported by a corresponding disdain for U.S. practitioners, accompanied by ongoing neglect of developments in visual arts in the United States. This perspective was apparent in a 1953 review of the exhibition “Sculpture in the 20th Century” at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the first review of an exhibition in the United States to be featured in the magazine since the end of the war. In his review, Gladu praised the museum itself because it was devoted to contemporary art and living artists (a point of criticism directed at the Musée) and expressed regret that the exhibition would not travel to Montréal. Although the review was positive, he was critical of art work by American sculptors David Hare and Alexander Calder, criticism that became part of a pattern of negative assessment of U.S. artists that intensified in the next decade.

In addition to criticism of art work by U.S. artists, the magazine limited treatment that would convey either the growing strength of the New York art world or the development of modernism and abstraction in the United States. In a review of an exhibition of modern paintings at the Musée, on loan from the Guggenheim Museum in New York, for instance, Gladu used the example of the Guggenheim collection to announce the opening of a new Montréal gallery

120 PG, “Renaissance de la sculpture,” LPJ 6 Sep. 1953, 54. Gladu described Hare’s work as a “horror in metal” and referred to Alexander Calder’s “jeux puérils.”
121 Gladu noted, “l’académitisme le plus lamentable et des échantillons de ce que l’insanité la plus complète puisse sérieuses” (PG, “Renaissance de la sculpture,” LPJ 6 Sep. 1953, 54).
devoted to non-figurative painting. Omitting reference to the development of abstraction in the United States, Gladu presented the gallery, called l’Actuelle, as both an opportunity to see how the “great adventure” of modernism was progressing in Canada and an indication, once again, of the strength and dynamism of the visual arts sector in the city. Further, the critic publicized founder Guido Molinari’s plan to foster open discussions of contemporary art at the new exhibition space and used the idea to bolster his claim that Montréal was “one of the liveliest artistic centers in the country.” With comparable daring, Gladu suggested that, although it functioned on a smaller scale, L’Actuelle played a similar role in Montréal to that of the Museum of Non-Objective Painting (now the Guggenheim) in New York.

The comparison between a modest exhibition space in Montréal and the Guggenheim highlights the way information concerning the increasingly prominent role of the New York art world was obscured in the Journal. Similar to the practice in the Star Weekly, readers of the magazine were given little information concerning U.S. artists. While in the Toronto magazine this appears related to a larger project to promote cultural nationalism in Canada, the neglect of American art and artists in the Journal supported both a claim of independent originality for Québec artists and rising cultural nationalism in Québec. In a 1956 article, for instance, the art critic claimed that Montréal painters had “finally outgrown the tutelage of the Europeans,” and instead were closely aligned with U.S. artists Edward Corbett, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and

122 PG, “Picasso et Cie au Musée: Ceux qu’on aime et ceux qu’on déteste,” LPJ 12 June 1955, 58.
124 The magazine’s coverage of exhibitions at l’Actuelle provides an indication of ongoing efforts by the publication to present art-related debates in a positive light. Although art historian Pierre Théberge has described Molinari’s decision to open a gallery devoted to non-objective art as an important commitment because “non-figurative art was a culturally progressive force and served as a manifesto against oppressive traditions,” reviews in the journal were generally positive; see Pierre Théberge, Guido Molinari (Ottawa: Galerie Nationale du Canada, 1976), 18.
Bradley Walker Tomlin. This brief list, one that projected an equivalent stature for American and Québec artists working in abstraction, constituted the first mention of the American abstract expressionists in the Journal.

The neglect of U.S. art and artists suggests that the magazine carefully managed information on developments elsewhere in order to emphasize the innovation and originality of Francophone artists in Québec, and to establish a direct lineage to European art. In addition, while the magazine endorsed French-Canadian artists working in abstraction in the late 1950s, similar investigations by English-speaking artists in Québec and the rest of Canada were ignored, and reviews of group exhibitions often omitted even the names of non-Francophone artists. In one example, the art critic cited an article in Vogue showcasing art work by Borduas, Jean-Paul Riopelle and “a third unnamed Canadian artist”; the omission of artist B.C. Binning’s name suggestive of a deliberate strategy to avoid mention of artists based in other regions of Canada working in an abstract or non-objective mode. At the same time, the magazine registered a degree of uncertainty regarding reception to Montréal painting in the rest of Canada, while promoting innovation in abstraction as an opportunity to counteract impressions of Québec as a place of “ignorance and inertia.”

Although the art critic claimed impartiality with respect to French-English relations, the Journal also publicized a purported neglect of Francophone artists elsewhere in Canada. A series

126 While local artists dominated commercial galleries in the city, several dealers included non-Québec artists in solo and group exhibitions, including the Dominion Gallery, Galerie Agnès Lefort and the George Waddington Gallery. The Musée des beaux-arts also featured non-Québec artists in many group and solo exhibitions. See Helene Sicotte, “Un état de la diffusion des arts visuels à Montréal,” Journal of Canadian Art History vol. 16 no. 1 (1994), 87.
127 The article, “Three Canadian Painters,” accompanied a longer essay on economic and cultural development in Canada, “Gossipy Memo on Canada,” Vogue (15 Apr. 15 1955), 108-109, 135. An article on Borduas in Art Digest and positive reception to Jean Dallaire’s work in South America were also cited as evidence of rising stature for Quebec artists.
of celebratory articles concerning Alfred Pellan’s 1953 exhibition at the Musée national d’art modern in Paris, for instance, emphasized the exhibition as evidence of international acclaim in the face of continuing neglect at home. In its coverage, however, the Journal failed to mention that Pellan was one of four artists selected by the National Gallery in Ottawa to represent Canada in the 1952 Venice Biennale, a significant omission insofar as it was Canada’s first invitation to show at the prestigious event. Nor did the magazine reveal that the artist was no longer living in Canada but had returned to France the previous year with financial support from the Canadian government. Instead, Pellan’s exhibition in Paris was described as “an official and definitive consecration of the artist’s talent,” this moment of external cultural validation a central element of the magazine’s ongoing celebration of the artist and his art work.

As the decade advanced, Pellan emerged as a pivotal artist in the magazine’s emphasis on innovation in visual arts within Francophone Québec. Further, the magazine stressed both the artist’s independence of trends in France and his Canadian roots to support the claim. Paul Gladu, for instance, argued that Pellan retained his Canadian temperament, “typically French Canadian personality,” and personal style, while “absorbing the lessons of European masters”

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130 LPJ published an overview of the biennale written by René Centass that listed the Canadian artists. However, the journalist focused primarily on the submissions of the major European nations; “Modestes’ débuts de notre peinture,” LPJ 20 July 1952, 50. See also Paikowsky 1999.
131 Guy Robert, Pellan : Sa vie et son œuvre (Montréal: Editions du Centre de Psychologie et de Pédagogie, 1963), 56. Further, Robert argued that Pellan’s subsequent return to Canada in 1955 was prompted by changes in France for instance lingering post-war economic difficulties and the commercialization of the French art world. These factors were not mentioned in the Journal.
132 In this, there was no suggestion that the decision to showcase the artist’s work might have been prompted by interests in France, for instance a desire to assert its position as the cultural centre of Western art by welcoming foreign artists, such as Pellan, who worked in the post-cubist style favoured there at the time.
during his years in France. The painter was also described as “among the greatest artists ever produced in Canada,” a related assertion that, in Pellan, “Canada finally has an artist with an international stature” supporting the celebratory aura surrounding the artist in the pages of the Journal. Similar assertions of international acclaim, independence from external influences and attachment to the local environment were used to describe artist Ozias Leduc, as a “typically French Canadian” role model for the next generation of artists.

In the face of the celebratory treatment of Francophone artists, the magazine’s corresponding dismissal of English-speaking artists suggests that visual arts coverage was used to reinforce divisions between the cultures in Québec and Canada. In time, resistance to the domination of English Canada became more prominent and may have prompted a rare negative review in the Journal, of art work by English sculptor Barbara Hepworth in a solo exhibition at the Musée. In the review, Gladu described her work as “without soul, impoverished and cold,” called her drawings “frankly bad,” and claimed that other artists had already covered the same ground. Because the depth of criticism was unusual for the magazine, which typically couched negative comments in vague references to unspecified artists and art works, the strongly worded critique suggests increasing frustration with the Musée over its practice of showcasing foreign artists at the expense of local practitioners.

133 PG, “Pellan nous a bien représenté,” LPJ 20 Mar. 1955, 60. Characteristics of the artist’s “typically French Canadian” personality included “uncommon energy, spirit and ambition, [and] an impetuous and turbulent character.”
134 PG, “Pellan, un peintre dont on est fier,” LPJ 11 Nov. 1956, 60; Louise Cousineau, “Que pensez-vous de l’affaire Pellan?” LPJ 16 Nov. 1956, 48.” These reviews concerned Pellan’s exhibition at City Hall in Montréal.
However, the valorization of Francophone artists in visual arts coverage, based on the magazine’s assertion of originality in the field of non-objective painting, was tested by developments in the Montréal art world at the end of the decade. An exhibition of non-figurative art in the spring of 1956 prompted open criticism in the *Journal*, suggesting that the magazine’s support for Québec painters working in abstraction was in doubt. Gladu’s review of the exhibition, a review accompanied by a large bold question mark described as “the ideal non-figurative painting,” was both sarcastic and unusually critical. He opened his review with an explanation of the differences between abstract art and non-figurative art, “for art lovers who have not attended the Sorbonne,” accused some of the participants with “not trying to please,” and others of openly mocking the public. Installed in a restaurant on Île Ste-Hélène, the accessibility of the exhibition to a broad cross-section of the general public may have sparked the abrupt and pointed criticism in the *Journal*. As Carani has argued, Gladu feared that artists who pursued “total abstraction” might alienate the public. In this, the magazine’s promotion of Francophone artists as independent and highly original, and the prominent role of innovation in abstraction within this conceptualization, was potentially placed at risk through wide exposure in the public sphere.

As the decade ended, the Canadian government posed an additional challenge to the magazine’s celebration of Francophone artists and the idea of an ascendant visual arts sector in Québec. The decision to establish the Canada Council, announced in the *Journal* in the fall of 1956, was generally supported in the editorial pages as an attempt to create a culture that was

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138 Artists mentioned in the review included Maurice Raymond, Claude Tousignant, Pat (Patterson) Ewan, Tomi Simard and Jean McEwan; PG, “Peintures intéressantes et insignifiantes,” *LPJ* 4 Mar. 1956, 56.
139 A strong supporter of Pellan’s art work, Gladu was typically vague and at times contradictory when writing about paintings that were completely abstract or non-objective.
140 Carani 1990, 38.
“distinctively Canadian.” Opposition to what was described as federal “interference” in the provincial domain of education and culture was dismissed by the *Journal* as merely the opinions of a “small nationalist group.” Within the pages devoted to the arts, however, the federal initiative was greeted less enthusiastically. In the next decade, criticism of the Canada Council, and what was perceived by the *Journal* as the dominating influence of business interests and the political elite among administrators, gradually subsided into almost complete silence concerning the Council’s efforts to cultivate growth and development in visual arts in Canada.

The magazine’s silence regarding initiatives undertaken by the Canadian government reinforced a sense that Francophones were neglected and disadvantaged within the federal system. This allegation enhanced awareness of divisions between the two cultures as the decade ended, divisions supported by the magazine’s celebration of innovation by Francophone artists and corresponding dismissal of similar experimentation in English Canada. The suggestion of neglect by the rest of Canada represented a significant break with the past in that the magazine typically avoided controversy and politically-charged debates in its visual arts coverage. In other ways, however, the magazine maintained an established practice of shaping debate by both controlling and limiting the information it provided to readers. In the next decade, visual arts coverage fostered perceptions of divisions between English and French Canada with greater intensity, exposing in the process an increasingly rancorous relationship between the “two solitudes.”

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141 Editorial “Culture ‘distinctement canadienne’ et cent-millions de nos bons dollars,” *LPJ* 11 Nov. 1956, 44. Paul Litt has argued that resistance in Québec was one of the main reasons that federal funding for universities was not implemented following the Massey Report recommendations “until a compromise was reached between Ottawa and Québec at the end of the decade”; Litt 1992, 247.
The Artist in Society

Extensive visual arts coverage in the *Journal* throughout the first decade following the war, including weekly exhibition reviews and additional art-related articles, rendered the publication a rich source of ideas concerning artists. Through the type of information it included, the magazine registered support for traditional values in Québec society and publicized contributions made by artists to the provincial economy. These characteristics indicate the presence of liberal and anti-communist perspectives, the emphasis on what the magazine presented as positive contributions made by artists masking any potentially troubling intellectual investigations they may have considered. In the early post-war years, personal details such as religious affiliation, marital and parental status and whether the subject was a teacher or had served in the military were included in descriptions of artists, a practice that foregrounded an expectation of heterosexual marriage, large families and patriotic attachment to Canada. In time, this preoccupation faded from view and was replaced by an emphasis in such descriptions on the artist’s character and personality, a focus that was used in turn to support the magazine’s claim that Francophone artists were sincere and hard working. The publication’s promotion of artists as valued members of the community was extended to women practitioners by mid-decade, although a preoccupation with identifying a feminine sensibility in the art work of women artists reinforced traditional gender stereotypes. In addition, European artists provided a point of contrast to an ideal of Canadian artists as dedicated professionals; initially presented by the magazine as eccentric dilettantes, a conception that echoed their portrayal in the *Weekly*, the *Journal’s* dismissal of European artists was later tempered by its endorsement of their participation in artisanal and commercial enterprises

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142 The emphasis on military service may reflect the perspective of the owner of the magazine. Roger Maillet served as a fighter pilot in the Royal Air Force during WWI, achieved the rank of lieutenant-colonel and retained an attachment to “le monde militaire”; Fernand Denis, “Un home extraordinaire disparait: M. Roger Maillet,” Obituary, LPJ 20 Mar. 1960, 46.
because they provided a model for similar production in Québec. These aspects of visual arts coverage indicate that, while the magazine’s priorities and preoccupations shifted across the decade, the impulse to influence the behavior of artists and shape perceptions of them among readers remained constant.

Francophone artists working in traditional modes and subjects dominated visual arts coverage in the early years following the war, their work in themes taken from Christianity and Québec heritage celebrated in the magazine. This focus was evident in attention to sculptor Alfred Laliberté, the subject of an article that provided a detailed description of the sculptor’s working practice, appearance and studio. A photograph of Laliberté at work on a large Christ-Roi accompanied the article and both the photograph and the text projected an image of the artist as a conscientious and hard-working professional. Laliberté’s commissions were also noteworthy; the fact that they were predominately religious was underscored, a series for the Musée de Québec based, according to the article, on Québec folklore serving as additional validation of both artist and oeuvre.

A purported Catholic background and strong religious influences were vital components of the magazine’s portrayal of artists in the early post-war years. This focus projected support for traditional values in Québec society and worked to downplay the presence of challenging new ideas and directions in both art production and art education. For instance, in a profile of painter Gerard Breton, the magazine included details such as the artist’s religious education, training with a local abbot, interest in religious philosophy and subsequent commissions for the Catholic Church. The artist was also identified as a “traditionalist” in his attitudes toward pedagogy, the Journal describing his art practice as grounded in his Catholic faith. As though to support the

assertion, it claimed as well that he preferred to give away his paintings rather than sell them, referring to him in this context as “good humored, generous and non-materialistic.” In addition, information such as the artist’s marriage to his former teacher and sometime artist’s model, and reference to his growing family, projected an ideal of conventional family life. Articles about other artists included similar details, the magazine using these characteristics to deflect attention from what were presented as more troubling elements of art-related enquiry. Charles Daudelin, for instance, described as working in a variety of media including painting, sculpture, drawing and theatre design, was praised for presenting puppet shows, with his wife, in a local park. The artist’s interest in surrealism, and former association with French surrealist Fernand Léger, was not mentioned in the account.

In addition to publicizing such personal details as an artist’s marital and parental status and experience teaching, the magazine focused on associations between male artists, working-class origins and Québec settler culture. This was evident in a profile of Robert Roussil that included description of the sculptor’s experience as a butcher and machinist prior to enlisting in the army for service in Europe during World War II. Details concerning Roussil’s private life, including his status as married and father of an infant, and what the magazine presented as an unpretentious life in rural Québec, were mirrored by a similar depiction of artist Albert Dumouchel. Both portrayals suggested an attachment to Québec patrimoine, even as they provided reassurance that the artists were patriotic family men.

146 “L’artiste Roussil est bûcheron, pour mieux réussir la sculpture,” LPJ 25 Sep. 1949, 48. A similar association was suggested by Armand Vaillancourt; “Où est la sculpture dans la rue,” LPJ 21 Nov. 1954, 75.
A similar type of association was forged in the magazine between Québec artists and the Canadian wilderness, an association that skirted details of prior interests and controversial friends. An article advertising a new summer art school established by artists Marcel Barbeau and François Soucy on Île d’Orléans, for instance, drew on the authenticity of the wilderness experience as a foundation for art practice and teaching, the announcement that the pair were about to embark “into the solitude of the forest to prepare their lessons” deployed as validation for them.\textsuperscript{148} Such references deflected attention from what were presented as troubling investigations by artists, among them Roussil’s difficulties with censorship and Barbeau’s association with the automatistes and Refus global; in the announcement of the art school, Barbeau was described merely as a “Borduas disciple.”

In subsequent accounts, the magazine publicized contributions made by Francophone artists to cultural life in the province and presented these artists as part of a vibrant intellectual community. In time, the magazine celebrated former rebels, for instance automatiste artist Jean-Paul Mousseau, who was described by the Journal as “an authentic creator who opens the curtain onto a magical world.”\textsuperscript{149} Guido Molinari was similarly praised in a review of his exhibition at a local restaurant, described fondly as “a self-contained visionary, an eccentric, a madman,” whose “flirtation with abstraction does not go too far.”\textsuperscript{150} In the photograph accompanying the article, Molinari appears distinctly priest-like, clad in a dark collarless shirt with hands poised expressively (fig. 15). The photograph would appear to refute what the magazine described as

\textsuperscript{148} Françoise Côté, “Centre d’éducation artistique pour l’été, à l’Île d’Orléans,” \textit{LPJ} 24 May 1953, 58.
Figure 15: “Le peintre Molinari devant un de ses dessins”

contemporary perceptions of artists as “long-haired eccentrics” with “revolting manners, shabby dress and messy hair.” At the same time, the presentation of the artist in a guise that resembled a cleric was perhaps intended to diffuse uncertainty and unease with respect to abstraction and experimental investigations undertaken by Molinari and others at the time; the claim that Molinari remained within acceptable bounds appearing as both reassurance to readers and a directive to artists to limit their exploration of abstraction. In this instance, the figure of the artist mediated interaction with his art work, featured less prominently in the background, the force of the artist’s personality deflecting any suspicion of rebellion.

Other photographs of artists published in the magazine reinforced the *Journal’s* presentation of Francophone artists as valued members of the local art scene and helped to downplay suggestions of controversy. Photographs of artists Rita Letendre and Mario Merola with writer Jean-Jules Richard at an exhibition opening at *Librairie Tranquille* conveyed an impression of a congenial evening among friends.\footnote{LPJ 29 Aug. 1954, 56, and 2 Oct. 1955, 51.} Others projected similar ideas and helped publicize what the magazine presented as a close and supportive relationship among artists, art dealers and gallery owners such as Agnes Lefort.\footnote{LPJ 2 Oct. 1955, 51.} These associations were most prominent in connection with practitioners working in abstraction, the magazine presenting them, in both photographs and text, as indication of growing cultural sophistication in Québec. This project was supported by the practice of both limiting information about critical debates and suggesting that any controversy occurred in the distant past.\footnote{PG, “Une exposition-solo consacrera le beau talent d’Alfred Pellan,” *LPJ* 18 Oct. 1953, 61.} Further, the magazine highlighted the importance of the visual arts sector, Gladu for instance arguing at one point that artists and artisans made the best ambassadors and demonstrated to the world that Canadians do more than “carry water and cut down trees.”\footnote{PG, “Plaidoyer en faveur des artistes,” *LPJ* 16 Jan. 1955, 58.} The assertion reinforced the magazine’s claim for the importance of artists within the process of modernization then underway in the province.

In addition to projecting a sense of a dynamic intellectual community and supportive atmosphere in the metropolitan centres, the magazine drew on elements of Québec heritage to establish a claim of artistic integrity in descriptions of professional Francophone artists. These claims became more prominent as the decade advanced, and evolved from an emphasis on patriotic attachment to church, family and tradition to a focus on elements of French-Canadian identity. One artist described in this way was Ozias Leduc, the artist’s appearance and demeanor,
rather than his paintings, the main focus in both photographic and textual treatment in the magazine. In this example, the *Journal* presented the elderly artist as a positive role model by emphasizing his purported respect for tradition, his love of nature, his “charming and timid manners” and his “reticent speech.” These characteristics were supported by a photograph of the elderly artist, head bowed and gaze directed downward, positioned in front of a shelf of books.

![Ozias Leduc, photographié l’automne dernier](image)

Figure 16: “Ozias Leduc, photographié l’automne dernier”

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In its coverage of Leduc, the magazine employed the artist’s status as an alleged mentor to the group of artists who produced *Refus global* to suggest an exclusively Québec-based artistic lineage. Details such as his purported development as a self-taught artist, outside of academies and “powerful artists’ associations,” supported the magazine’s promotion of the artist as an independent outsider and, in this, a model for the next generation.\(^{157}\) At the same time, the magazine used the example of Leduc to discourage what it presented as negative behaviour, Gladu charging, for instance, that the new generation of artists was not only unduly preoccupied with financial gain, but that its behaviour also provided evidence of inflated egos.\(^{158}\) A complementary ideal of professional integrity was suggested by description of Leduc’s refusal to alter a painting to suit a client and claim that the artist preferred to lose the sale rather than compromise his vision. Such apparent integrity was linked by the magazine in turn to the artist’s personality and identity as a French-Canadian.

The promotion of the Francophone artist as a distinct type was enhanced by the magazine’s presentation of Anglophone artists in Québec. Not only did the *Journal* devote considerable attention to Anglophone artists working in landscape as the decade advanced, describing this art work as both amateurish and out-of-touch with contemporary trends in visual art. It also used the perception created as a result to make distinctions between the two groups of artists, with Francophone artists presented as curious and innovative in comparison to their Anglophone contemporaries.\(^{159}\) The effort to distinguish the two groups was aided by the magazine’s neglect of Anglophone artists working in abstraction in both Québec and the rest of

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\(^{159}\) PG, “Mr. Roberts, le peintre qu’on aime malgré soi?” *LPJ* 30 Oct. 1955, 58.
Canada, which was coupled, significantly, with neglect of male Francophone “hobbyists” who might balance the emphasis placed on such amateurs in the Anglophone community.

The Journal’s presentation of women artists also helped promote the achievements and stature of male Francophone artists by establishing a further point of contrast. By the mid-1950s, the magazine acknowledged an increasing number of both Anglophone and Francophone women artists, the suggestion, with such inclusion, that women were no longer confined to traditional roles of wife and mother serving to enhance both a sense of the dynamism of the visual arts sector and the modernization of the province. At the same time, the magazine devoted more attention to women artists working in a representational mode of painting, a weighting that portrayed women as less *avant-garde* than their male contemporaries and a construction that mirrored the magazine’s presentation of Anglophone artists. In addition, allusions to a “feminine sensibility,” an emphasis on appearance and demeanor and associations between women artists and children helped to contain the proliferation of talent. Painter Marion Scott, for instance, was described as “full of vitality, young, thin, soft with a discreet manner, an intellectual who disdains the decorative.”

A similarly paternalistic tone was evident in the Journal’s reference to the “child-like joy” in Ghitta Caiserman’s work, the claim that she “exploits the rich candor of children and makes us recall a bit of our childhood” serving to further diminish the artist’s achievement. Women artists were also linked with the natural world, their art work described as a reflection “of feminine dress and charm given so generously by nature” and an expression of personality. These connections forged by the magazine emphasized art production by women artists as an intuitive rather than intellectual response to the world around them, a suggestion that

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162 PG, “Ghitta Caiserman nous rappellent notre enfance,” *LPJ* 1 Apr. 1956, 56.
served at the same time to underscore the experimental investigations undertaken by their male contemporaries.\textsuperscript{164}

The magazine’s presentation of women artists, dismissal of Anglophone artists and corresponding valorization of Francophone artists helped to forge a new vision of the professional artist by the mid-1950s. This new ideal was perhaps best embodied by the example of Alfred Pellan. The artist’s 1954 exhibition in Paris was presented as evidence of international recognition, the magazine also maintaining that the artist retained a strong attachment to Québec and remained independent and highly original even though his art practice was informed by study in France.\textsuperscript{165} Reviews of Pellan’s art work stressed these attributes amid glowing and positive praise and also emphasized the artist’s purported Canadian roots and “typically French-Canadian personality.” This focus suggests the magazine’s interest in promoting Pellan as an icon of French-Canadian identity—a figure to inspire pride in what the magazine described as the artist’s unique achievements.

The promotion of Francophone artists such as Pellan, an increasingly prominent element in visual arts coverage, suggests growing appreciation for contemporary artists as the decade advanced. This was a significant change from the early post-war period, when the magazine projected negative perceptions concerning contemporary artists in mocking and dismissive commentary directed at European practitioners. Rather than merely a generalized disregard for European artists, however, presentation of them in the 	extit{Journal} appears directed at diminishing their stature as both authorities and role models in art-related matters. A series of photographs depicting a duel between two French painters, for example, projected notions of their frivolous

and eccentric behavior (fig. 17). According to the captions included with the photographs, the

Figure 17: “Une discussion philosophique se termine par un duel”

fight was sparked because the artists had disagreed over the philosophy of existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre, “but parted friends after the police intervened.” In this instance, the magazine employed humor, not only in its presentation of the behavior of the artists, but also to belittle intellectual inquiry.

Other internationally acclaimed artists were treated with similar disdain in the early part of the decade. Artists Salvador Dali and Picasso were presented as peculiar and untrustworthy, for instance, publicity-seeking dilettantes who had duped the art-buying public, particularly Americans, into spending large sums on dubious paintings. In time, however, both were presented in a more positive light and evidence of their participation in commercial endeavors was used by the magazine to encourage similar projects in Québec. Local tapestry-making

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166 *LPJ* 21 July 1946, 2.
167 A similarly derogatory tone was used in an account of artist James McNeill-Whistler, who was described as eccentric, stubborn and selfish, “like many artists”; *LPG* 12 May 1946, 5.
initiatives and mural production, for instance, were promoted in the magazine using the example of French artist Jean Lurçat’s successful revival of the industry in Aubusson, France.\textsuperscript{169} Similarly, from initial accusations of self-serving avarice, Picasso’s foray into ceramics was subsequently recast as a model for related production in Québec.\textsuperscript{170} Significantly, the accounts did not report the artists’ political aspirations, communist sympathies or support for the working classes that prompted participation in such projects, the European models used instead to encourage artisanal industries in the province.

Associations between male artists and both technological and economic development, combined with a celebration of their achievements in visual arts, intensified in the magazine by the mid 1950s. In time, however, its support for artists working in abstraction was tempered by expression of fears that they were too independent, a criticism bolstered by an underlying suspicion that artists were “going too far” in their investigations of abstraction. Such concerns were a significant element of Gladu’s review of the 1956 exhibition organized by the municipal parks service on Île Ste-Hélène, the art critic accusing some of the artists of “offering little of interest to the viewer, no more than wallpaper or arborite panels.”\textsuperscript{171} Related criticism of the dictatorial behavior of certain artists in the magazine, combined with purported outrage at rising monetary values of paintings by former \textit{automatistes}, also appeared in the late 1950s.\textsuperscript{172}

Although specific artists were rarely mentioned by name, criticism of \textit{avant-garde} painters intensified in the magazine as the decade ended. This criticism was supported by a turn

\textsuperscript{170} PG, “Qui oserait manger dans les assiettes de Picasso?” \textit{LPJ} 15 July 1956, 56. Reproductions of art work by Picasso were also presented in a positive light, as an opportunity for “everyone to appreciate good art” (\textit{LPJ} 29 Aug. 1955, 54).
away from artists working in abstract and non-objective painting toward the promotion of sculpture as the primary site for artistic innovation in the province. The surge in interest in artists working in sculpture, combined with the magazine’s linking of the medium to early settler history, suggests the impact of rising Québec nationalism on visual arts coverage. These subjects became more prominent in the next decade, the magazine registering support for Québec nationalism and a distinct Francophone identity in the figure of the contemporary male sculptor.

The identity of the artist in Québec society projected in the Journal was significantly altered by the end of the decade. From an initial emphasis on traditional values and beliefs in the early post-war period, the magazine gradually embraced and promoted an ideal of Francophone artists as important assets within the provincial economy. Attention to European, Anglophone and women artists was used to reinforce the magazine’s claim that male Francophone artists were in the forefront of artistic innovation, while its focus on personality and character helped deflect attention from potentially troubling aspects of intellectual inquiry. In the next decade, claims of innovation and originality were increasingly linked by the magazine to a distinct Francophone history and culture, notions of racial identity and ties to the land used to forge a new conception of the artist in Québec.

**Conclusion**

My analysis of visual arts coverage in Le petit journal in the first decade following the war reveals a strikingly different perspective than that found in the Star Weekly. While the Journal promoted the sector as an important economic and cultural resource and encouraged consumption of art-related products, it devoted far less attention to visual arts as a component of social policy in Canada. Interest in the relationship between visual arts, training for workers and improved
productivity was also less developed in the *Journal*. I identify ways that it expanded its initial promotion of the cultural heritage of Québec as a significant economic resource to encompass contemporary art and artists, encouraging the consumption of the products of visual arts within what it presented as a growing and dynamic cultural sector in the province. This transition was accomplished through extensive coverage of professional artists and mediated through the format of the exhibition review. At the same time, I argue that critical investigations undertaken by artists in Québec were not dealt with in depth in the *Journal* and that the magazine framed information in specific ways and limited debate in the public sphere, even as it promoted Francophone artists as individual creative genii. According to my analysis, the magazine avoided direct criticism of individuals and institutions, promoted a sense of gradual change underway, and presented this development as both positive and productive.

The sense of gradual change and modernization that I identify in the magazine’s visual arts coverage indicates both how the Quiet Revolution registered in the popular press in the early 1950s and how a magazine such as *Le petit journal* promoted and supported this process. In addition, the magazine’s focus, later in the decade, on what it presented as positive developments in the visual arts sector, overlooked animated, if at times acrimonious debates among artists and any hint of engagement in the political sphere. Subsequent art historical scholarship displays similar preoccupations, the characterization of artists engaged in private investigation and explorations of personal expression dominating the narrative of visual arts in Québec. The impact of censorship and the climate of suspicion I identify in the *Journal*, on lives and careers, has received scant attention in this narrative. As I have argued in chapter two, above, this aspect

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of Canadian art history has only recently been addressed, for instance in research by Esther Trépanier. 173

While recognition of the potential of the visual art sector to contribute to economic development emerged much later in the Weekly, analysis and comparison of visual arts coverage suggests similar preoccupations in both magazines. Accomplished in different ways, the use of visual arts as an expedient to encourage capitalist growth was a consistent feature of each. In this, the Journal’s promotion of the contributions made by artists to intellectual and cultural life in the province of Québec, juxtaposed with a corresponding denial of social and political critique, helped mask the underlying economic interests at the heart of its interest in visual arts. In the next decade, evidence of these economic interests was further displaced by the magazine’s endorsement of rising Québec nationalism.

173 Esther Trépanier, “La Réception Critique de Marc-Aurèle Fortin: Entre les méandres du nationalisme et la construction de la figure de l'artiste maudit,” Journal of Canadian Art History vol. 28 (2007), 56-105. One might ask, for instance, if there were RCMP files on artists such as Roussil, Borduas, Molinari or Mousseau.
Chapter 6

*Le petit journal 1957-1968*

The dramatic increase in attention to issues of cultural nationalism in the *Star Weekly* in 1957 was mirrored by separate yet parallel preoccupations in *Le petit journal*. An extension of the interest it projected over the course of the previous decade, the *Journal’s* promotion of Québécois history and culture intensified in the late 1950s and early 1960s. A key component of this expression of cultural nationalism was increasing animosity toward English Canada and federal institutions, animosity that was based on a purported neglect of Québécois by the rest of Canada. The magazine’s promotion of Québécois nationalism in visual arts coverage served to further differentiate the province, the alleged accomplishments of Francophone artists used to support a claim of innovation and modernization underway in the province and to provide evidence of both a dynamic economy and a progressive society. In addition, the magazine registered increased attention to international developments in visual arts and to publicizing the prominence of Québécois artists on the international stage. These preoccupations suggest the use of visual arts to promote a sense of a separate and sovereign Québécois, a preoccupation that deepened in the years leading up to Canada’s Centennial. The elimination of the arts column in 1967 and a shift to entertainment features marked a decisive end to the first chapter of the post-war era, new directions in the content of the *Journal* mirrored by larger shifts underway in Québec and Canada at the time.

The abrupt cancellation of the arts column ended the magazine’s longstanding endorsement of visual arts and culture as vital elements of Québécois society. Beginning in the previous decade and intensifying in the late 1950s, the *Journal* used visual arts coverage to
advance awareness and pride in what was presented as a distinct Québec identity. The magazine’s promotion of the achievements of Francophone artists supported a claim of cultural maturity in the metropolitan centres of Montréal and Québec, a claim bolstered at this time by the presentation of established Québec artists as “Old Masters.” In addition, the presence of foreign artists and returning expatriate Quebecers was employed to suggest a successful and vibrant visual arts sector in French Canada. Accompanied by evidence of disaffection with the rest of Canada, the magazine’s celebration of achievement in visual arts was informed by, and contributed to, nascent Québec nationalism.

An important component of the projection of a strong visual arts sector in Francophone Québec was the magazine’s ongoing neglect of artists from other parts of Canada and the United States. This characteristic of visual arts coverage, evident in the previous decade, was increasingly apparent in the late 1950s. The strength and prominence of the art world in the United States, previously ignored by the magazine, was subsequently obscured by its focus on U.S. artists working mainly in figurative modes. A preference for these artists and this type of art work was evident in a new feature in the Journal, a separate arts column introduced in 1957. This column appeared to inform the reader about international trends in contemporary art, but showcased now little-known artists. Such selective presentation of external developments in the visual arts served to highlight the magazine’s assertion of originality for Québec artists working in abstraction. In time, this project faltered, undone perhaps by the growing prominence of abstract expressionism and widespread acceptance of the mode of painting as an international art movement.

The selective presentation of external developments suggests that an informed readership was not the Journal’s primary goal. Instead, the magazine’s emphasis on the strength of the
visual arts sector, and its claim that Francophone artists were highly original and independent of international trends, was closely tied to their promotion as contributors to economic development and thus an indication of a progressive and modern economy. In this, the economic value of artists remained a key facet of visual arts coverage through the decade. This focus registered in the magazine’s attention to the participation of artists in commercial projects and urban redevelopment, in the projection of them as cultural ambassadors for Québec and in the magazine’s linking of visual arts with international trade initiatives.

The magazine’s use of visual arts coverage to suggest a modern and progressive society in Québec also extended to its presentation of ideas about artists. It continued to promote Francophone practitioners as both innovative and distinct from Anglophone artists in the province, a construction that was increasingly pronounced as the decade advanced. In addition, growing attention to racial identity and links to the land in descriptions of artists in the early 1960s suggests that the magazine supported formation of a distinct Québec identity. A related component of this project was the magazine’s growing attention to Québec sculpture and the linking of sculptors to both early settler culture and modern industrial production, a construction that effectively excluded women artists. While it did not suggest that artists engaged in social and or political debates in other areas, Québec nationalism was an important exception, acknowledged and encouraged in the *Journal* as a key subject for artistic expression as the decade ended. In effect, the magazine projected an image of the French Canadian male artist as rebel and outsider, and as such, an agent of resistance to English Canada and corporate North America. Although he may have shared renegade status with artists featured in the *Weekly* at this time, this rebel artist was decidedly Québécois.
**Cultural Nationalism at Home**

The emphasis on promoting Francophone artists from Québec that was evident in the immediate post-war years intensified significantly in the magazine’s visual arts coverage in the late 1950s. Publicity for the achievements of Francophone artists and a corresponding assertion of cultural maturity in the metropolitan centres of Montréal and Québec was bolstered by claims of a distinct lineage of exclusively Québec artists at this time. The presence of foreign artists in Québec, combined with evidence of returning expatriate artists, was noted in the *Journal* to support assertions of a dynamic visual arts sector. In this, the magazine’s celebration of Francophone artists drew on elements of what it presented as a unique Québec identity, which in turn promoted a sense of patriotism and pride in this identity. In addition, the *Journal* registered a decline in interest, as the decade advanced, in artists working in abstract and non-objective painting, growing acknowledgement of the international popularity of abstraction seemingly challenging the magazine’s promotion of painting as the primary site for innovation by Francophone artists. A parallel surge in attention to sculpture and the linking of the medium to early settler history signals the magazine’s use of Québec heritage as validation for artists and art production.

A strong component of the cultural nationalism projected in the magazine in the late 1950s involved the presentation of established Québec artists as Old Masters and mentors to a new generation of artists. Together with practitioners Ozias Leduc and Paul-Émile Borduas, Alfred Pellan was a central figure in this conception and was credited by the magazine as a catalyst for change in both art practice and teaching in the province. According to the magazine,

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Pellan “revolutionized” Canadian painting following his return to Canada in 1939.\(^2\) The stature of the artist was enhanced by a gloss of Québec heritage and reference to Pellan’s work in large scale public murals in the late 1950s, the artist’s purported contributions to the redevelopment of the city of Montréal serving to augment the perceived value of the artist.

The magazine’s focus on established Québec practitioners as Old Masters was supported by its assertions regarding the presence of foreign artists in Québec in the late 1950s, both underscoring a claim of strength for the arts sector and advancing an argument for cultural nationalism. While in previous years the *Journal* publicized the economic and intellectual contributions made by immigrant artists in visual arts and culture, touching in the process on such issues as assimilation, by 1957 the number of foreign-born artists working in Québec was used to support assertions of cultural maturity.\(^3\) Art critic Paul Gladu identified the influence of the Canadian landscape on paintings by French artist Michel Rostand, for instance, a situation he described as a complete reversal of past practice, when Canadian artists would travel to France, assimilate a French sensibility and return to Canada with a “Parisian attitude and accent.”\(^4\) The critic also noted the return of artists who had lived abroad for many years and used this development to support an assertion of the strength of the visual arts sector in the province. The number of foreign exhibitions in Montréal was presented as further indication of the city’s growing influence, this argument extended to include claims that it was also attracting artists


from other parts of Canada. The magazine published a photograph and brief reference to Toronto artist York Wilson, for example, coverage that appeared to position him as a foreign artist rather than fellow Canadian, his visit to Montréal adding weight to the Journal’s claims for the importance of the art scene in the city.

Cultural nationalism also emerged in the magazine’s attention to patriotism, and its reassurances that artists remained attached to their country despite travel and study abroad. The Journal attributed Borduas’s decision to leave Québec for New York and Paris to the limited support he received at home, and emphasized that the artist’s absence did not indicate a lack of patriotic attachment to his home country. Similar reassurances were advanced with respect to other Québec artists and were prominent in the Journal’s coverage of Canada Council travel awards, which asserted that recipients were eager to return home following study abroad, and that despite this experience they remained “profoundly Canadian.”

The political climate and nationalist preoccupations in both Québec and Canada in the late 1950s were noticeable in this focus on allegiance to Canada, a preoccupation that continued to both skirt controversial subjects and emphasize what the magazine presented as positive contributions made by artists.

Notice of a sophisticated cultural environment in Québec, projected in the magazine in the late 1950s, was tempered, however, by an element of caution regarding experimental work in abstraction. This hesitation perhaps indicates the impact of growing awareness of the mode as an international art movement, awareness that challenged assertions of local innovation and

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5 PG, “Marchand ou le peintre qui nous revient après 30 ans,” LPJ 2 June 1957, 72. The fact that Montréal hosted an exhibition from Israel was used to support the idea that the city was “an important city, a great cultural centre, with cosmopolitan character and commercial significance” (PG, “Les images calmes d’un pays trouble,” LPJ 14 Oct. 1956, 60).
6 PG, “57 aura été une année remarquable pour nos artistes et nos artisans,” LPJ 22 Dec. 1957, 75. The artist’s mural for the Imperial Oil corporate office in Toronto was also a subject of interest and the magazine promoted similar projects in Québec.
7 PG, “Ils domptent la peinture abstraite,” LPJ 1 June 1958, 74.
originality in the field of abstract painting. Claims that abstraction had “gone too far,” criticism of the dictatorial behavior of some (unnamed) groups of artists and accusations that some practitioners were deliberately manipulating the public and “playing a game” under the pretext of being modern, hinted at contentious debates within the Montréal art community over approaches to abstraction. These criticisms appear directed against fears that practitioners were too involved in theoretical discussions and that both critics and the art-buying public, described by Gladu as “suckers” and “sheep,” were unduly swayed by opaque philosophical discussions and rising prices.

By the early 1960s, intimations of uncertainty and circumspection about artists working in abstract or non-objective painting were offset by growing attention to sculpture in the pages of the magazine. Its increased coverage of public sculpture, and the associations it made between sculptors and Québec heritage, suggests that the magazine advanced this production in terms of a Québec-based national identity. As historian Eric Hobsbawm has argued, the creation of an independent, national public sculpture tradition is both a key element in the development of national identity and a potent force in promoting the idea of nation. The intense focus on the subject of sculpture in the early 1960s, and the specific characteristics of this coverage, moreover,

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9 This acknowledgement was a key element of Gladu’s review of an exhibition of work by the former automatistes at the Musée; PG, “Que devient Borduas et Cie?” LPJ 13 Sep. 1959, 97, and “Qui est Borduas?” LPJ 28 Jan. 1962, 55. Gladu argued that Borduas’ work was weakened when he came under the influence of the Americans.
10 PG, “M. Steegman et la banalité des certains non figuratifs,” LPJ 31 Aug. 1958, 66. Louise Moreau has described the polarization of the visual arts community at this time; Louise Moreau, “Making Art Modern: The first decade of Vie des Arts magazine and its contribution to the discourse on the visual arts in Québec during the 1950s and 1960s” (MA thesis, Concordia University, 1997), 59.
11 Acknowledging the financial burden of public sculpture, for instance, Gladu suggested the redirection of public funds from painting to sculpture commissions and was increasingly critical of grants to individual artists. See for instance comments on Robert Helsmoote’s sculpture for Place Ville Marie; PG, “La plus grande sculpture en aluminium au monde ornera la Place Ville Marie,” LPJ 17 June 1962, 57.
suggests that the *Journal*’s attention to the medium was informed by an interest in promoting nationalism, particularly in Francophone Québec.\(^\text{13}\)

Key elements of the magazine’s coverage of sculpture included the linking of both production and producers to early Québec history. The *Journal* made a specific connection between individual artists, techniques, and Québec identity, for instance foregrounding Robert Roussil’s use of wood and method of carving to convey the impression of the artist as a hard-working *habitant* with strong connections to the history of Québec.\(^\text{14}\) According to the magazine, the artist’s association with his homeland was very strong, the assertion supported by the comment that “his blood was the same blood that flowed in the veins of the resisters of ’37.”\(^\text{15}\) The magazine’s account of his work restoring a historic grange—the “*pur laine*” building and décor described as particularly suited to Roussil—reinforced the impression of the artist as a hardy *patriote* with a history of resistance to authority. Roussil was also associated with a distinct “Canadian school of sculpture” that was identified by Gladu amid effusive praise for Roussil and Armand Vaillancourt, the two Québec participants in the 1964 Mount Royal Sculpture Symposium.\(^\text{16}\) Roussil’s involvement with the peace movement and past difficulties

\(^{13}\) The valorization of Québec artists was supported by other features in the magazine at this time. In early 1963, for instance, the magazine began to include weekly treatment of Québec historic cultural figures—poets, writers, artists—accompanied by portraits and examples of their work. These features parallel similar endeavours undertaken earlier in the Weekly but were restricted to Francophone Canadians of literary and cultural note. The timing suggests a possible connection to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and an interest in promoting French Canada at this time.

\(^{14}\) For example, Gladu described Robert Roussil, recently returned to Canada from France, as “bearded and mocassin wearing” who “resembles the wood he works in and is as solid as an oak.” *PG,* “Roussil, un ‘résistant’ de la sculpture,” *LPJ* 28 July 1963, 38, and “Sculpteur de la liberté,” *LPJ* 7 Oct. 1963, 61.

\(^{15}\) This is a reference to the Lower Canada Rebellion of 1837.

\(^{16}\) *PG,* “Un vrai musée de table,” *LPJ* 9 Jan. 1966, 27. In this context, the term *Canadien* refers to French Canadians in particular.
with censorship were recast in this context as evidence of non-conformity, his extended stay in France overlooked in favor of his connection to Québec.\textsuperscript{17} 

While the magazine registered growing interest in both Québec and European sculpture in the early 1960s, in this way tying contemporary developments in the province to international trends in visual arts, it also promoted the need for a distinct tradition in sculpture.\textsuperscript{18} Specific sources of inspiration for Québec sculptors suggested by the art critic included art work by “Eskimos and Indians,” sources that would provide the same inspiration as that “African artists gave Picasso.”\textsuperscript{19} At the same time, sculptors were discouraged from adopting the “industrial aesthetic” favored by some U.S. sculptors because it represented ideas foreign to “our soil, our climate and our people,” the materials and techniques practiced by early settlers (“blacksmith, carpenter and mason”) offered as alternative models for sculptors.\textsuperscript{20} A claim of continuity with a tradition of sacred sculpture in Québec and ice sculptures created for \textit{carnaval}, described as “a real Nordic means of expression,” was similarly advanced in the magazine and recommended as a source of inspiration.\textsuperscript{21} In essence, articles dealing with sculpture presented the local environment as the only true source for the development of a unique and independent sculptural tradition in the province.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{17} Roussil has lived in France since 1958.
\textsuperscript{18} PG, “Un vrai musée de table,” \textit{LPJ} 9 Jan. 1966, 27. The critic also praised the work of Québec sculptors in an exhibition in Stratford, Ontario, as a demonstration of the avant-garde accomplishments of Québec artists “previously considered conservative if not retardataire.”
\textsuperscript{20} PG, “Nos artistes, pas des copistes!” \textit{LPJ} 3 June 1962, 47.
\textsuperscript{21} PG, “Nos sculpteurs veulent rencontrer le people,” \textit{LPJ} 30 Dec. 1962, 36; “Une sculpture naïve que le peuple arrache au froid,” \textit{LPJ} 29 Jan. 1961, 87. The endorsement of traditional materials and techniques was extended, briefly, to Ontario sculptor Yosef Drenters, described in a review as a “man of the country” and an “Ontario farmer” who worked with found objects and used techniques such as the hand forge to produce both representational and stylized figures and other sculptural objects; PG, “Monde enseveli et un sorcier moderne” \textit{LPJ} 26 May 1963, 53.
\textsuperscript{22} PG, “Montréal accouche de quelques bonnes artistes,” \textit{LPJ} 12 May 1963, 62.
The Journal’s identification of sculpture with the idea of a distinct history and identity in French Canada highlights both the magazine’s growing emphasis on cultural nationalism and how it presented the issues at stake. The dominance of English Canada was a key target in the early 1960s, the magazine publicizing complaints against English-dominated cultural institutions with an increasingly strident tone as the decade advanced. The magazine registered discontent with the management of a historically Anglophone Musée des Beaux-arts in Montréal for instance, and ongoing accusations that the Musée did not adequately recognize the achievements of contemporary Québec artists were central to the magazine’s expectations for the newly founded Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal. 23 Related accusations that the National Gallery in Ottawa also neglected the Francophone community were made in the Journal at this time. 24 Gladu projected outrage that a National Gallery employee claimed responsibility for establishing the reputations of prominent artists such as Borduas, Riopelle and Yves Gaucher, the critic also implying that the Gallery only purchased a work following Borduas’s death “from a foreign source at an inflated price when the artist’s widow was trying to sell his paintings.” 25 Other criticisms, for instance that the National Gallery was only interested in the monetary value of

23 The appointment of a new director at the Musée, David Carter from the Rhode Island School of Design, was presented by Gladu as a sign that the museum remained a “colonial institution” and he lamented the succession of American and British directors at the museum; PG, “Les artistes canadiens cherchent une salle,” LPJ 3 May 1964, 60. Gladu was increasingly critical of the Beaux-arts because “foreigners and dead artists occupy the larger salons while contemporary artists are crammed into small rooms” (PG, “On entasse nos artistes dans une petite salle,” LPJ 1 Dec. 1963, 51). The Contemporain also disappointed the critic, however, who complained that the inaugural exhibition opened with French artist Georges Rouault rather than a Canadian artist; PG, “Le Musée d’art contemporain promet…de beaux discours” LPJ 31 Jan. 1965, 31. Gladu was also critical of what he described as its shoddy treatment of Robert Roussil by the Contemporain; PG, “Roussil: J’en ai assez! Nous partageons son avis,” LPJ 21 Nov. 1965, 39.

24 Gladu described the National Gallery as “the private property of four or five men”; PG, “Qui les a fait connaître? Borduas et Riopelle,” LPJ 29 Aug. 1965, 28.

25 Arguing that Borduas was supported by collectors and friends in Montréal, Gladu overlooked the fact that the National Gallery owned eight works by the artist at the time of his death in 1960 and that the artist was supported and encouraged by Toronto collectors before those in Montréal; Ray Ellenwood, Egregore: A History of the Montréal Automatist Movement (Toronto: Exile Editions, 1992), 228.
paintings, combined with an expression of contempt for what the critic perceived as a focus on members of the “Ontario-based” Group of Seven to the exclusion of artists from Québec, were increasingly prominent in the Journal by the mid-1960s.26 Also critical of the publication Canadian Art, referring to it as “a servile copy of the British version,” by early 1966 Gladu resorted to putting quotation marks around the term “Nationale” in order to imply that the Gallery was not representative of the country as a whole.27

While these accusations were not new, a heightened level of bitterness and anger over what the magazine described as slights to Québec was evident in the Journal as the decade advanced. The lack of French-speaking employees at the National Gallery, federal spending on military defense rather than on art, and the reporting structure of both the National Gallery and the Canada Council were among criticisms of federal programs leveled by the Journal.28 These complaints were bolstered in the magazine by the perceived contrast offered by the strength and dynamism of the visual arts sector in the province of Québec. Other articles, written by other journalists, projected a more positive image of efforts to include Québec in federal initiatives, for instance publicizing new programs at the National Gallery such as increased travelling exhibitions and the hiring of a Francophone as the gallery’s representative in Eastern Canada and Québec.29 These articles did little to assuage the tone of outrage projected in the visual arts column but exposed the level of discontent and conflict in federal-provincial relations at the time.

The sense of isolation and separation from the federal system and the rest of Canada that was projected in the magazine lent additional support to the growing prominence of cultural

nationalism at the provincial level. The Journal often withheld specific information about efforts by the federal government to encourage visual arts. For instance, the publication attributed financial support for artists to simply “the government” and provided no indication as to whether travel grants and bursaries came from the federal, provincial or municipal government, thereby giving the impression that only the Québec government supported visual arts. In addition, the magazine published evidence of what it presented as slights and indications of negative attitudes to Québec on the part of other Canadians. In one example, Gladu reported that, based on his reading of an article published in Toronto’s Mayfair magazine, Montréal’s Dominion Gallery owner Max Stern claimed to be the only art dealer in the country. Positioned as Montréal against Toronto (and French against English Canada), the critic also suggested that the rest of Canada considered French Canadians “barbarians” because they only bought works of art according to personal taste and not for investment. Accusations that English Canada failed to recognize the “artistic revolution begun by Pelland and Borduas” supported a sense of a growing divergence between the two cultures in the magazine, a divergence that centered on attitudes to visual arts.

The projection of deep divisions between the two cultures in Canada was reinforced by the magazine’s selective presentation of developments in visual arts in the rest of Canada. While

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30 A similar practice has been identified by Louise Moreau (1997, 46) in her study of the history of the art magazine Vie Des Arts. Although the Canada Council began funding the magazine in 1957, public funding from the Québec Ministry of Culture and the Canada Council was not acknowledged until a decade later, in 1967.
31 The author and article were not given, but it was likely Robert Fulford’s “How Fake Paintings Come to Canada: A Montreal Dealer’s Story,” Mayfair, Jan. 1957, 13-17.
32 PG, “Les Canadiens sont des barbares,” LPJ 20 Jan. 1957, 59. If Fulford’s article was the source of Gladu’s outrage, his account of the article was misleading because Fulford wrote that the Dominion Gallery was the “only major Canadian gallery dealing, in an important way, in both old masters and contemporary Canadian art.” Gladu presented the failure to acknowledge the cultural dynamism and sophistication of Québec as highly insulting.
33 PG, “La province de Québec a fini de passer pour ‘habitable,’” LPJ 26 Apr. 1959, 113.
continuing, for the most part, to ignore artists working outside of Québec, particularly those working in abstraction, the magazine adopted a mocking tone in rare accounts of professional artists from other parts of Canada. A dismissive description of “photographic painting,” for instance, accompanied reproduction of Family and Rainstorm (1955) by Alex Colville. The representational painting was untitled and reproduced in the magazine upside down. “If you are one of the jokers who turn around an abstract painting to find the best side,” the caption suggested, “try it with a painting such as this one.” A similar invitation was advanced by the Journal with respect to an abstract painting, by “Hodson, de Toronto,” the only information provided by the art critic was that the artist was “not a Sunday painter and is known across Canada.” (The painting was not identified, but the artist was clearly Thomas Hodgson of Painters Eleven.) The flippant approach adopted by the Journal to convey information about these Anglophone artists and their work, combined with the cursory acknowledgement of activity

34 While local artists dominated commercial galleries in the city, several dealers included non-Québec artists in solo and group exhibitions, including the Dominion Gallery, Galerie Agnes Lefort and the George Waddington Gallery. The Musée also featured non-Québec artists in many group and solo exhibitions; see Hélène Sicotte, “Un état de la diffusion des arts visuels a Montréal,” Journal of Canadian Art History vol. 16, 1 and 2 (1994), 64-95; 55-75.
35 PG, “M. Steegman et la banalité des certains non figuratifs,” LPJ 31 Aug. 1958, 66. At the time the article appeared, the painting was in the collection of the National Gallery, purchased in 1957. Colville was described as “a painter from the maritimes.”
37 Notice of the participation of Canadian artists in the 1958 Brussels World Fair was limited to a list of Québec artists working in the applied arts, selected for the Canadian pavilion; PG, “Nos artistes voyagent,” LPJ 17 Nov. 1957, 86, and “38,000 visiteurs ont vu ‘l’expo du centenaire,’” LPJ 14 Feb. 1960, 91. In addition, Group of Seven members Arthur Lismer and A.Y. Jackson were mentioned in the Journal solely in connection with their activities in Montréal, for instance Lismer’s long time association with teaching at the Musée and Jackson’s residence in the Montréal neighborhood of St.-Henri; PG, “Jackson: un peintre qui a conquis le monde,” LPJ 21 Feb. 1960, 92, and “Arthur Lismer, ami des jeunes,” LPJ 9 June 1963, 49. The magazine also provided limited information concerning Harold Town, omitting to mention the artist’s work in abstraction or membership in Painters Eleven in an exhibition review that included a representational portrait of Canadian actress Kate Reid, rather than an example of Town’s work in abstraction; PG, “Quand l’art rend songeur,” LPJ 4 Oct. 1964, 95.
outside Québec, helped reinforce a sense of indifference toward English Canada and supported the magazine’s claim of superiority for Québec artists.

These characteristics of the content of the Journal indicate ways that it used visual arts coverage to cultivate attitudes toward developments, not only in Québec but also in the rest of Canada. Its coverage posed a challenge to the parallel project underway in English Canada in the lead-up to Centennial year, a project promoting cultural nationalism in the country as a whole. The cancellation of the arts column and reorientation toward lowbrow and entertainment features in 1967 effectively ended the magazine’s use of visual arts in this way. As the decade ended, new sites for the promotion of cultural nationalism emerged, but the magazine’s sustained attention to the subject over the course of two decades helped foster awareness of the centrality of visual arts within Francophone Québec, awareness strikingly different from that projected in the Weekly.

Looking Outward

The Journal’s portrayal of a strong and innovative visual arts sector in Québec was supported by the information it published regarding both external developments and reception to art work by Québec artists. The magazine publicized what it described as growing acclaim for Québec artists in the international arena in the late 1950s and used this to augment a sense of pride in local artists. The art centres in Paris and New York were the main focus of efforts to promote awareness of the stature of Québec artists in this era of rising Québec nationalism, and mocking disdain, tinged with bewilderment, remained the principal tone in descriptions of European artists and their art work. In this way, the magazine continued to frame information about developments in other countries, particularly the progress of abstraction and modernism in the United States.
Effectively obscuring evidence of rising influence, the magazine showcased little-known artists while neglecting major artists and developments in the field of abstract expressionism.

The magazine’s support for cultural nationalism in Québec was constructed around the celebration of a dynamic and expanding visual arts sector in the province and what the magazine presented as the unique achievements of Québec artists, initially in abstraction. In the early years of the decade, the magazine reinforced awareness of the strength of visual arts in Québec by providing limited information concerning progress elsewhere, not only in the rest of Canada but also in the United States and Europe. An important component of this project was the column devoted to visual arts, introduced in the magazine in 1957, co-authored by Paul Gladu and American author Meyer Levin. The column, “Vivez avec art,” was a full-page feature that included large reproductions of paintings and sculptures, instructions on how to look at art and brief discussion of the significance of the work. Over the two years that the column was published in the Journal, the authors provided information about different styles, modern and contemporary debates, and international trends in visual arts.

The selection of artists and art movements covered in “Vivez avec art” projected an international perspective, but this perspective was a highly selective reading of contemporary trends in visual arts. Most of the artists presented in the column were either American-born or naturalized U.S. citizens born in Europe. A few artists from other countries, primarily European, were also included but, apart from an introductory article that provided a survey of international trends, the artists featured in the column worked almost exclusively in a figurative mode. Further, although several modern masters were included, such as Piet Mondrian, Wasily Kandinsky, Stuart Davis and Robert Smithson, the majority of the artists are not well-known.

38 Meyer Levin (1905-1981) was a U.S. journalist, novelist and playwright.
today. Conspicuously absent from the list of artists showcased in the feature were U.S. abstract expressionists. In effect, both the content and focus of the column worked to deflect attention from the growing prominence of the New York school.

This observation is supported by the substance of other articles published in the magazine in the late 1950s. In a review of the exhibition “Contemporary American Painters” held at the Musée in early 1958, for instance, Gladu described the artists as “false authorities.” In the review, he was highly critical of the influence of U.S. artists on contemporary Québec practitioners and argued that abstract expressionism represented not the *avant-garde* but a “tired genre and an unhealthy inspiration.” The art critic also attacked local art dealers, collectors and critics for what he described as their role in promoting art work by American artists.

The desire to shape public perceptions and influence attitudes toward abstract expressionism is evident in the extent and scope of the “*Vivez avec art*” column. At the same time, the authors of the column were often highly critical of U.S. art in general. An exhibition of historical painting in Tel Aviv, for instance, was described as “timid” and “provincial,” reinforcing negative perceptions of art produced in the U.S. The pair also suggested that the exhibition, circulated by the United States Information Service, should raise questions about similar projects initiated by the National Gallery in Canada. What the magazine described as limited interest shown by European galleries in collecting historical American art was presented

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39 PG, “Les Américains ont une regrettable influence chez nous,” *LPJ* 12 Jan. 1958, 59. The exhibition was curated by students at the Université de Montréal and McGill University. Gladu accused the students of being misled by their advisors and duped by well-placed authorities in the U.S. art world.

40 In a demonstration of how visual arts intersected with the political sphere, this disdain extended to criticism of the actions of the U.S. government. Similar to the Weekly, editorials in the magazine were critical of what the magazine identified as growing anti-Americanism in the late 1950s, while publicizing negative aspects of life in the United States. See for instance *LPJ* 26 Jan. 1958, 50, and 2 Feb. 1958, 52.

41 VAA [*Vivez avec art*], “Qui veut de la peinture Américaine?” *LPJ* 30 Nov. 1958, 47.
as an indication of the weakness of U.S. painting overall, the authors also predicting the imminent
decline of interest in abstraction in the United States.

The selective presentation of information concerning the interests of contemporary U.S.
artists was enhanced by the type of information provided in the column. Gladu and Levin, for
instance, employed notions of personal integrity to support their descriptions of art works,
presented this production as indication of both individual creativity and personal expression, and
published affirmative and positive statements about the little-known artists they featured. The
content of the columns suggested a contemporary focus on, and links to then-current
preoccupations in the visual arts sector in the West, but applied to representational paintings
produced by largely unknown artists. Sidestepping difficult or controversial subject matter, the
authors emphasized both the humanity and universality of human suffering and artists as
individual creative genii.

In addition to providing an alternative perspective regarding the ascendancy of abstract
expressionism and the overall strength of the U.S. art world, the Journal’s coverage of abstraction
was increasingly critical in the early 1960s. At this time, Gladu often suggested that abstraction
was merely a fad at best, and at worst a deliberate strategy to gain notoriety and financial
success. The critic frequently claimed that “anyone can paint like Pollock in the U.S. and

42 VAA, “Tout artiste doit-il être malade pour produire des œuvres qui attirent l’attention?” LPJ 15 June
1958, 39. Politically and racially-charged topics were also avoided, for instance Chinese-American painter
James Leong’s mural project in a San Francisco housing project was described by the authors as merely
“recounting the history of Chinese immigration in America.” The authors focused on the formal aspects
rather than the content of the mural or the political upheavals within the Chinese-American community at
the time the art work was produced. According to the Oakland Tribune, 21 May 2006, the mural was
controversial for its depiction of aspects of Chinese immigrant life in America and was rejected by the
Chinese-American business association, supporters of Chiang Kai-Shek, who commissioned it. See
43 Gladu was critical of Borduas and Riopelle, for instance, and increasing prices for their work; PG
“L’intéressant expo au ‘Square des arts,’” LPJ 27 July 1958, 69. See also PG, “Le peintre René Durocher,
un peintre qui échappe à la mode,” LPJ 12 Apr. 1964, 62, and “Certains sculpteurs font oublier certain
Borduas in Canada,” and either overlooked the progress of abstraction elsewhere in Canada or
denigrated this production as evidence of subservience to U.S. artists. Abstractions by
Canadian artists Ronald Bloore and Kazuo Nakamura in the Fourth Biennial Exhibition of
Canadian Art in 1961, for instance, were dismissed by Gladu as “clever” art works that “echoed
the Museum of Modern Art” in New York. According to the critic, the greatest sin committed
by many of the artists in the exhibition was that “they copy from the U.S.”

The writing on abstraction published in the magazine is notable for inconsistencies in
treatment rather than comprehensive condemnation of the style of painting. This disparity
suggests that criticism was informed by other concerns, such as an interest in establishing the idea
of a distinct, modern tradition in painting descending directly from France to Québec through
Alfred Pellan and, to a lesser extent Borduas, with no diversion to the New York school of
abstract expressionism. The growing prominence of U.S. artists working in abstraction in the
late 1950s, perhaps increasingly difficult to ignore, posed a challenge to the magazine’s claim that
art work by Québec painters was unique and highly original. The alleged influence of U.S.
painting on a new generation of artists was a particular concern, the dangers of “copying from the

Peinture” at the École des beaux-arts was similarly negative: “many seem to have the idea that anything
abstract is good” with the result that “the exhibition is awash in the banal” (PG, “Une pitoyable ‘fricasse,’”
LPJ 12 Mar. 1961, 98). While praising Guido Molinari and Claude Tousignant’s exhibition at the Beaux-
arts as “a bit of fresh water,” Gladu wrote “today the slightest blob of paint sends ‘snobs’ to their knees”
46 According to Gladu, Borduas came under the influence of the U.S. artists and his art work was
diminished because it became fashionable; PG, “Qui est Borduas?” LPJ 28 Jan. 1962, 55.
47 The magazine suggested an equivalent stature for U.S. and Québec artists working in abstraction; see
According to the journalist, participating Canadian artists compared favourably with “American
automatistes” Jackson Pollock, Sam Francis and Franz Kline as “part of the grand family of
expressionism.”
U.S.” explicitly set out in a review of an exhibition of painting from the Whitney Museum in New York, installed at the Musée in Montréal. According to Gladu, the strength of the art work in the exhibition meant that “our painting appears timid in contrast. We are doing abstraction like fishing.” Gladu also accused collectors and dealers of directing acclaim for abstraction and manipulating the art market. Other trends, for instance pop art and op art, were greeted with similar derision in the magazine, the influence of the U.S. on art production around the world prompting accusations of a “loss of assertiveness and a shocking lack of imagination.” These accusations smacked of cultural nationalism because the critic linked the influence of U.S. artists to a loss of Québec autonomy, drawing on the history of post-war painting in Québec to establish a point of contrast.

The selective presentation of contemporary trends in visual arts in the U.S. was accompanied by a parallel disdain and dismissal of European artists in the magazine. Similar to the magazine’s practice in the previous decade, the Journal employed mocking humor and focused on the behavior and appearance of European artists to reinforce negative perceptions of them. And, once again, Salvador Dali was a prominent target in this campaign. Photographs of the artist were featured regularly in the Journal and writers unfailingly commented on his

48 The profile of Robert Smithson may have been prompted by a desire to counter the popularity of abstraction among art students. Smithson was a family friend and fellow student at the Art Students’ League in New York with Levin’s son Jonathon in the late 1950s. The example of his work included in the piece was a representational drawing.
51 PG, “La mode du jour nous fait oublier la voix du cœur,” LPJ 18 Apr. 1965, 39. Gladu’s initial condemnation of op art was redirected the following month by substituting the tradition of impressionism and the “followers of Seurat and Signac” as the originators of investigation into “optical effects” and op art; PG, “Il passe tant de choses sur la palette des peintres!” LPJ 20 June 1965, 31. According to Gladu, French artist Robert Delaunay discovered op-art “years before the Americans.”
purported use of publicity to gain notoriety. French artist Georges Mathieu was similarly portrayed as eccentric and publicity-seeking in a series of unattributed photographs depicting the artist engaged in what the magazine termed “combat” with a canvas. Published photographs documented the artist’s “projections” as he attacked an upright canvas by flinging paint in wild gestures (fig. 18). The accompanying text claimed that Mathieu was a wealthy, celebrity painter whose work was popular in the United States. Subsequent photographs of Mathieu rendered the

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Figure 18: “Le peintre français MATHIEU a ceci de singulier, qu’il peint par “projections”. Projections de couleur, s’entends. On le voit ici en plein action, alors qu’il commence un de ses “chefs d’œuvres.”

connection to Dali more explicit because the artist was depicted with a prominent Dali-like moustache under the headline, “Is he crazy?”

54 Claire Hugon, “Il peinte avec ses genoux, son nez et sa moustache,” LPJ 31 July 1960, 82.
Despite the mocking and dismissive tone used in these accounts, however, they projected important ideas concerning European artists and functioned as support for the magazine’s claim that Québec artists were valuable members of the local community. Artists from France were a significant target, the Journal’s emphasis on their purported eccentric behavior providing a compelling contrast to its portrayal of Québec artists as dedicated, hard-working and conscientious. In addition, information included in the Journal about different approaches to abstraction helped obscure both the origins of the style of painting and evidence of influence among practitioners. Mathieu’s work was described as representative of “action painting” for instance, a term more typically used to describe abstract expressionists such as Jackson Pollock, and Gladu attributed the development of the technique of “dripping,” also closely associated with Pollock, to the artistic “accident” endorsed by Borduas.  These claims supported the magazine’s promotion of the importance of Québec painters working in abstraction while deflecting attention from U.S. artists and artistic precedents.

The magazine used additional strategies to downplay external developments in visual arts, portraying other foreign artists as frivolous and inconsequential and linking their art production to lowbrow entertainment. French artist Jean Tinguely’s “painting machine,” for instance, was described in the magazine as producing works on demand that were “remarkably similar” to abstract paintings on sale in a nearby Parisian gallery. The magazine also suggested that the “painting machine” was an example of the introduction of movement into art and, in this, was comparable to Alexander Calder’s “mobiles” and Mathieu’s “action painting.” The superficiality of the associations made by the Journal, and the suggestion that the “painting

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56 VAA, “Voici maintenant la machine…à peindre!” LPJ 28 Feb. 1960, 4 (2). The article included mocking description of Tinguely’s American patron, heir to the Fuller Brush fortune, and a claim that the art work was a great hit at dinner parties.
machine” would be welcomed at Coney Island and Belmont Park racetrack, served to trivialize experimental art work and other investigations undertaken by contemporary artists. In effect, the way the magazine presented these developments conveyed an impression that the international art world was full of trickery and deceit, a characterization extended to U.S. painting in the early 1960s. Examples of pop art, for instance, were described as “comics” containing “photographic clichés and other realist elements.” Once again, the magazine’s use of humor and sarcasm in presenting this information diverted attention from the growing strength and authority of the U.S. art world and provided little or no analysis of intellectual investigations undertaken at the time.

Despite the evident disregard and mockery directed at French artists, the cultural validation of the former colonial centre was an important consideration in the Journal. Participation by Québec artists in exhibitions in Paris and New York was used to substantiate claims of cultural maturity and the magazine also publicized the activities of the Québec cultural delegation to France, initially celebrating its efforts to promote local artists. However, subsequent accusations of colonialism—that the projects undertaken by the delegation displayed “eagerness to accept the opinions of foreigners”—suggest disagreement over the direction of the cultural initiative. Charges that the delegation showcased Québec artists living in Europe, rather

59 Gladu described much of the work as “les déchets” and noted that one gallery was even offering “painted or sculpted food!” No photographs of the works were included; instead, a photograph of collector Peter Dobush contemplating Arthur Lismer’s Sous bois accompanied the article. An earlier description of the exhibition “Pop Art” at the Museum of Modern Art contained a brief account of the latest American school of art and a description of immense shoes and hamburgers (“the American national dish”) by Claus Ogdenburg (sic); “Steaks en plâtre, femmes en planche,” LPJ 1 Sep. 1963, 41.
60 PG, “Nos artistes voyagent,” LPJ 17 Nov. 1957, 86.
than artists who had remained in Canada, were key elements of the Journal’s criticisms. In effect, the magazine supported the need for “publicity” to raise international awareness of achievements by Québec artists, but registered concern that the selection of artists was influenced by dealers and collectors. As an alternative, the magazine suggested that the delegation should have featured an earlier generation of artists, such as Ozias Leduc, Marc-Aurèle Fortin, John Lyman and Alfred Pelland, rather than artists who “copy trends from Paris and New York.”

The suggestion that Québec’s interests would be better served by showcasing artists from a previous generation, most of whom it had consistently linked to a distinct Québec identity, highlights the magazine’s interest in domestic issues and the local environment as the decade ended. External developments in visual arts and support for the promotion of Québec artists abroad received less attention at this time, the magazine instead emphasizing a need to strengthen awareness of artists and art production within Canada. In the lead-up to Centennial, this preoccupation became more pronounced, the magazine promoting the opportunity presented by Expo ’67 even as it registered uncertainty about how local artists would measure up against masterpieces of Western art brought to Montréal for the World’s Fair. The cancellation of the arts column brought a decisive end to the magazine’s promotion of visual arts as an important element of cultural nationalism, its displacement by entertainment-oriented features suggesting new priorities and preoccupations as the decade ended.

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61 PG, “Nous ne sommes plus des coloniaux,” LPJ 1 Apr. 1962, 71. Jean-Paul Riopelle was consistently attacked by Gladu, not only because he lived abroad but also for copying American artists.
**Visual Arts and Economic Development**

Support for visual arts as a component of economic development, within what the magazine portrayed as an expanding visual arts sector, was increasingly prominent in the *Journal* from the late 1950s. In addition to celebrating Québec artists and the growing infrastructure of commercial galleries and art dealers in the province, the magazine endorsed both corporate and government patronage in visual arts. Its advocacy of both public art projects and an alliance between art and architecture, in the context of urban redevelopment then underway in Montréal, indicates recognition of the importance of commercial applications for visual arts and an understanding of how the sector might support capitalist development. At the same time, contradictions between the valorization of Québec artists and the commercial trade in works of art, increasingly prominent in discussions of rising values for paintings by Québec artists, emerged as areas of conflict in visual arts coverage. Enthusiasm for corporate patronage also dwindled as the decade advanced, seemingly prompted by concern for a growing North American corporate presence in the province of Québec. Amid preparations for Expo ’67, the magazine’s interest in the commercial potential of visual arts was redirected to support of the sector as a component of cultural tourism.

Couched within a language of cultural nationalism and obscured by a valorization of individual artists and distinct Québec identity, commercial interests dominated the magazine’s attention to visual arts across the decade. This interest was evident in the magazine’s endorsement of projects involving works of art commissioned by companies such as Molson’s, Monsanto, British American Oil and Imperial Oil, among others. The *Journal* actively promoted an alliance between visual art and architecture and, in the late 1950s, endorsed projects that engaged the work of Québec sculptors, muralists and artisans. A mural created by York Wilson,
for instance, a commission for the headquarters of Imperial Oil in Toronto, was presented as an example of how corporations might support individual artists. These types of projects, initiated by business and corporate interests, were endorsed by the magazine as a means of encouraging visual arts. By implication, however, this publicity also sanctioned the growing presence of corporate interests in Québec in the late 1950s by projecting the idea that businesses were contributing, in what was presented as a positive way, to the cultural heritage of the province.

The expanding field of Canadian architecture in the late 1950s, combined with the redevelopment underway in Montréal, resulted in new opportunities for visual artists, and their participation in these projects was well publicized in the magazine. In fact, the art critic promoted collaborations with artists and artisans as “good for business.” Cultural nationalism, however, remained a significant part of the magazine’s endorsement of these developments. Unlike the Star Weekly, for instance, Gladu described the decision to employ Finnish architect Viljo Revell for the Toronto City Hall as “a blow to Canadian architects” rather than an indication of internationalism and cultural sophistication in Canada. In addition, in an otherwise positive review of Belgian artist Robert Helsmoortel’s sculpture for Place Ville Marie in Montréal, Gladu lamented both what he described as the absence of Canadian sculptors of stature and ability and the dearth of large-scale public commissions in Canada. These complaints, combined with growing attention to Québec sculptors in the magazine in the late 1950s and early 60s, reinforced the magazine’s promotion of cultural nationalism and, while celebrating the need for increased commissions and collaborations, the central focus remained on Québec artists and their purported

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64 PG, “‘57 aura été une année remarquable pour nos artistes et nos artisans,” LPJ 22 Dec. 1957, 75.
potential to “enliven increasingly banal modern architecture.” Perhaps to reinforce the argument by providing examples from other countries, international artists and similar projects were featured in articles and photographs in the magazine.

Demonstrating the close relationship endorsed by the Journal between visual arts and economic development, the magazine presented collaboration between artist and architect in public art commissions as a model for other commercial ventures. Gladu suggested that a variety of industries could benefit from employing artists. The argument, that artists could make what the magazine presented as positive contributions to design and industrial and commercial initiatives, was supported by publicity for similar projects undertaken by international artists—stained glass and tapestries produced by Marc Chagall, interior church decoration by Jean Cocteau and a building façade by Fernand Léger. It was also the central focus of an article concerning an exhibition in New York that featured objects such as doorknobs, pottery and fabric designed by Picasso, Chagall, Matisse and Mondrian. The magazine endorsed the design initiative as an example for Canadian manufacturers and included a quotation from Léger in which he encouraged artists to “use their talent and creativity to improve objects for everyday use.”

72 PG, “Les artistes inspirés par la papier-tenture,” LPJ 13 July 1958, 31. A similar message was perhaps intended by an unusually positive description of Salvador Dali, accompanied by a reproduction of one of the paintings from a trilogy used in an advertising campaign for a new perfume, promoting the commercial potential suggested by an alliance between fine art and advertising. Gladu described the artist as a
commercial development, however, was limited to the promotion of Québec artists and designers.\textsuperscript{73}

A related component of the magazine’s focus on economic development was its growing emphasis in its visual arts coverage on technology, innovation and design. A photo-story on artists Jean-Paul Mousseau and François Soucy, for instance, portrayed the pair as participants in technological development and industrial innovation in the province.\textsuperscript{74} The artists were featured in photographs working with fiberglass and resin to produce what they called “light objects,” the new materials and techniques suggesting they were contributing their talents to create consumer objects of both innovative design and contemporary appeal. This example placed the artists at the heart of the industrially-based modernization then underway in Québec, and a similar construction was apparent in a subsequent article on Mousseau’s work for the light mural commissioned by Hydro-Québec.\textsuperscript{75} In this instance, the art critic described Mousseau as an “adventurer” and the mural as “a model of innovation and experimentation.” The artist’s use of modern materials—resin, plastic and electronics—supported the portrayal of contemporary artists as exemplars of innovation and experimentation, accompanying photographs suggesting an industrial setting rather than an artist’s studio.

\textsuperscript{73} In an article on the new president of the Association of Canadian Industrial Designers, for instance, Gladu deplored the fact that, in his view, Canadians looked to the United States for improvements in products and design and he attributed this to an “inferiority complex.” Gladu was also critical because “French-Canadian culture is less inclined toward industry and bright young men are directed into medicine, law, religion and politics” and he characterized this as a form of suicide “in a continent where industry is so important” (PG, “Un homme qui ne crée pas d’objets au hasard,” \textit{LPJ} 10 Aug. 1958, 74).


The integration of economic interests with visual arts was also apparent in the publicity the magazine devoted to commercial galleries, art dealers and artisanal production in Montréal and Québec. Open venues such as the annual outdoor exhibition and sale in Dominion Square in Montréal were promoted by the magazine as further indication of the dynamism of the visual arts sector, the critic invariably urging “ordinary folk” to both attend and make purchases.\textsuperscript{76} The magazine publicized sales of artisanal and craft objects with similar enthusiasm; the annual Christmas sales sponsored by l’Office provincial de l’artisanat et de la petite industrie, for instance, received extensive coverage each year.\textsuperscript{77} In addition, exhibition reviews and other articles regularly included endorsement of economic activity, the coverage reinforcing a sense of a close and personal relationship between the art critic and dealers. While such coverage portrayed selected dealers as professional and reliable, Gladu was at times highly critical of “unscrupulous dealers who manipulate the market” and what he termed the “commercial trade in paintings.”\textsuperscript{78} Although such criticism suggested tension between the visual arts sector and the art market, specific dealers were never identified. As such, Gladu’s comments served as cautionary criticism while the atmosphere of celebration around commercial transactions in the art world remained intact.

The Journal’s support for visual arts as a component of the economy is consistent with the values and goals of liberalism, an outlook that remained separate from anti-communist


\textsuperscript{78} For instance, in his remarks celebrating the homage to the late Paul-Émile Borduas in the French art journal \textit{Aujourd’hui}, Gladu noted how ironic it was to read \textit{Refus global} because several of the participating artists, including the father of automatism, attacked materialism in 1948 and were now “the darlings of snobs and collectors.” PG, “Hommage à Borduas peintre maudit,” \textit{LPJ} 31 July 1960, 80. One artist of whom Gladu was consistently critical was Riopelle, whom he describes as a “Parisian (born in Canada) who had achieved financial success “on the American plan””; PG, “Jean-Paul Riopelle, ou ce que voit l’Oiseau du feu.” \textit{LPJ} 24 Feb. 1962, 47. Gladu was also dismissive of those who “buy and sell like the stock exchange”; PG, “Le musée des beaux-arts, entreprise désintéressée;” \textit{LPJ} 31 Dec. 1961, 39.
perspectives across the decade. In time, however, preoccupation with encouraging economic expansion tempered the magazine’s long-standing anti-communist stance, a shift that was apparent in the magazine’s response to the opening up of diplomatic and economic relations between Canada and Russia in the late 1950s. The rapprochement between communism and capitalism, attributed by some as an acknowledgement of Soviet technological achievement and fear of the bomb, was supported by the Journal’s tentative endorsement of visual arts in Russia. Initially critical of the “dull academism” of what was described as a lack of individualism in works of art produced to serve the Soviet state, the magazine exhibited a new attitude to this production in the early 1960s. The extent of institutional support for young artists in Russia was presented as a positive model and used as a point of comparison to highlight a purported lack of similar support for artists in Canada. Gladu also praised other aspects of Soviet art at this time, for instance alleging that it developed from a long tradition and that Russian artists were required to “participate in the national cause, to comment on history and to express something,” the critic’s linking of visual arts and nationalism serving as justification for intrusions by the state in directing art production.

The magazine’s increased publicity for sculpture in the early 1960s, particularly sculpture in public spaces, was also shaped by economic interests. In the early years of the decade, the Journal promoted public sculpture as an opportunity for artists to contribute to development and

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79 The magazine included evidence that the Catholic Church endorsed the new relationship; “Pour le bien des catholiques, coexistons avec le communisme,” LPJ 6 Dec. 1959, 40.
80 Sales of Canadian wheat in significant volumes to both China and Russia, beginning in 1961 helped to facilitate a new openness. See Robert Bothwell, Alliance and Illusion: Canada and the World, 1945-1984 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 155.
82 The critic also argued that “just as the work accepted by the Vatican must participate in one way or another with the Church and the collection of the British Royal Family must uphold the monarchy, Russian art is addressed to the people rather than connoisseurs; PG, “Des peintures qui exaltent la vie du peuple!” LPJ 20 Mar. 1960, 92.
modernization in metropolitan centres by creating objects that would enhance the physical environment in the city.83 This perspective was subsequently augmented by publicity for exhibitions and private sales of sculpture, the critic encouraging Francophone Canadians to support sculpture and publicizing the fact that purchasing these art works was a deductible income tax expense.84 By the mid-1960s, however, large-scale public sculpture was increasingly promoted as a component of tourism, even as the work of Québec sculptors was suggested as a possible counter to the growing uniformity of North American cities. A preoccupation with encouraging tourism, for instance, was an element of the magazine’s publicity for the 1964 Mount-Royal Sculpture Symposium organized by Robert Roussil.85 The origins of the International Sculpture Symposium movement as a means of promoting dialogue between nations during the Cold War were not mentioned, the magazine instead publishing a photograph of Roussil with Mayor Jean Drapeau (fig. 19). In this, the Journal presented the symposium as an opportunity to attract tourists to the city, both the event and artist evidently endorsed by the mayor on behalf of business interests. The purported relationship between an event such as a sculpture symposium and tourism was specifically advanced in an article advocating a similar project in Québec City with the hope that it might produce “our own tower of Pisa.”86

85 “Sculptures au parc Mont-Royal,” *LPJ* 23 Aug. 1964, 64.
Associations between visual arts and commercial activity intensified significantly in *Journal* in the final years of the decade. Perhaps a reflection of new ownership and changes underway both in the magazine itself and in the communication industry in Québec in the mid-
1960s, the *Journal* was increasingly dominated by entertainment news. A photo-story featuring Québec actor Margot Campbell on a visit to the Musée d’art contemporain indicates the place of visual arts within the new focus on entertainment. The actor was photographed posing playfully among contemporary paintings and sculptures, the inclusion of a television actor and Québec media personality suggesting an attempt to promote intersections between visual arts, commercial interests and the entertainment industry at this time (fig. 20).

Evidence of a redirection toward visual arts as entertainment, underpinned by attention to the economic potential of the sector, was prominent in other ways as the decade ended. This

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87 While they remained a mainstay until 1967, exhibition reviews were moved to a separate entertainment section following the 1964 sale of the magazine to Jean-Louis Lévesque and Corporation des valeurs Trans-Canada.
89 A star of theatre, television, radio and film, the actor appeared in *la Famille Plouffes* followed by numerous popular television and radio programs in Québec.
trend was particularly apparent in coverage of Expo ’67, the magazine including photographs of long line-ups of visitors eager to view masterpieces of international art on display and promoting the event as an opportunity to view art works by what it described as a pantheon of Old Masters, including several from Québec. In effect, the magazine publicized the exhibitions as one of the unique opportunities offered by Expo, appearing to recognize and endorse an imminent phenomenon of “blockbuster” art exhibitions and cultural tourism.

The shift to lowbrow and entertainment features ended the magazine’s longstanding promotion of visual arts as a key component of Québec society. Due to the extent of publicity for these issues over many years, awareness of the relationship between visual arts and economic development was perhaps well established at this point, even as new priorities and interests engaged the owners of the Journal. By publicizing purported contributions made by artists to economic development, the magazine promoted both cultural and economic nationalism, a project supported by the magazine’s focus on a specific Francophone identity for visual artists. In turn, this focus helped to construct ideas of a distinct national identity in Francophone Québec.

**The Identity of the Artist: Race, Place and Gender**

While otherwise neglectful and critical of developments elsewhere in Canada, the magazine publicized accomplishments by Québec artists and, across the decade, advanced a claim that the visual arts sector was strong and vibrant. By the early 1960s, descriptions of artists in the Journal increasingly drew on notions of race and national identity rooted in the Québec patrimoine. This was a central characteristic of the magazine’s attention to male sculptors, the physical attributes of strength, hardiness and lack of pretention used to promote a specific vision of the Québec

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artist. While this identity drew on what was presented as the unique history of the province, the magazine projected a parallel construction of artists as agents of industrial innovation and modernization. These characteristics, and assertions that artists were making important contributions to both the economy and the larger community, were used as endorsement for artists. The stature and importance of the male artist in Québec was also defined against a corresponding dismissal of European artists and dwindling attention to women artists as the decade advanced. These elements suggest ways the magazine used visual arts to strengthen awareness of a distinct national identity in Francophone Québec, a project ended by the elimination of the arts column in 1967.

An emphasis on particular characteristics associated with the history, geography, climate and people of Francophone Québec was evident in visual arts coverage in the late 1950s, declining post-war sensitivity with respect to race-based identity in the Journal paralleling similar changes in the Weekly at this time. Artist Denys Matte, for instance, was described as “displaying the sentiments of the French-Canadian race,” and these types of characterizations were increasingly prominent in exhibition reviews and other articles in the magazine.91 In addition, the Journal made frequent reference to the climate and geography of the province at this time, finding an alleged source for Matte’s art work in the “winter, snow and the pure soil of Québec,” noting the persistence of “snow and vigor” in art work by Marcelle Ferron, and identifying Charles Daudelin as a “Nordic type.”92 Notice of these characteristics was a prominent feature in visual arts coverage, the magazine presenting them as positive endorsement of the artists and their

92 PG, “Marcelle Ferron et ‘La relève,’” LPJ 21 Feb. 1960, 94; PG, “Dans un studio de Paris, Jérôme découvre la…nature Canadienne,” LPJ 24 May 1959, 112. In these examples, both artists had been living in Europe, the art critic asserting that patriotic attachment to Canada intensified while abroad. See also PG, “Charles Daudelin, “Le peintre du rêve et de la beauté pure,” LPJ 4 May 1958, 81.
work. At the same time, these elements were juxtaposed against what the magazine described, in increasingly negative terms, as the international style of non-figurative painting.

Associations with the land, climate and history of Québec were particularly prominent in the magazine’s descriptions of male sculptors. An important component of this construction was an emphasis on masculinity tied to early settler history in the province. Drawing on notions of the hard-working *habitant*, for instance, a photo essay concerning Daudelin featured the artist at his farm in rural Québec with goats and farm implements. The sculptor and painter was presented as living an unpretentious country life and the magazine portrayed a similar rustic existence, albeit in the city of Montréal, in an article about two artists living in a garage in Westmount. Photographs of the pair, a sculptor and a blacksmith, depicted the young men as resourceful and self-sufficient, making do in their home-studio without running water or heat.

Additional attributes that the magazine associated with sculptors at this time included an easy acceptance of physical labor and an independent spirit. Descriptions including these types of attributes augmented its focus on traditional materials and techniques used in sculpture and reinforced the connection made by the magazine between sculptors and Québec history.

Alongside the links to settler culture ran a complementary ideal of the male sculptor as someone actively engaged with industrial and technologically-based innovation, both of these deployed by the *Journal* to forge connections to male, Francophone, working-class identity. Photographs of sculptor Armand Vaillancourt, for instance, suggested a solitary romantic in pursuit of cast-off materials among the boat hulls and abandoned industrial debris in the port of

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Montréal (fig. 21). The 1960 photo-story about Vaillancourt made reference to the “nobility of

Figure 21: “Armand Vaillancourt n’est pas un sculpteur du salon. Il hante les ports, il fréquente
les marins, il cherche son inspirations des lieux débordants d’activités.”

the solder and blowtorch” used by the artist, and also to the fact that the sculptor began his career

carving in wood. Another photograph in the essay portrayed the artist as urbane and successful, a

member of a vibrant visual arts community and, while his identity drew on elements of the past,
this depiction placed him firmly in the modern era.  

95 PG, photographs by John Taylor, “A sculpture moderne, moyens moderns,” 

96 Other examples include sculptor Pierre-Roland Dinel working with a chainsaw; Gaby Perrault,

photographs Roger Lamoureux, “Pierre-Roland Dinel,” 

A second photo-story from 1960 portrayed sculptors more explicitly within a context of modernization then underway in the province. Artists Jean-Paul Mousseau and François Soucy were shown experimenting with new materials and techniques, the text informing the reader that the pair was “not frightened by masks and blue jeans because they are accustomed to hard physical labour.” This example of artists working with fiberglass and resin situated them in a context of male, working-class industrial production and a similar impression was conveyed in subsequent articles on Mousseau and his art work, including the Hydro-Québec light mural and the artist’s use of mechanization in revolving paintings. Another account in the magazine identified qualities such as a lack of pretension and a connection between workers and artisans “with dirty jagged fingernails who keep unusual hours because the muse of art is not clean.” Another advocated for an artists’ society that would function as a union to protect artists as workers and ensure adequate wages.

These characterizations, projection of a working-class sensibility, and a focus on physical labour and hardiness—qualities identified as masculine within conventional gender stereotypes—stand in stark contrast to previous depictions of Francophone artists in the magazine. Photographs of artists such as Molinari and Borduas published in the Journal in the previous decade portrayed them as contemplative and introspective intellectuals. This conception was replaced by a new vision of the artist as laborer and worker in the 1960s, the “man of action” substituted by the magazine for the effete thinker even as sculpture replaced painting as the primary site for innovation in visual arts. In fact, the shift in focus was supported by a claim that

100 Jean-Paul Robillard, “Des peintres qui n’ont pas $0.25 par jour pour vivre,” LPJ 13 Nov. 1960, 106.
sculpture was growing in prominence internationally because painting had been “weakened” by excessive interest in abstraction, a claim that reinforced the idea that gender was an important consideration in the way the magazine presented the identity of the artist at this time.  

The displacement of an earlier ideal for a new vision of the male artist was also apparent in a reduction in the number of articles about female practitioners in the magazine in the early 1960s.  Rose Marie Arbour has identified a reduced profile for women artists in the wider visual arts sector and has linked the trend to both a rejection of lyrical abstraction and misgivings about the realm of intuition and emotion associated with art production by women.  

These preoccupations registered in the *Journal*, the magazine identifying what it described as a feminine sensibility and promoting the idea that contemplation of art work by women offered potential escape from the pressures of the contemporary world.  At the same time, the *Journal* continued to focus on appearance and demeanor, and a photograph of a female artist’s “pretty face” often substituted for an example of her work.  

And, while the art critic typically offered his praise in exhibition reviews, the proliferation of talent was contained by both expressions of surprise at the number of what were described as talented young women and assertions that their success was due to the “freedom of the current age and the ascendance of abstract art which has opened doors

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These comments by the art critic effectively diminished accomplishments by women artists and downplayed the strength of their work.

By the early 1960s, the decline in interest in female practitioners was also registered in the context of the magazine’s growing focus on sculpture. Previous notice and celebratory reviews of sculptor Anne Kahane’s work faded from view, achievement by the artist further diminished by the suggestion that producing sculpture was both an extraordinary and unusual accomplishment for a woman. In similar fashion, a photo-story on sculptor Silvia Lefkovitz depicted the artist shopping, sightseeing, preparing coffee and visiting a stone-carving workshop—an observer rather than creator—and also at work carving in stone (fig. 22).

Figure 22: “La fonderie où Sylvie Lefkovitz apprend à couler ses propres sculptures est renommée dans le monde entier.”

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profile, the Canada Council grant recipient was presented as hardworking and dedicated, but the article, written by a female journalist not the art critic, served to publicize assurances that federal money was being well spent, rather than to endorse the artist.

As these examples suggest, while the magazine supported and promoted a particular conception of male sculptors and their role in the modernization of the Québec economy in the early 1960s, this conception did not extend to female practitioners.108 Instead, as the decade advanced, the magazine presented women as observers and consumers of sculpture and other art objects, rather than producers. This construction was evident in the photo-story involving Québec actor Margot Campbell and entertainer Andrée Champagne, the former playing “hide and seek” with a sculpture by Ivanhoe Fourtier at the Musée d’art contemporain and the latter an admiring observer sightseeing at an iron foundry (fig. 23).109

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108 One exception was Yvette Bisson’s sculpture *l’homme* installed at le Jardin Botanique de Montréal. Gladu emphasized the masculinity and strength of her work in concrete: PG, “Quand le béton s’assouplit et symbolise ‘l’homme,’” *LPJ* 9 Aug. 1964, 55.
In her analysis, Arbour has argued that increasing valorization of the artist as male hero in the 1960s contributed to the decline in attention to women artists. This observation is supported by contemporary evidence in the *Journal*, particularly the way the magazine emphasized traditional masculinity in descriptions of male sculptors. In addition, the magazine’s linking of sculpture with working-class industrial production suggests the impact of rising Québec nationalism on visual arts coverage. According to historian Jeffrey Vacante, “since the 1960s, Québec nationalism has also been seen as an instrument capable of revitalizing manhood in the province by providing French-speaking men with the necessary tools to reclaim their economic power.”¹¹⁰ In effect, scholars have described Québec nationalism as “largely a men’s

movement” in the 1960s. Seen in this light, the valorization of the “manliness” of local sculptors suggests that visual arts coverage helped promote Québec nationalism by linking masculinity with working-class Francophone identity.

The identity of the Québec artist was also shaped by the Journal’s depictions of European practitioners, what the magazine presented as positive contributions made by local artists once again juxtaposed against its portrayal of Europeans as selfish, self-absorbed, decadent and even misogynistic.\textsuperscript{111} The magazine publicized purported excesses in the Parisian art world—extravagant prices, eccentric behavior and widespread dealer speculation—and presented French artists such as Georges Mathieu and Bernard Buffet as frivolous dilettantes.\textsuperscript{112} In its coverage, the magazine also portrayed these artists as unproductive and cynical, identifying excessive melancholy and a bleak vision of both humanity and the world to justify dismissive comments regarding their work.\textsuperscript{113} These qualities, combined with the magazine’s characterization of Buffet, for one, as a “supreme egoist,” projected the idea that the artists were undeserving of financial success and critical acclaim.\textsuperscript{114} In addition, numerous articles on French artist Maurice Utrillo describing his life of poverty, alcoholism and mental illness reinforced negative perceptions of French artists and the art world in France.\textsuperscript{115} This criticism extended to abstraction

\textsuperscript{111} Claire Hugon, “Le célèbre Bernard Buffet est épris des cheveux de sa femme,” \textit{LPJ} 19 Mar. 1961, 80. The review focused on Buffet’s purported misogyny and objectification and exploitation of his wife Annabel.
\textsuperscript{112} Bernard Kaplan, “Le créateur du ‘tachism’ peint un ‘chef d’œuvre’ à la minute!” \textit{LPJ} 27 July 1958, 23. According to the writer, Mathieu produces paintings “faster than Detroit turns out cars.”
\textsuperscript{114} VAA, “La peintre Buffet est l’idole de la France,” \textit{LPJ} 4 May 1958, 33.
and a claim that “the dispute between abstraction and realism has allowed anyone to be an artist regardless of training or ability.”

Not all articles concerning European artists published in the magazine were negative, however. The Journal at times projected contradictory ideas about self-indulgent and manipulative behavior in articles that reinforced notions of individuality as a fundamental aspect of Western democracies. Often employing a bewildered and indulgent, rather than dismissive tone, these articles projected the idea that Western democracies tolerated extremes of behavior in the name of freedom. This perspective was a prominent feature of coverage of Picasso in the 1960s, the artist’s association with communism presented as the mark of a “man of intellect, engaged with his time, one who is unafraid to express his convictions.” In this instance, Picasso was used as a positive model for behavior, providing “a good lesson for contemporary artists to stop contemplating their grants and trips to the Riviera and look at the world around them,” the artist’s facility in a variety of media used to support the magazine’s presentation of the artist as individual, male, creative genius.

The variability in the magazine’s characterizations of European artists suggests the impact of anti-communist perspectives on visual arts coverage and ideas about artists in the 1960s. According to Michael Brenson, the year 1960 was an important moment in the history of the Cold War and anti-communism, a moment when the significance of individual freedom was

116 Frank Elgar, “2,500 professionnels et 12,000 amateurs,” LPJ 5 Mar. 1961, 92. Photographs of gallery visitors standing on their head before abstract paintings, “the better to understand modern painting,” and abstract paintings by cats and chimpanzees featured periodically, added to the magazine’s mocking and dismissive tone directed at abstraction.

117 Other accounts were equally contradictory. For instance one article praised Max Ernst as the “charming creator of enigma paintings, an elegant fabulist and amazing sculptor who plays with humor,” while another focused on the artist’s reputation as a seducer of young women, his numerous marriages and association with wealthy collector Peggy Guggenheim; see André Ferrier, “Un magicien du rêve,” LPJ 17 Dec. 1961, 50, and Gilles Valdonne, “Marx Ernst ou…le don Juan de la peinture,” LPJ 20 Dec. 1959, 99.

emphasized as a “natural” characteristic of an open and democratic society. A message of artistic freedom and individuality, and purported benefits produced from allowing this freedom, was conveyed in articles in the Journal concerning artists, for instance in a photo story about an exhibition and sale of refrigerators decorated by contemporary artists in France, an exhibition that was also covered by the Weekly the previous fall. The author of the piece emphasized the large sums paid for the refrigerators, by what were presented as gullible U.S. patrons, but the example also served to publicize the wealth of Westerners as a point of contrast to contemporary perceptions of life in the Soviet sphere.

An important omission in the Journal’s account of the sale was that it was a charitable fundraiser, the absence of this detail enhancing the author’s portrayal of the event as an eccentric indulgence on the part of Westerners. The omission was also typical of the magazine’s approach to contemporary political debates and controversial topics across the decade. While it occasionally raised questions about censorship and prudery, notice of engagement with political causes was consistently ignored in visual arts coverage. This tendency was apparent in articles about Armand Vaillancourt and the sculpture he created for l’École Technique d’Asbestos in 1963. The artist has maintained that the sculpture was a response to both the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and the nuclear threat, but the art critic merely described the sculpture as a “tour de force in technical terms” and a work of “independent expression.” In this example, a description of the artist’s personal integrity deflected attention from both past conflicts such as the 1949 Asbestos

120 “Entre deux repas, elles admirerons le chef d’œuvre,” LPJ 24 May 1959, 1-2 (B).
121 In an article on Michelangelo, Gladu compares the attacks on Robert Roussil’s nudes to those suffered by the Italian master; PG “Que ferait Michel-Ange de nos jours?” LPJ 24 July 1966, 38.
Strike, and contemporary politics, assertions of patriotic attachment to Québec reinforcing this message.\(^{123}\)

As the example of Vaillancourt suggests, the *Journal* consistently overlooked evidence that artists engaged in the realm of politics, with one important exception—Québec nationalism. In fact, the identity of the artist was increasingly tied to expressions of nationalism in the mid-1960s, in assertions made by the magazine of patriotic attachment to Québec and associations with early settler history. Nationalism was also a central component of the magazine’s attention to sculptors at this time, attention that drew extensively on links to the past as validation for local sculptors. An indigenous sculpture tradition was promoted as a counter to what it described as the negative impact of Madison Avenue and a North American corporate presence in Montréal—banal architecture and sculpture by international practitioners. In this, the identity of the Francophone sculptor was used as an example of resistance, in the portrayal of a “bearded and moccasin wearing” Robert Roussil, for instance, who “refuses to bow down before a corporation.”\(^{124}\) The source of this resistance was drawn from an identity tied to the land and infused with masculinity, the artist described as one who works with “gigantic structures at a superhuman level, creating powerful works like titans and magnificent monsters of the mountains and the forests whose branches invite us north.”\(^{125}\) His characterization as a “bearded giant” placed the sculptor in opposition to what were described by the art critic as effete, “Americanized Quebeckers,” the magazine drawing on both masculinity and Québec identity to suggest that Roussil challenged encroaching corporate North America.


The magazine’s presentation of artists as independent rebels and a source of resistance to the domination of both English Canada and the United States declined as the decade ended. The tentative acknowledgment that artists might engage with political debates disappeared in the *Journal*, replaced by a focus on celebrity and notions of selected Québec artists as internationally-recognized icons. This was particularly evident in the *Journal*’s publicity for Expo ’67, which included several Québec artists in photographs of Old Masters whose work was on view at the World’s Fair. Apart from this association with fame, the magazine registered reduced interest in visual arts and a waning profile for artists overall. The shift in the magazine’s content and a reorientation of visual arts as part of entertainment accounts for this change, a profile that was further reduced by the elimination of the arts column in 1967. Following changes in ownership, the identity of the artist received less attention, the *Journal* returning to an early portrayal of visual arts as sites for personal expression and enrichment. While other preoccupations engaged the magazine in its new guise as an entertainment magazine, the long-established focus on male Francophone artists, to the exclusion of women and other Canadian artists, served to define the identity of the artist for readers of the *Journal* as the decade ended, an identity constructed around Québec nationalism.

**Conclusion**

Continuing a trend well established in the previous decade, the economic benefits associated with visual arts emerged as a key focus in my examination of visual arts coverage in *Le petit journal* across the decade. I argue that, in time, the magazine’s interest in visual arts as components of economic development gradually expanded to include additional products and activities, such as

contemporary sculpture and cultural tourism. Further, I suggest that the magazine continued to skirt evidence that artists engaged directly in social or political debates, instead portraying Québec artists as sincere, hard-working and patriotic and advancing the idea that their art work and behavior was indication of a modern and progressive society. I identify ways that these assertions were supported by the lack of information provided by the magazine concerning developments in visual arts elsewhere in Canada and in other countries, and that the limiting of information reinforced its claims that art production by Francophones artists was both original and innovative. According to my analysis, the magazine continued to promote the idea that visual arts were central to intellectual life in Québec, and used this as validation to advance awareness of purported contributions made by Francophone artists. Also consistent with previous trends, publicity for women artists was preoccupied with appearance and demeanor; recognition of accomplishments by women artists ultimately displaced by an ideal of the artist as male hero.

In addition to an emphasis on the economy, I argue that visual arts coverage registered increased attention to Québec nationalism as the decade advanced. Among the characteristics of this coverage was heightened animosity toward English Canada and federal institutions and an emphasis on the land and racial identity in descriptions of Francophone artists. For a brief period of time, the focus on national identity displaced economic considerations, a change that suggests the use of patriotism to challenge both English Canada and a growing North American economic presence in Québec.

The focus on economic considerations and nationalism I identify in this chapter highlights the use of visual arts as an expedient in the service of economic growth and exposes the close relationship between political and economic interests in the Journal. While used to advance the perspective of the owners of the magazine, this expedient also extended to the wider
community and promotion of specific identity in Francophone Québec, projected outward from the metropolitan centre of Montréal. The magazine’s preoccupation with economic and cultural nationalism was a persistent feature in the *Journal* across two decades, the *Star Weekly* registering similar interests and preoccupations in a competing vision emanating from Toronto. In important respects, however, the result was fundamentally different. The centrality of visual arts within Francophone Quebec was well entrenched by the end of the decade, but the relative absence of attention to social policy in visual arts coverage effectively obscured efforts to shape behavior. In effect, a language of valorization of Francophone artists and art production in Québec worked to obscure the underlying economic interests at the heart of visual arts coverage in *Le petit journal*. 
Chapter 7

Conclusion

I began this investigation and analysis of the *Star Weekly* and *Le petit journal* with questions regarding the origins of ideas about visual arts and artists in Canada. Among my conclusions, I argue that these magazines were a key site for the dissemination of ideas about art, and that this dissemination was intimately tied to social, political and economic considerations throughout the post-war period. Although there were substantial differences between the two publications, the way that they participated in the construction and distribution of information was strikingly similar. In effect, both magazines projected specific notions of the value of artists and visual arts and used this coverage to shape attitudes—to work, gender, money, identity, immigration, nationalism and a host of other topics. Further, I argue that the magazines’ approach to visual arts was rooted in both liberalism and anti-communism and informed by inherent self-interest on the part of the owners of the magazines.

In the course of this study, I have focused on both similarities and differences between the two magazines in order to reveal the process at work in the public imagination. Among these, the most prominent difference is the extent of visual arts coverage in *Le petit journal* from the early post-war period through more than two decades. English Canadian readers of the *Weekly* learned relatively little regarding visual arts produced across the country or around the world at this time, while readers of the *journal* were reasonably well informed of art-related developments both in Québec and, to some extent, internationally. This characteristic is an indication of different attitudes and approaches to visual arts, differences that suggest the impact of an existing climate of support for the arts and culture sector in Québec and recognition of it as both a
significant economic resource and a site to sustain and foster Francophone identity in North America.

In contrast, the *Weekly*’s lack of attention to Canadian professional practitioners throughout the first decade following the war, combined with its sudden attention to the subject in 1957, underscores the marginal position of visual arts in English Canada. In effect, artists became interesting when the *Weekly* recognized their potential to contribute to both economic growth and nationalism, the two inevitably linked, I argue, by the economic self-interest of the owners of the magazine. This conception left little room for the notion that artists might contribute meaningfully to intellectual life in Canadian society, apart from their ability to enhance economic development and to foster national pride.

The expediency of this linking of visual artists to both cultural and economic nationalism is reinforced by evidence, in the *Weekly*, of lingering post-war attachment to Great Britain and membership in the British Commonwealth. The cultural authority of Great Britain remained a significant force in the *Weekly*’s presentation of not only the visual arts sector, but also other aspects of Canadian society in the first decade following the war. While this characteristic suggests a strong attachment to the former colonial centre, it was also a means of projecting an international perspective and supported a claim that Canada had achieved a level of international stature through significant contribution to World War II. A similar international perspective was forged in the *Weekly*’s projection of classlessness as a feature of Western countries, of solidarity among Western nations as a counter to Soviet aggression, in the extent of information provided to readers about daily life in communist countries and in the way it presented the West as savior of both democratic institutions and the heritage of Western civilization. These facets of visual arts coverage expose both the presence and impact of anti-communism on ideas about visual arts and
artists in English Canada in the first decade of the Cold War. Further, this characteristic suggests a substantially different outlook from that found in standard Canadian art history texts, one that challenges perceptions that an interest in nationalism and nation-building was the dominant force in art production in Canada following World War II.

Both the expediency of visual arts and the impact of anti-communism are also apparent in the Weekly’s presentation of the sector as a venue to advance social policy in Canada. I argue, in effect, that the magazine supported visual arts as a means of mitigating perceived or potential problems. Further, I argue that this impulse was informed by liberalism, intertwined with anti-communism, in the Weekly’s initial focus on expanding educational opportunities for Canadian adults, including arts education and arts appreciation, and additional uses for visual arts. While training and education to enhance industrial and commercial productivity was the initial focus of the Weekly’s endorsement of the sector, visual arts were subsequently presented as a means for disabled adults to achieve economic self-sufficiency and as a solution to such perceived problems as juvenile delinquency, mental illness and assimilation of immigrants. The way the magazine initially conceived of these potential justifications for the visual arts sector negated any idea that artists were valuable assets contributing to spiritual and intellectual life in Canada, a position reinforced both by its presentation of European artists as decadent and unproductive and its focus on art production as an amateur pursuit, particularly for women.

Although it registered in different ways, visual arts coverage in the Journal advanced a similar type of argument for the value of visual arts and artists. The French-language magazine did not endorse social policy initiatives with the same intensity, or indeed even acknowledge that such initiatives might be necessary following the war. Instead, the Journal initially cast the threat of internal subversion and possible communist sympathies as separate concerns, unrelated to the
daily lives and interests of patriotic and pious Quebecers. This perspective informed the Journal’s initial coverage of new ideas and approaches in visual arts, including the intellectual investigations and interests of the artists associated with the manifesto Refus global. The challenges to Quebec society and institutions posed by the artists were met with hostility in the Journal’s visual arts coverage, and were initially mocked and ridiculed, and these negative responses worked to both limit and discourage dissent. In time, the repressive atmosphere projected in the magazine dissipated, a development I connect to recognition that visual artists, within certain limits, were potential agents of both intellectual and economic growth. In other words, coverage in the Journal similarly supported visual arts and artists as an expedient but, unlike the Weekly, embraced and promoted avant-garde trends as evidence of modernization and innovation in Francophone Canada.

In fact, extensive visual arts coverage in the Journal registered awareness of, and appreciation for, the prospective economic benefits of the visual arts sector from the beginning of the post-war period. According to my analysis, the Weekly appears at least a decade behind the Journal in its recognition of this potential. The French-language magazine also registered, early on, interest in consumers of visual arts, and promoted active participation in the sector among the general public. In addition to encouraging Canadians to attend exhibitions and purchase works of art, the Journal projected a celebratory atmosphere of cultural appreciation and presented the consumption of the products of both visual artists and artisans as both enriching and rewarding. This presentation ignored key elements of art-related debates and hints of controversy, a characteristic that further helped to deflect attention from both the processes of control and the possibility of dissent in post-war Quebec.
While I have identified significant differences between the way each magazine envisioned and presented visual arts and artists, both managed potential controversy and dissent in similar ways. Both employed humor and mocking references to lowbrow culture in visual arts coverage, for instance, a practice I connect to the impulse to downplay potentially troubling or controversial subjects, to a desire to advance a particular viewpoint while claiming disinterest, and to otherwise encourage (or discourage) certain behaviors. Further, I argue that humor was used to forge a bond between reader and text, by establishing the reader in a position of privilege in art-related debates, and that this strategy helped build support for the magazines’ position on politically-charged issues. The expediency of this strategy is most apparent in the Journal’s treatment of non-objective painting because initial mocking and disparaging comments were replaced, somewhat abruptly, by a serious, respectful and appreciative tone. Neither the circumstances nor approaches to art production changed significantly; the Journal simply altered its presentation from dismissal to celebration. Potentially disruptive influences and dissent were also mitigated by reference, in both magazines, to conventional family structures, military service and either teaching or commercial art as a full-time career, a practice that similarly skirted contentious ideas by ignoring evidence of critical inquiry and emphasizing ways that artists were contributing to both contemporary society and the economy.

What these characteristics of visual arts coverage indicate is a process of shaping information for their respective readerships. According to my analysis, both magazines not only framed information in specific ways, but also limited the information they provided. Art-related developments in the United States are a prime example; neither publication acknowledged the growing strength and prominence of the art world in the United States until well into the 1960s. I connect this ongoing neglect to the Weekly’s efforts to promote pride in Canada and Canadian
achievements and to the Journal’s interest in forging a claim of independent originality for Québec artists, particularly artists working in abstraction, and in this, of modernization and innovation in the province. Substantially more sophisticated than the Weekly, which typically ignored aspects of life in the United States that might appear positive, the Journal carried out a well-orchestrated diversion in visual arts coverage by showcasing U.S. artists working in representational modes, producing, in effect, a denial of avant-garde status for contemporary U.S. artists. At the same time, notice of participation by Québec artists in international exhibitions, and of a dynamic and growing visual arts sector in the province, supported the magazine’s claims of the strength of local achievements in visual arts.

Similarities in outlook and approach extend to the way each magazine used visual arts coverage to project competing nationalisms in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The Journal’s emphasis on racial identity and the local environment in descriptions of artists, and its linking of early settler history and contemporary Quebec sculpture, suggests an interest in promoting a distinct Francophone identity to foster Québec nationalism. Unlike the abrupt change I identified in the Weekly, this focus developed gradually in the Journal over the two decades. The nationalist agenda in the French-language magazine was supported by a sense of isolation and separation (but not separatism), a preoccupation that strengthened over time and included both positive and negative components—increasingly strident complaints that Québec was disadvantaged within the federal system, juxtaposed with claims of cultural sophistication in Québec. This practice advanced the idea that Francophone Québec was both exceptional and yet undervalued by the rest of Canada and, while this construction supported and promoted a sense of a unique and distinct identity in Québec, artists themselves were not agents in this. Instead, the Journal projected nationalist ideology onto and through the figure of the artist, linking
masculinity with working-class Francophone identity and an emerging technologically and industrially-based economy. This construction worked to deny any sense that artists might take a leading role in political debates, including debates concerning nationalism. The Weekly engaged in a similar project, but increased attention to Canadian themes and subjects in the late 1950s was used to foster nationalism in the country as a whole, by promoting knowledge of Canada and pride in Canadian achievements. I argue that the projection of nationalisms was undertaken with similar goals, in English Canada to encourage resistance to an expanding U.S. economic presence in Canada, and in French Canada as resistance to English North America. Further, I argue that these competing liberal democracies expressed, through nationalism, an intensification of liberal relations at the international level, one that operated in competition with communism.

The way that each magazine focused on personality and the behavior of artists in their promotion of either Canadian or Quebec nationalism demonstrates the impact of both Cold War thinking and anti-communism on the projection of ideas about visual arts and artists. The possibility that artists might engage in political debates, that their work might express or contribute to the construction of ideas of a political nature, was apparently viewed as potentially dangerous in the context of the Cold War. It was therefore consistently discouraged; both magazines conveyed a message of conformity and deference to authority, typically asserted that artists were not interested in politics, and that art production was an expression of an artist’s personality and a “personal response to the world.” The projection of an artistic “cult of personality” based on notions of celebrity culture, with roots in advertising and public relations, was more prominent in the Weekly, the Journal instead promoting a legacy of Québec-based innovation and a lineage of Old Masters to support the value of visual artists to an emerging separatist state. Nonetheless, both magazines consistently denied that artists were interested in
political affairs, a claim that not only skirted evidence of such involvement but also served to discourage it.

In addition, the focus on personality and behavior of artists, in both magazines, demonstrates both the presence and impact of ideas central to liberalism. Both magazines claimed, for instance, that artists were not interested in material wealth and typically lived in poverty. While such claims were used to highlight a purported lack of interest in visual arts on the part of Canadians and to argue for greater participation in the sector, this characteristic was also used to assert artistic integrity. Such claims served not only to foster altruistic attitudes on the part of Canadian artists but also as a way of establishing value for works of art, particularly abstraction. Such assertions, in effect, diverted questions of monetary value away from producers to consumers, suggesting in the process that speculation and profit were acceptable for collectors but not artists. In this, rising monetary values for works of art were presented as a positive outcome, consistent with liberal values of material wealth and prosperity, but separate from the interests and preoccupations of visual artists.

The conception of visual artists as engaged in personal and independent exploration of artistic expression, while initially a way of asserting artistic integrity, was subsequently embraced within an emerging ideal of the artist as outsider and rebel. In my analysis, I argue that, in the late 1960s, the Weekly’s heavy-handed approach to encouraging specific directions in art production gradually evolved into a more sophisticated project in which rebellion was acknowledged and even celebrated, particularly for its potential to provide resistance to the growing economic presence of the United States. This shift registered in the presentation of the Canadian male artist as rebel and outsider, a romantic conception that was all the more effective because it embraced contemporary youth and counterculture mores. I identify a slightly different
focus in the *Journal*, one that embraced an ideal of the artist as Quebecois hero in an emerging separatist state. Further, the new conception of the artist as rebel and hero echoed developments elsewhere; for instance, Michael Brenson has argued that artists came to be seen as an antidote, in the 1960s, to growing materialism and consumerism in the United States. According to Brenson, new recognition of the value of artists stemmed from their status as outsiders and, in this romantic ideal, the heroic artist, “unbowed by convention and uncorrupted by the marketplace and commodification,” offered an alternative to an obsession with money that was threatening to undermine the moral and spiritual purpose of the U.S.\(^1\) While Brenson argues that this “outsider” status was used to promote a new vision of the artist and new directions in cultural policy and funding for artists during a moment of national crisis in the United States, a similar ideal was also evident in the *Journal* and the *Weekly*. In the Canadian context, the change was also useful but in different ways—as a counter to the feared loss of economic and political autonomy to the United States and, in Quebec, to English-speaking North America. In this, the new conception extended beyond cultural policy initiatives, at the level of the state, to priorities and economic interests of the owners of the magazines and their ongoing search for profitability.

Significantly, the new romantic ideal of independent artistic expression that I identify in both publications in the late 1960s was supported by a shift in content and focus from middlebrow to lowbrow and entertainment features. The moralizing tone and authoritative voice of the middlebrow gradually dissipated, a change suggesting a search for a new readership and expanded audience, but also that changes were underway in both Canada and Québec. Middlebrow values such as hard work, patriotism, conventional family relationships and

chivalrous attitudes to women were perhaps out of step with the rising counterculture, and this change registered in the new romantic conception of visual artists as rebels and outsiders.

In contrast to this important change I identify in the popular press, middlebrow preoccupations have continued to shape art historical scholarship about the period, particularly in the emphasis on nationalism and a search for national culture as the dominant themes in art production in Canada throughout the post-war era. Because of this, and because such interests have been interpreted as a public good for their potential to contribute to political stability and economic growth, other topics and perspectives have been neglected by art historians. The impact of the Cold War and anti-communism on art production in Canada, questions about how nationalism fits within the international perspective of the first decade following the war, and how one might interpret ways that artists engaged with lowbrow as a site of resistance to middlebrow values, are among the topics that have received significantly less attention from scholars.

This study of the popular press brings a different perspective to the period, one that diverges significantly from that of art historians and curators in Canada. For one thing, my analysis reveals the subordinate position of visual artists in the first two decades following the war, and both the historical moment and context when this begins to change. In mainstream curatorial writing and art historical texts, this position is not typically acknowledged, and artists are presented as autonomous creative genii, granted agency and a presumption of independent critical thought. In addition, although it remains challenging due to suggestions of intellectual and class hierarchy, the framework of low, middle and highbrow used in this study is a useful way of examining both shifts in art production and the dissemination of ideas and values to particular audiences. Finally, this study has exposed the impact of contemporary events and
perspectives on ideas about visual arts and artists and the instability of notions about the value and place of visual artists in Canada. The magazines neither constructed nor determined specific policies, but represented a cultural space for discussion, development and persuasion.

The popular press remains an important, although often overlooked, source of ideas about visual arts and artists in Canada because of the information it provides to readers, the way this information is presented, and the details, both present and absent, it features. In addition, the practice of linking visual artists to both economic development and national identity, in both the Weekly and Journal, suggests a possible source of divergent views of the value and role of visual artists in Canadian society. This position was only enhanced by the longstanding denial, in both magazines, that artists engaged in political activism and independent critical thought outside of the realm of visual arts. Although developed in different ways and at different times, the “oddballs and eccentrics” (“les hirsutes et les excentriques”) were supported first for their ability to contribute to economic growth. This conception, although challenged by a new ideal of the artist as rebel and outsider in the late 1960s, was perhaps not easily relinquished in the popular imagination.
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