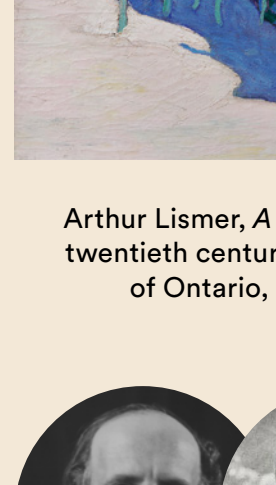


AUGUST 30, 2024

PASSING WITH FLYING COLOURS ARTIST TEACHERS & THEIR STUDENTS

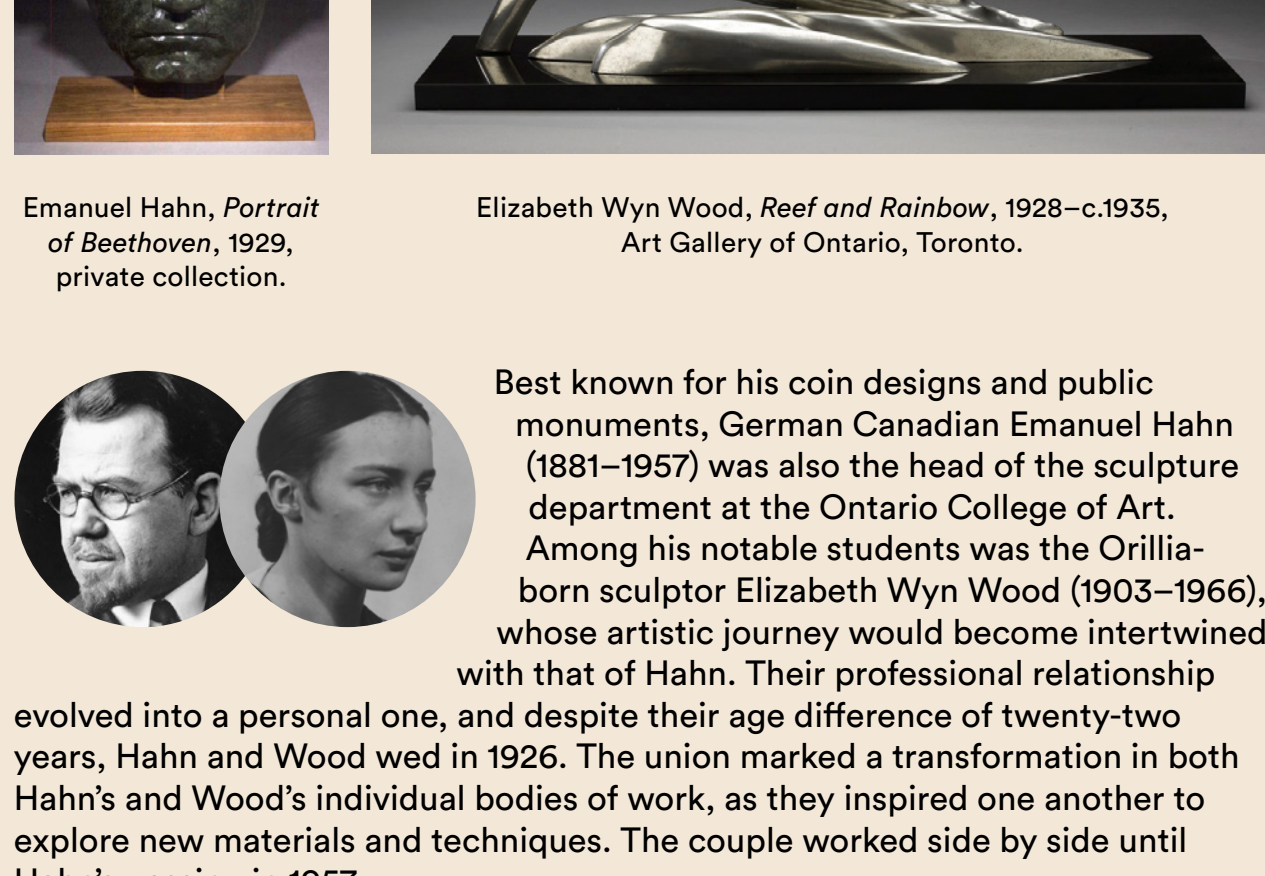
Exploring the mentorships that have fostered great talent.



The story of Canadian art is about something far richer than brushstrokes and colours. It's also about the powerful connections that shape creativity and legacy—formed over generations—that often happen in classrooms, studios, and workplaces. To mark the beginning of the school year, today's newsletter breaks down some of the greatest educator-student relationships among Canada's most beloved artists. These partnerships highlight the knowledge transmission and guidance that have been instrumental in nurturing visionary talent and advancing the rich heritage of Canadian art. Read on to learn about the profound impact these artist-educators have had on their pupils, fostering and ensuring a continuity of innovative output.

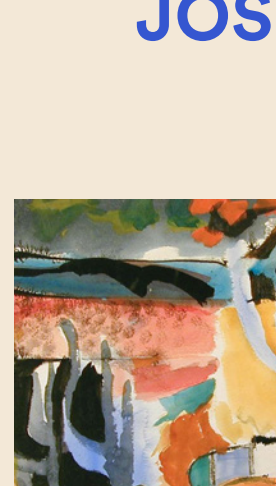
Sara Angel
Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

ARTHUR LISMER AND DORIS MCCARTHY



Arthur Lismer, *A Clear Winter*, twentieth century, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

Doris McCarthy, *Iceberg Fantasy No. 9*, 1973, private collection.



Toronto's OCAD University was the setting for the mentoring relationship that blossomed between Arthur Lismer (1885–1969) and Doris McCarthy (1910–2010). At what was then known as the Ontario College of Art, McCarthy was instructed by Lismer, a member of the Group of Seven. Though she disliked his jokes, McCarthy was moved by Lismer's exceptional drawing abilities and insightful lectures. As John G. Hatch documents in *Doris McCarthy: Life & Work*, upon graduation, Lismer offered McCarthy an opportunity to teach children's art classes at the Art Gallery of Toronto (now the Art Gallery of Ontario), where he oversaw the education program. From there, her career as a teacher and celebrated artist commenced. While McCarthy's artistic style veered away from the Group of Seven's style, like her mentor, she honoured the beauty of Canada's landscapes.

Read more in ACI's *Doris McCarthy: Life & Work* by John G. Hatch

EMANUEL HAHN AND ELIZABETH WYN WOOD



Emanuel Hahn, *Portrait of Beethoven*, 1929, private collection.

Elizabeth Wyn Wood, *Reef and Rainbow*, 1928–c.1935, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.



Best known for his coin designs and public monuments, German Canadian Emanuel Hahn (1881–1957) was also the head of the sculpture department at the Ontario College of Art. Among his notable students was the Orillia-born sculptor Elizabeth Wyn Wood (1903–1966), whose artistic journey would become intertwined with that of Hahn. Their professional relationship evolved into a personal one, and despite their age difference of twenty-two years, Hahn and Wood wed in 1926. The union marked a transformation in both Hahn's and Wood's individual bodies of work, as they inspired one another to explore new materials and techniques. The couple worked side by side until Hahn's passing in 1957.

JOSEPH (JOE) PLASKETT AND TAKAO TANABE



Joe Plaskett, *Old Cemetery, Provincetown*, 1948, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

Takao Tanabe, *West of Winnipeg*, 1949, private collection.



The relationship that Takao Tanabe (b.1926) had with his mentor, Joseph (Joe) Plaskett (1918–2014), while studying at the Winnipeg School of Art was truly transformative. Hailing from British Columbia, Tanabe initially delved into commercial sign painting before encountering Plaskett's modernist leanings. Plaskett, fresh from studying under painter Hans Hofmann (1880–1966) in New York, brought a surge of modernism to the Prairie school, exposing Tanabe to Picasso, Cézanne, and Matisse. As Ian Thom writes in *Takao Tanabe: Life & Work*, Plaskett recognized Tanabe's talent, encouraging him to shift to fine art. Upon graduation, again inspired by his mentor, Tanabe found himself in New York, where he experienced the thrill of the city and its art scene. Eventually, Tanabe returned to the West Coast, continuing to paint while experimenting with new disciplines and travelling extensively. Informed by his training with Plaskett, Tanabe's paintings have changed the Prairies and Pacific Coast.

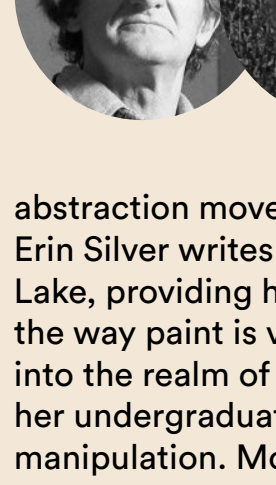
Read more in ACI's *Takao Tanabe: Life & Work* by Ian Thom

JAN ZACH AND TIM WHITEN



Jan Zach, *Leaf Form*, 1970s, courtesy of MBA, Seattle Auction LLB.

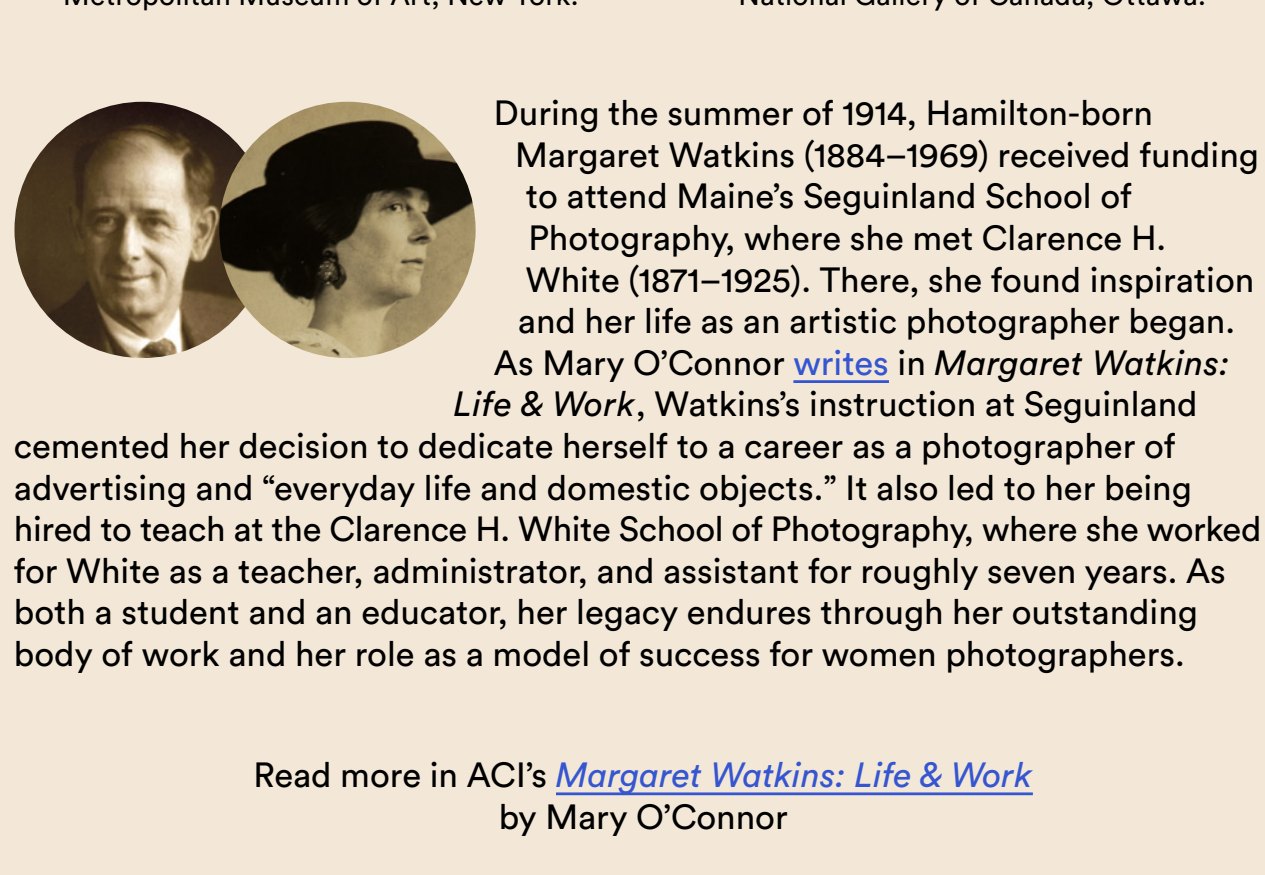
Tim Whiten, *Book of Light: Containing Poetry from the Heart of God*, 2015–16, courtesy of the artist and Olga Korper Gallery.



For contemporary image maker Tim Whiten (b.1941), learning from sculptor Jan Zach (1914–1986) was "key to everything." Born in Czechoslovakia, Zach moved to Victoria, B.C. in 1951, where he opened a school for painting and sculpture. It was there that he began to work with materials gathered from the beaches of Vancouver Island, stating, "I discovered a whole new world of organic forms of astonishing richness and diversity"—an epiphany he took with him in his tenure as chair of the sculpture department at the University of Oregon, where he met Whiten. A recipient of both the Governor-General's Award for the Arts and the Garson Iskowitz Prize, Tim Whiten has himself played a pivotal role as an educator during his thirty-nine-year career at York University, where he has inspired countless students in their own artistic pursuits.

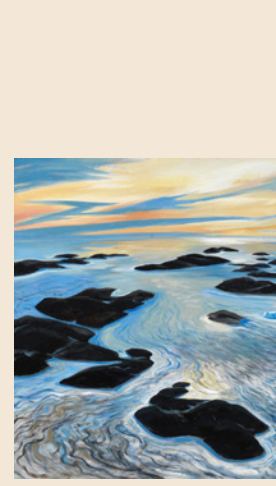
Read more about *Tim Whiten: Life & Work* by Carolyn Bell Farrell—forthcoming in February 2025.

JOHN ARMSTRONG AND DENYSE THOMASOS



John Armstrong and Paul Collins, *cache-misère: cache-misère (Lakieviv)*, 2007–12, courtesy of the artist.

Installation view of Denyse Thomasos, *Till the River* (detail), 1986, at the now-demolished North Building, University of Toronto Mississauga (formerly Erindale College).

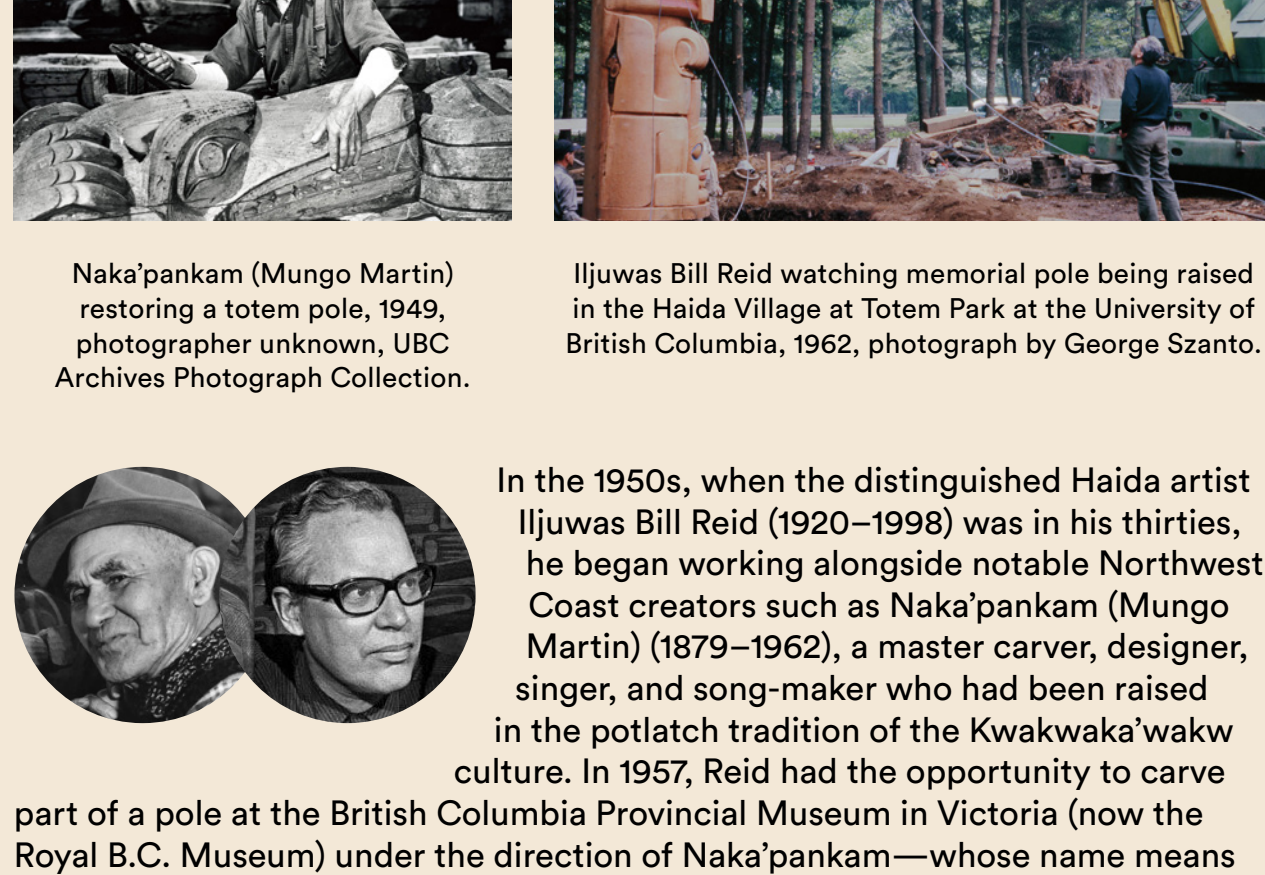


Before becoming the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM), the institution was known as Erindale College. It was here that Denyse Thomasos (1964–2012) studied in the joint Art and Art History program under *John Armstrong* (b.1955), a professor at Sheridan College and UTM. On the Mississauga campus, Thomasos completed her first large-scale work in the summer before her fourth and final year—an ambitious floor-to-ceiling mural on the interior walls of a now-demolished university building. This work, entitled *Till the River*, 1986 (above right), marked the beginning of her foray into monumental, site-specific works that would define her career. Armstrong and Thomasos maintained a close friendship that lasted throughout Thomasos's life until her passing in 2012.

Read more about Thomasos's [extraordinary career](#)

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GUIDO MOLINARI AND SUZY LAKE



Guido Molinari, *Green-blue Bi-serial*, 1967, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. © Estate of Guido Molinari / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

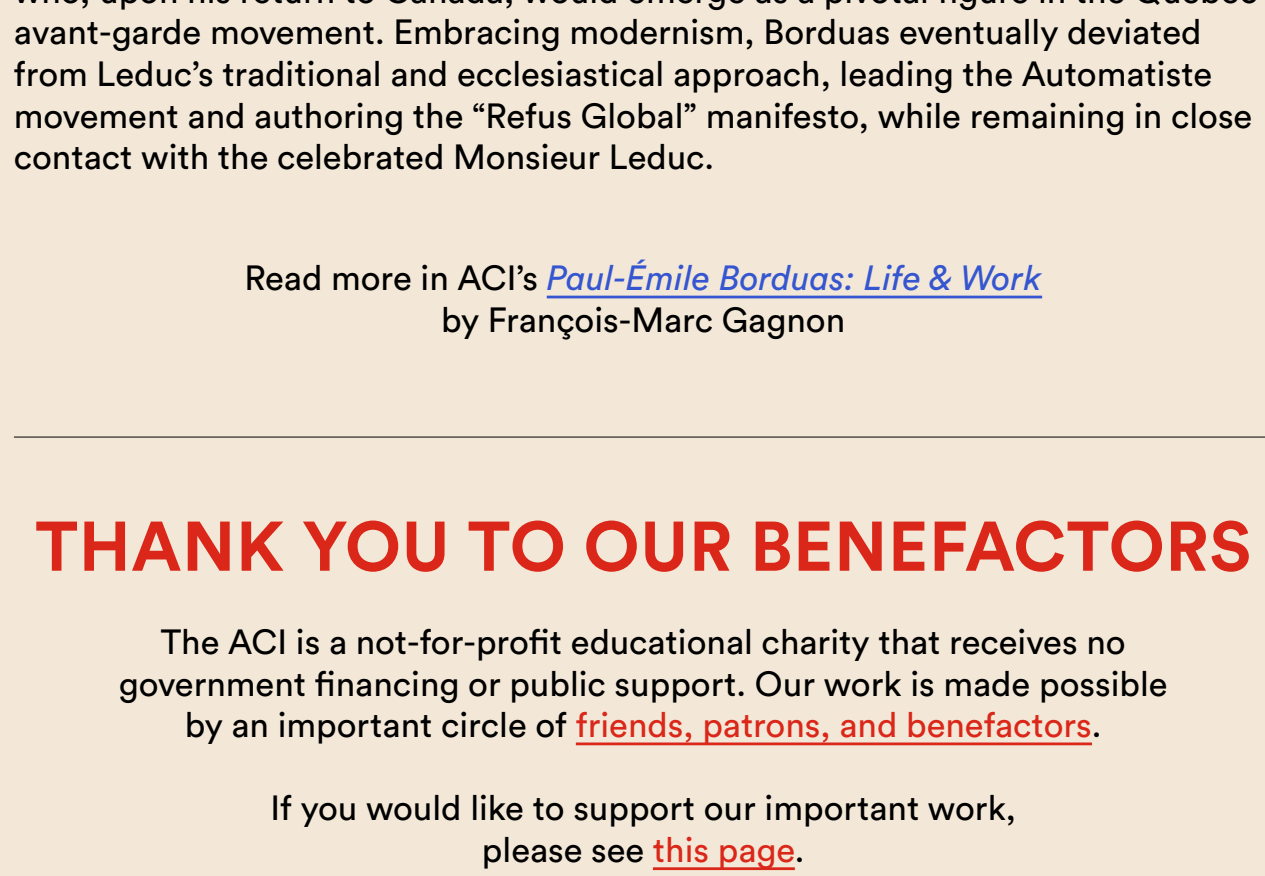
Suzy Lake, *The Natural Way to Draw* (detail), 1975, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.



Suzy Lake (b.1947) met Guido Molinari (1933–2004) as she entered the Montreal art scene, after completing her studies in painting and printmaking. Working as a life model in art institutions like the school at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Lake was introduced to Molinari through sculptor Hugh LeRoy (1939–2022). Recognized for his work in the colour-abstraction movement, Molinari took Lake under his wing as his assistant. As Erin Silver writes in *Suzy Lake: Life & Work*, the mentorship profoundly impacted Lake, providing her with an immersive education in Molinari's exploration of the way paint is visually perceived in abstract works. Lake's practice diverged into the realm of photography, specifically self-portraiture, while she utilized her undergraduate training to create works of conceptual photographic manipulation. Molinari's mentorship enhanced Lake's technical abilities and broadened her conceptual grasp of abstraction, influencing her career as a pioneering artist.

Read more in ACI's *Suzy Lake: Life & Work* by Erin Silver

CLARENCE H. WHITE AND MARGARET WATKINS



Clarence H. White, *The Watcher*, c.1906, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

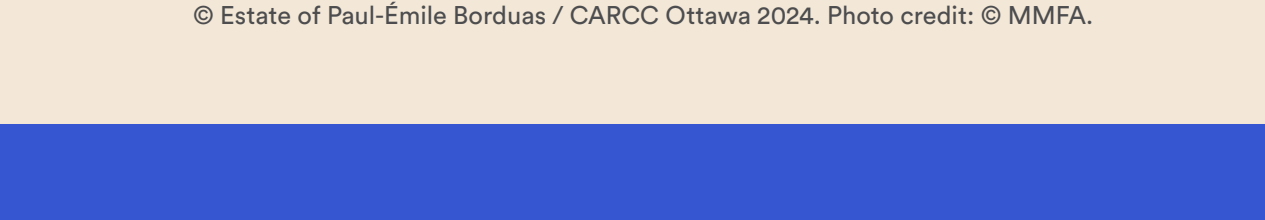
Margaret Watkins, *The Kitchen Sink*, c.1919, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



During the summer of 1914, Hamilton-born Margaret Watkins (1884–1969) received funding to attend Maine's Seguinland School of Photography, where she met Clarence H. White (1871–1925). There, she found inspiration and her life as an artistic photographer began. As Mary O'Connor writes in *Margaret Watkins: Life & Work*, Watkins's instruction at Seguinland cemented her decision to dedicate herself to a career as a photographer of advertising and "everyday life and domestic objects." It also led to her being hired to teach at the Clarence H. White School of Photography, where she worked for White as a teacher, administrator, and assistant for roughly seven years. As both a student and an educator, her legacy endures through her outstanding body of work and her role as a model of success for women photographers.

Read more in ACI's *Margaret Watkins: Life & Work* by Mary O'Connor

DORIS MCCARTHY AND JOYCE WIELAND



Doris McCarthy, *Antarctica from Above*, 1991, private collection.

Joyce Wieland, *Boat Tragedy*, 1964, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

For years, Doris McCarthy taught at Central Technical School in Toronto's Harbord Village, and among her students in the late 1940s was Joyce Wieland (1930–1998). As Johanne Sloan notes in *Joyce Wieland: Life & Work*, McCarthy, with a strong commitment to her own art and a spirited sense of style, became Wieland's first role model and professional mentor. While Wieland began her career as a painter, she also dabbled in sculptural assemblage, textile work, and experimental feminist filmmaking, producing a small but mighty repertoire. Described by Wieland as a "very great teacher" and "the most exciting woman I'd ever met," McCarthy's "stubborn independence and self-reliance made her a modern woman artist who forged ahead in getting what she wanted without dwelling on the roadblocks she encountered."

Read more in ACI's *Joyce Wieland: Life & Work* by Johanne Sloan

MUNGO MARTIN AND ILJUWAS BILL REID

Naka'pankam (Mungo Martin) resting a totem pole, 1949, photographer unknown, UBC Archives Photograph Collection.

Iljuwas Bill Reid watching memorial pole being raised in the Haida Village at Totem Park at the University of British Columbia, 1962, photograph by George Szanto.

In the 1950s, when the distinguished Haida artist Iljuwas Bill Reid (1920–1998) was in his thirties, he began working alongside notable Northwest Coast creators such as Naka'pankam (Mungo Martin) (1879–1962), a master carver, designer, singer, and song-maker who had been raised in the potlatch tradition of the Kwakwaka'wakw culture. In 1957, Reid had the opportunity to carve part of a pole at the British Columbia Provincial Museum—in whose name means "Potlatch Chief ten times over"—for two weeks. In *Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work*, Gerald McMaster writes, "Naka'pankam 'sang all the while he was carving,' which for Reid, who believed in "a deep unity of all the arts, with music at their core," was impressive and significant."

Read more in ACI's *Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work* by Gerald McMaster

OZIAS LEDUC AND PAUL-ÉMILE BORDUAS

Ozias Leduc, *Green Apples (Pommes vertes)*, 1914–15, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Paul-Émile Borduas, *Green Abstraction (Abstraction verte)*, 1941, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. © Estate of Paul-Émile Borduas / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

When Québécois artist Paul-Émile Borduas (1905–1960) was just sixteen years old, painter Ozias Leduc (1864–1955), who resided in the same rural town, took him on as an apprentice in the field of church decoration. Leduc brought Borduas along to assist with projects in Sherbrooke, Montreal, and Halifax, giving the young painter encouragement and guidance along the way. The early years of Borduas's career mirrored his teacher's path: after graduating from the École des beaux-arts de Montréal, he travelled to Paris to study at the Ateliers d'art sacré. Leduc's mentorship laid a bedrock for Borduas, who, upon his return to Canada, would emerge as a pivotal figure in the Quebec avant-garde movement. Embracing modernism, Borduas eventually deviated from Leduc's traditional and ecclesiastical approach, leading the Automatist movement and the celebrated "Refus Global" manifesto, while remaining in close contact with the authoring Monsieur Leduc.

Read more in ACI's *Paul-Émile Borduas: Life & Work* by François-Marc Gagnon

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