

CANADIAN SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS PART II

10 more works to make the summer last



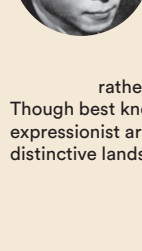
"There is no such thing as a model or ideal Canadian," remarked Pierre Elliott Trudeau in 1971. "What could be more absurd?" In putting together this week's newsletter about summer we were thinking about these words. While the country shares a common love for the season, our artists present anything but a singular depiction of it. Thank you to all of our readers who wrote last month to tell us how much you liked our first Scenes of Summer newsletter. Our particular gratitude goes to those of you who asked to see more summer images that reflect the nation's diversity. You remind us, as did Trudeau, that in art as in life, "a society which emphasizes uniformity is one which creates intolerance." Wishing you wellness and safety in our remaining summer days, so poignantly depicted by the following excellent artists.

Sara Angel

Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

CARVING WITH AN AXE

by Itee Pootoogook

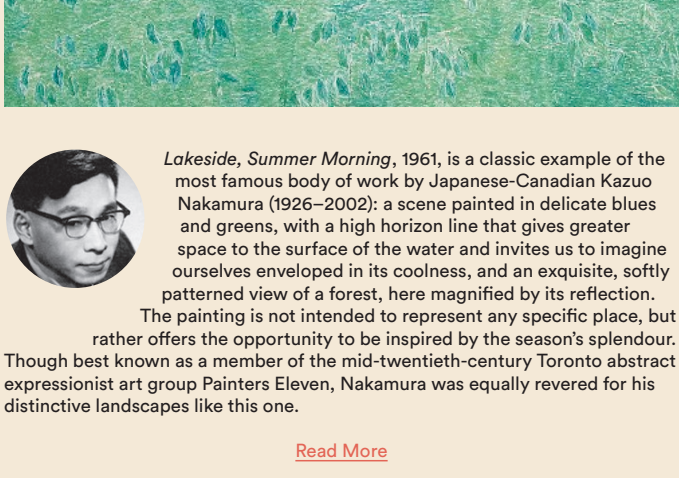


In this drawing, Kinngait (Cape Dorset)-based Itee Pootoogook (1951–2014) depicts an Arctic summer scene in which the subject looks out at us with quiet dignity, as if we have just arrived to visit with him as he works. For Pootoogook and his community, July and August offer the opportunity to go out on the land and to spend more time outdoors. Here the artist has depicted carving, a traditional activity, in a thoroughly modern style. The green boat's dramatic diagonal form and its contrast against the dusty pink soles of the man's boots and the orange background make *Carving with an Axe*, 2006, as much a deft celebration of colour as a salutation to a seasonal opportunity.

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LAKESIDE, SUMMER MORNING

by Kazuo Nakamura

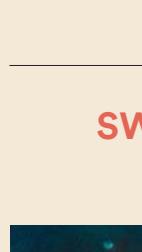
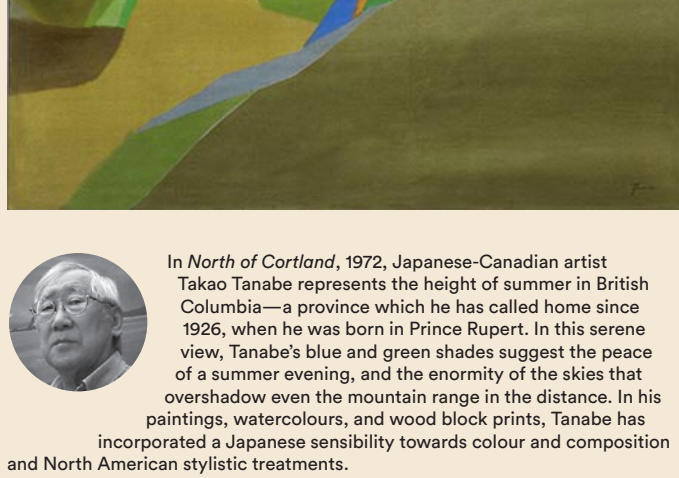


Lakeside, Summer Morning, 1961, is a classic example of the most famous body of work by Japanese-Canadian Kazuo Nakamura (1926–2002): a scene painted in delicate blues and greens, with a high horizon line that gives greater space to the surface of the water and invites us to imagine ourselves enveloped in its coolness, and an exquisite, softly patterned view of a forest, here magnified by its reflection. The painting is not intended to represent any specific place, but rather offers the opportunity to be inspired by the season's splendour. Though best known as a member of the mid-twentieth-century Toronto abstract expressionist art group Painters Eleven, Nakamura was equally revered for his distinctive landscapes like this one.

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YES YES Y'ALL

by Yannick Anton

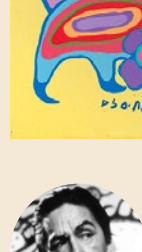
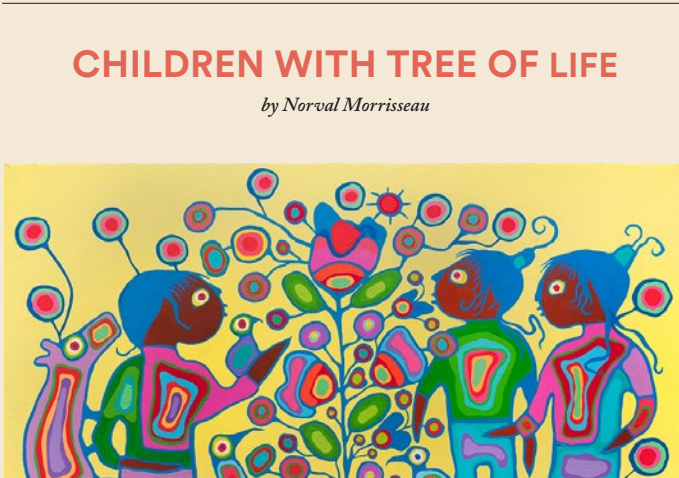


This image by Toronto photographer Yannick Anton highlights the vivacity and energy of Yes Yes Y'all, one of Toronto's largest LGBTQ events (which celebrated its 10th anniversary last year and is meeting virtually this summer). Commenting on the hip-hop bash Anton says, "By midnight the party would be rammed with the most diverse, beautiful people in the city: queer, trans, bi, all shades, all sizes.... I could never take enough photos to capture all moves, all the 'fits, and all the emotion in one room." Anton's art provides joyful and important cultural documentation for future generations.

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NORTH OF CORTLAND

by Takao Tanabe

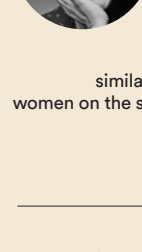
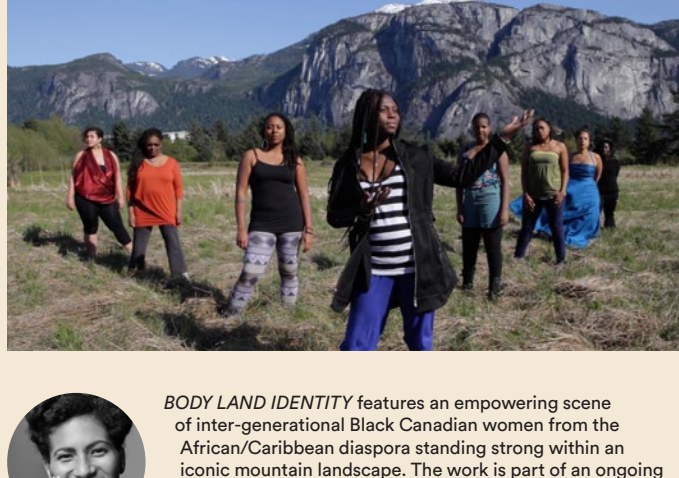


In *North of Cortland*, 1972, Japanese-Canadian artist Takao Tanabe represents the height of summer in British Columbia—a province which he has called home since 1926, when he was born in Prince Rupert. In this serene view, Tanabe's blue and green shades suggest the peace of a summer evening, and the serenity of the skies that overshadow even the mountain range in the distance. In his paintings, watercolours, and wood block prints, Tanabe has incorporated a Japanese sensibility towards colour and composition and North American stylistic treatments.

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SWIMMING UP TO THE SUN

by Mary Pratt

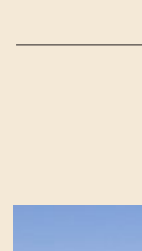
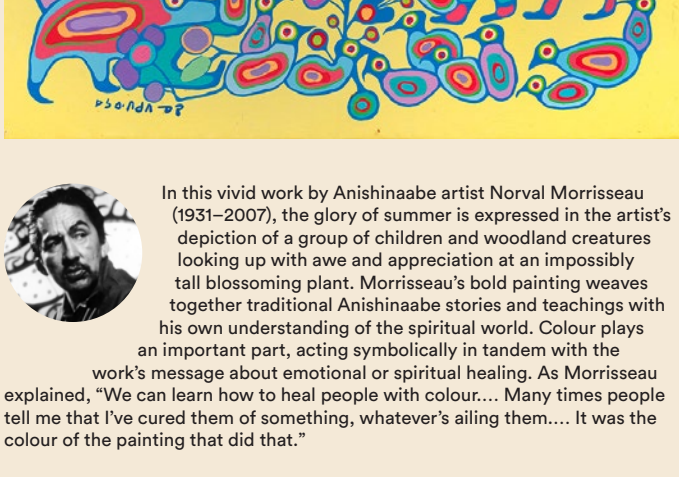


In her presentation of a woman rising up to the surface of a shimmering body of water, Newfoundland's great painter Mary Pratt (1935–2018) offers an image of summer, distilled. A study in contrasts—warmth and coolness, light and shadow, mystery and the ordinary—*Swimming Up to the Sun*, 1998, is a luminous depiction of an everyday moment made monumental by Pratt's hand. Floating gently in the centre of a crystal-clear body of water with her arms outstretched and her face tilted to greet the brilliant sun, the artist's model Donna appears beatific, suspended in time. Though best known for her still-life scenes of objects bathed in glowing light, Pratt's portraits showcase her unique ability to depict the complexities of human relationships and experience.

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CHILDREN WITH TREE OF LIFE

by Norval Morrisseau

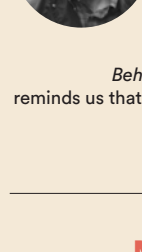
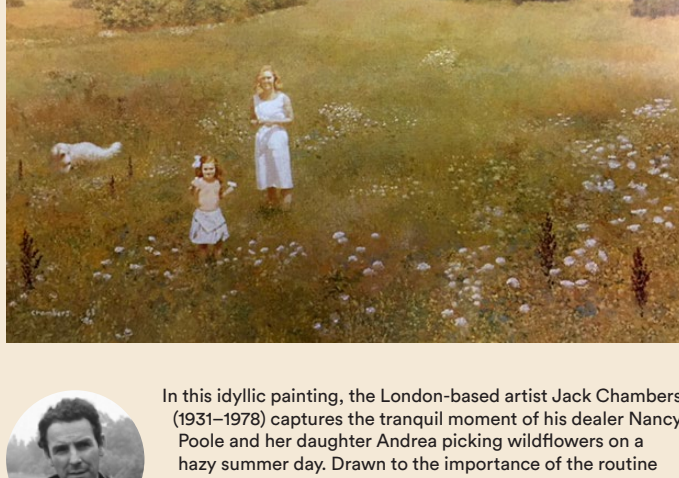


In this vivid work by Anishinaabe artist Norval Morrisseau (1931–2007), the glory of summer is expressed in the artist's depiction of a group of children and woodland creatures looking up with awe and appreciation at an impossibly tall blossoming plant. Morrisseau's bold painting weaves together traditional Anishinaabe stories and teachings with his own understanding of the spiritual world. Colour plays an important part, acting symbolically in tandem with the work's message about emotional or spiritual healing. As Morrisseau explained, "We can learn how to heal people with colour.... Many times people tell me that I've cured them of something, whatever's ailing them.... It was the colour of the painting that did that."

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BODY LAND IDENTITY

by Ella Cooper

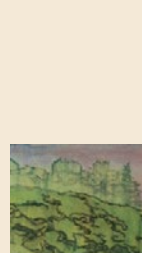
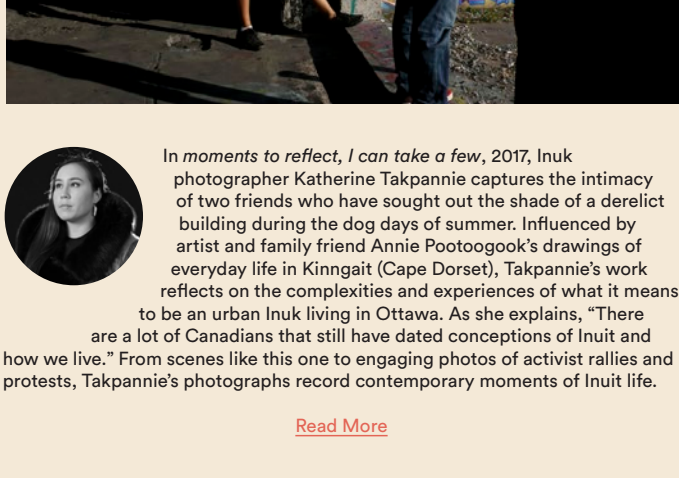


BODY LAND IDENTITY features an evocative scene of inter-generational Black Canadian women from the African/Caribbean diaspora standing strong within an iconic mountain landscape. The work is part of an ongoing photographic series and video installation by Toronto-based multidisciplinary artist and filmmaker Ella Cooper that reflects on history's lack of acknowledgement, documentation, and erasure of Black presence and culture in Canada. Other similar works in Cooper's series feature resilient Black Canadian women on the snow frosted ground and bathing in the summer sunlight.

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SUMMER BEHIND THE HOUSE

by Jack Chambers

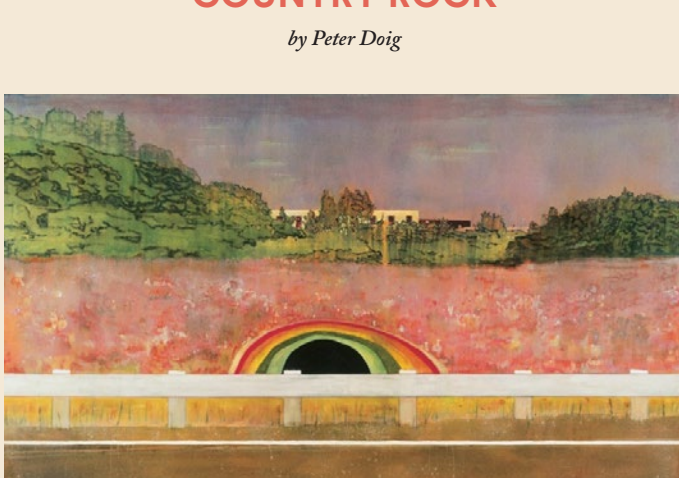


In this idyllic painting, the London-based artist Jack Chambers (1931–1978) captures the tranquil moment of his dealer Nancy Poole and her daughter Andrea picking wildflowers on a hazy summer day. Drawn to the importance of the routine and intimate encounters between friends and family—particularly in his hometown—Chambers often depicted scenes in a photorealist style, imbuing the everyday with a divine sense of wonder. In a time of social distancing, *Summer Behind the House*, 1965, has particular poignance as Chambers reminds us that there are worlds to be discovered in our own backyards.

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MOMENTS TO REFLECT, I CAN TAKE A FEW

by Katherine Takpannie



In *moments to reflect, I can take a few*, 2017, Inuk photographer Katherine Takpannie captures the intimacy of two friends who have sought out the shade of a derelict building during the dog days of summer. Influenced by artist and family friend Annie Pootoogook's drawings of everyday life in Kinngait (Cape Dorset), Takpannie's work reflects on the complexities and experiences of what it means to be an urban Inuk living in Ottawa. As she explains, "There are a lot of Canadians that still have dated conceptions of Inuit and how we live." From scenes like this one to engaging photos of activist rallies and protests, Takpannie's photographs record contemporary moments of Inuit life.

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COUNTRY ROCK

by Peter Doig



In *Country Rock*, 1998–99, Canadian-raised, Trinidad-based Peter Doig (b.1959) depicts the exterior of a concrete tunnel seen when travelling along Toronto's Don Valley Parkway. The structure was built in 1961 and over-painted with a rainbow mural in 1972 by local teenager Berg Johnson, to mark the death of a friend who had been killed in a tragic car accident nearby, and to make city-dwellers smile. Doig suffuses *Country Rock* with the joy and hope of summer as well as longing and nostalgia for his teenage years. The tunnel is something experienced by all, yet belonging to no one in particular, encapsulating the uncanny quality of an ubiquitous urban space transformed.

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