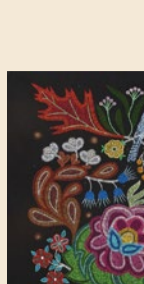


CANADIAN SUMMER SCENES

Artists from across the country depict the best of the season



Winter may define Canada but evidence reveals that we love summer. Studies show that 57 percent of Canadians say the warmer months are their favourite season, a fact that the acclaimed Prince Edward Island novelist Lucy Maud Montgomery made clear in *Anne of the Island* (the third novel in the series *Anne of Green Gables*), where she wrote: "I wonder what it would be like to live in a world where it was always June." There is no shortage of Canadian artists who, like Montgomery, have memorialized their love for long, warm, sun-drenched days in their work. On the eve of the August long weekend, we're spotlighting ten pieces that capture the sensation of summer. From everyone at the Art Canada Institute, we wish you a great holiday.

Sara Angel
Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

THIS PAINTING IS A MIRROR

by Christi Belcourt



Christi Belcourt's work reflects the plentiful beauty of nature while reminding us of the material and spiritual abundance in our own lives. A state of eternal summer is part of our being. As the artist explains, her work is called *This Painting is a Mirror* because it reflects back to the viewer all the beauty that is already within them. We are not separate from anything, we are born connected to the earth, with the capacity to love, to be kind, to be generous, to be gentle. As Odawa Elder Wilfred Peltier taught, "Everything we need to know is already inside of us."

[Read More](#)

A WREATH OF FLOWERS

by William Brymner

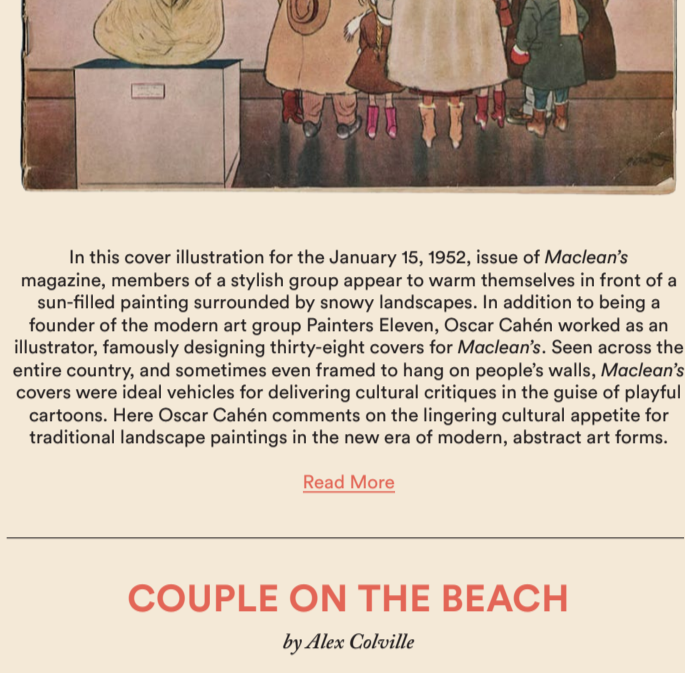


William Brymner's painting of young girls sitting on a hillside making a wreath of flowers was created during his visit to Runswick Bay, Yorkshire, in 1884. *A Wreath of Flowers* was a critical success for Brymner and a turning point in his early career as an artist. Its outdoor setting reflects Brymner's commitment to painting *en plein air*, a practice that he knew was important to many modern French artists. In meeting people in the community and asking local children to pose, the artist came to realize how challenging his young models were to capture: "The difficulties of painting children the size mine are awful. Keeping the pose for two minutes and then doing something altogether different for 10 nearby drives me wild sometimes, but they are prettier than anything else which keeps me at them."

[Read More](#)

GALLERY SUMMER SCENE

by Oscar Cahén

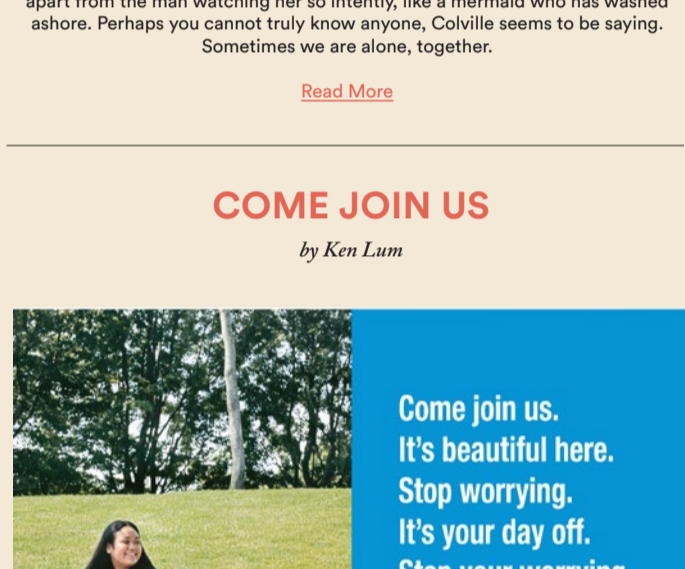


In this cover illustration for the January 15, 1952, issue of *Maclean's* magazine, members of a stylish group appear to warm themselves in front of a sun-filled painting surrounded by snowy landscapes. In addition to being a founder of the modern art group Painters Eleven, Oscar Cahén worked as an illustrator, famously designing thirty-eight covers for *Maclean's*. Seen across the entire country, and sometimes even framed to hang on people's walls, *Maclean's* covers were ideal vehicles for delivering cultural critiques in the guise of playful cartoons. Here Oscar Cahén comments on the lingering cultural appetite for traditional landscape paintings in the new era of modern, abstract art forms.

[Read More](#)

COUPLE ON THE BEACH

by Alex Colville

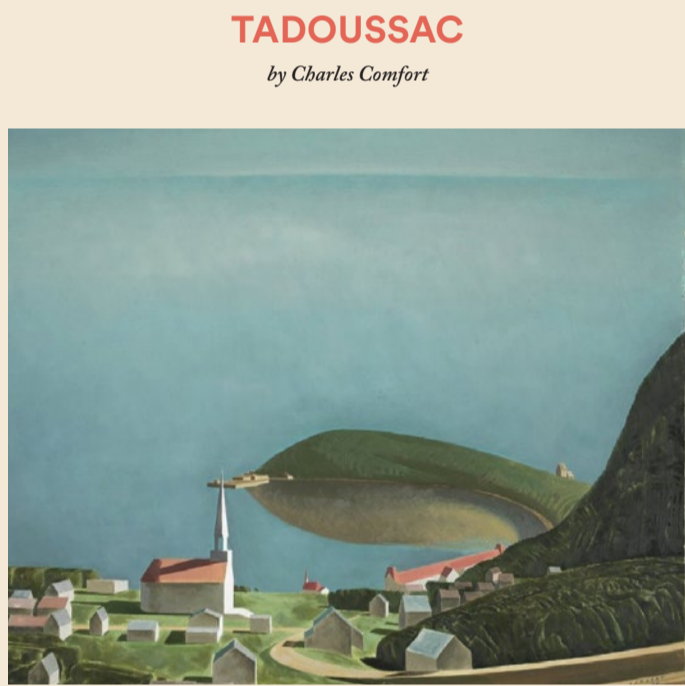


Alex Colville's outdoor scenes of Maritime life are some of the most iconic in popular culture. The enigmatic *Couple on the Beach* depicts the artist and his wife, Rhoda, in a quiet moment, relaxing in the sun. Despite the pair's obvious intimacy, an uncrouched, cinematic quality pervades the scene: viewed from behind, Colville crouches over his partner, silently observing her reclining figure. With her eyes and face hidden by her large hat, Rhoda appears to be a world apart from the man watching her so intently, like a mermaid who has washed ashore. Perhaps you cannot truly know anyone, Colville seems to be saying. Sometimes we are alone, together.

[Read More](#)

COME JOIN US

by Ken Lum



It isn't easy to resist peer pressure, especially on a gloriously summer day. This work from Ken Lum's 1995–2011 series *Portrait-Repeated Text* could not have more accurately predicted the present dilemma of maintaining social distance while staying connected to nature—and to each other. Part of a larger body of work in which Lum paired photographic portraits with accompanying graphic text, the image offers a striking commentary on the uncertainties and conundrums facing ordinary Canadians. Though it is ultimately up to the viewer to interpret the situations presented in Lum's work, we think this is an image to which we can all relate.

[Read More](#)

TADOUSSAC

by Charles Comfort

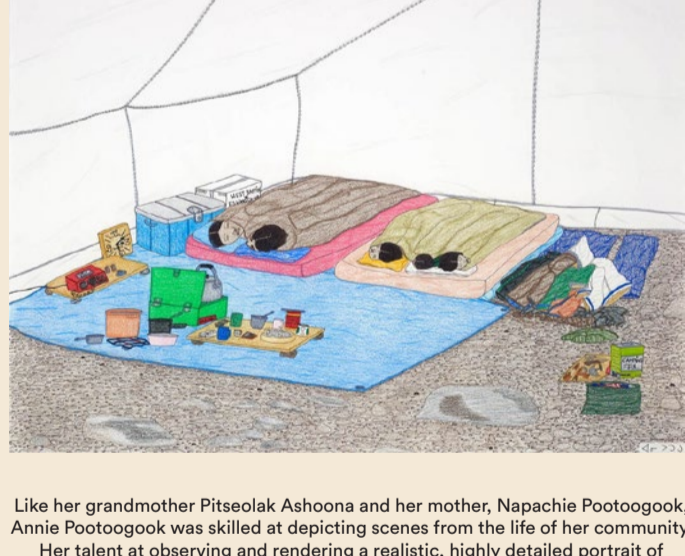


In *Tadoussac*, one of the most celebrated works by Charles Comfort (1900–1999), the painter presents a small village in Quebec's Côte-Nord, where the immensity of the St. Lawrence and the mouth of the majestic Saguenay Fjord fill the frame. We are given an epic view; we can feel the heat hanging in the air and are taken into the heart of this summer scene. Comfort immigrated to Winnipeg from Scotland with his family in 1912, and by the 1930s, was working as a commercial illustrator as well as teaching at the Ontario College of Art and Design. In 1932, Comfort was commissioned to design a mural for Toronto's North American Life Building, the first of many such works he would do. A year later, Comfort came to know the American Precisionist photographer and painter Charles Sheeler, who played a critical role in the Modernist movement. Comfort soon developed a uniquely understated but powerful style that is exemplified by the clear, crisp colours and shapes in *Tadoussac*.

[Read More](#)

THE PAINTER

by William Kurelek

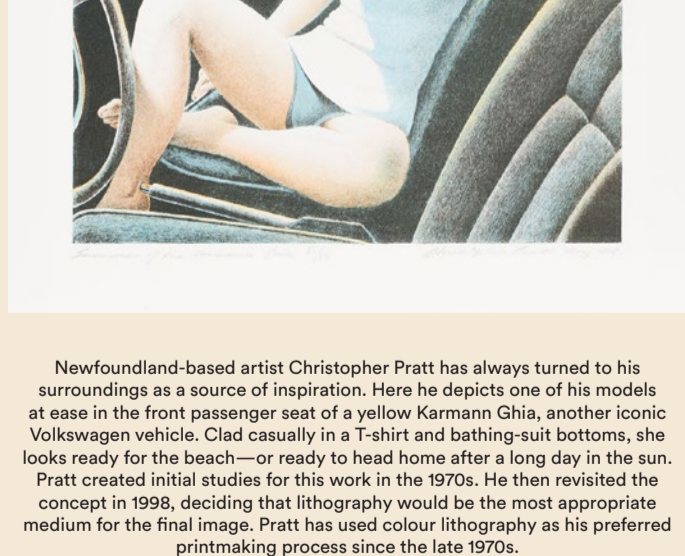


In this late self-portrait, completed three years before the artist's death, Kurelek documents himself painting in a red Volkswagen Beetle before an expansive swath of green and an extensive prairie sky, on one of the nearly annual summer painting excursions he began making to Western Canada in 1963. The painting is atypical for the artist, with its unabashed celebration of life, art, and the natural world. Set in the artist's "spiritual home, aesthetically speaking"—the Oak Hammock marsh east of the family's former farm near Stonewall, Manitoba—*The Painter* is a meditation on nostalgia. It projects a scene from the past but also shows the artist in the act of reconstructing that scene.

[Read More](#)

IN THE SUMMER CAMP TENT

by Annie Pootoogook

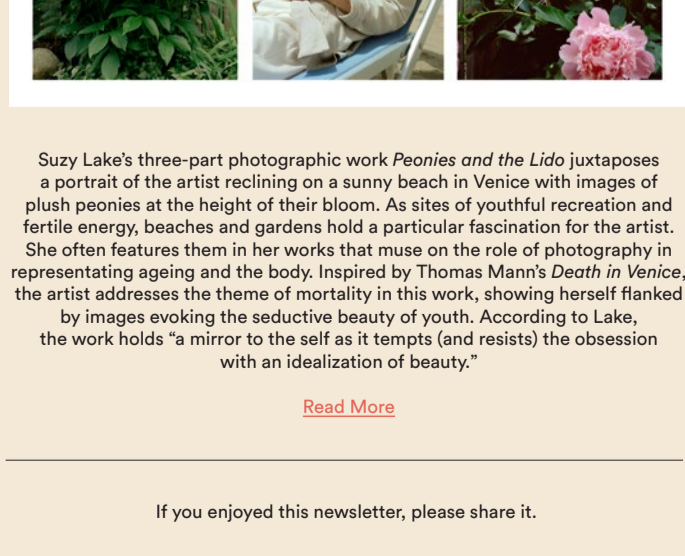


Like her grandmother Pitseolak Ashoona and her mother, Napachie Pootoogook, Annie Pootoogook was skilled at depicting scenes from the life of her community. Her talent at observing and rendering a realistic, highly detailed portrait of Inuit culture is in full force in works like *In the Summer Camp Tent*. Here, a family rests in a light seasonal shelter, surrounded by comfortable bedding and contemporary camping supplies. The longer days and warm weather during these months are ideal for hunting and travel, and summer camping remains an important and beloved tradition for families in the North.

[Read More](#)

SUMMER OF THE KARMANN GHIA

by Christopher Pratt

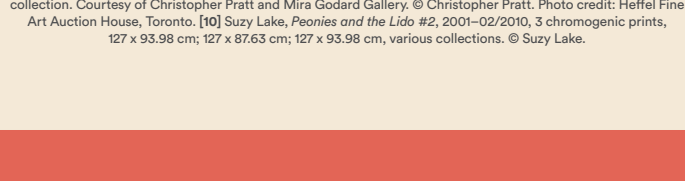


Newfoundland-based artist Christopher Pratt has always turned to his surroundings as a source of inspiration. Here he depicts one of his models at ease in the front passenger seat of a yellow Karmann Ghia, another iconic Volkswagen vehicle. Clad casually in a T-shirt and bathing-suit bottoms, she looks ready for the beach—or ready to head home after a long day in the sun. Pratt created initial studies for this work in the 1970s. He then revisited the concept in 1998, deciding that lithography would be the most appropriate medium for the final image. Pratt has used colour lithography as his preferred printmaking process since the late 1970s.

[Read More](#)

PEONIES AND THE LIDO

by Suzy Lake



Suzy Lake's three-part photographic work *Peonies and the Lido* juxtaposes a portrait of the artist reclining on a sunny beach in Venice with images of lush peonies at the height of their bloom. As sites of youthful recreation and fertile energy, beaches and gardens hold a particular fascination for the artist. She often features them in her works that muse on the role of photography in representing ageing and the body. Inspired by Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, the artist addresses the theme of mortality in this work, showing herself flanked by images evoking the seductive beauty of youth. According to Lake, the work holds "a mirror to the self as it tempts (and resists) the obsession with an idealization of beauty."

[Read More](#)

If you enjoyed this newsletter, please share it.

SHARE

READ PAST NEWSLETTERS

THANK YOU TO OUR BENEFACTORS

The ACI is a not-for-profit educational charity that receives no government financing or public support. Our work is made possible by an important circle of friends, patrons, and benefactors. If you would like to support our important work, please see [this page](#).

Image Credits: [1] Christi Belcourt, *This Painting is a Mirror*, 2012, acrylic on canvas, 206 x 256 cm. Collection of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. [2] William Brymner, *A Wreath of Flowers*, 1884, oil on canvas, 122.5 x 142.7 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Royal Canadian Academy of Arts diploma work, deposited by the artist, Ottawa, 1886 (19). [3] Oscar Cahén, *Untitled*, 1942, 1952, watercolour and gouache, 66 x 60.3 cm. Maclean's. © The Cahén Archives. Courtesy of Tripanier/Bauer Gallery, Calgary, Alberta. [4] Alex Colville, *Couple on the Beach*, 1957, casein tempera on Masonite, 73 x 96.4 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, purchased 1959 (no. 7744). © National Gallery of Canada. Photo credit: National Gallery of Canada. [5] Ken Lum, *Come Join Us* from the series *Portrait-Repeated Text*, 1995–2011, archival inks on Arches watercolour paper, 104.1 x 134.6 cm, Vancouver Art Gallery. [6] Charles Comfort, *Tadoussac*, 1935, oil on canvas, 76.1 x 91.4 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (15471). [7] William Kurelek, *The Painter*, 1974, mixed media on hardboard, 121.9 x 91.4 cm, The Thomson Collection, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, The Thomson Collection, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (AGOID104135). © Estate of William Kurelek, courtesy of the Wynick/Tuck Gallery, Toronto. Photo credit: Art Gallery of Ontario. [8] Annie Pootoogook, *In the Summer Camp Tent*, 2002, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 51 x 66 cm. Collection of John and Joyce Price. Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Reproduced with the permission of Dorset Fine Arts. [9] Christopher Pratt, *Summer of the Karmann Ghia*, 1998, colour lithograph, 28.6 x 28.6 cm. Private collection. Courtesy of Christopher Pratt and Mira Godard Gallery. © Christopher Pratt. Photo credit: Heffel Fine Art Auction House, Toronto. [10] Suzy Lake, *Peonies and the Lido #2*, 2001–02/2010, 3 chromogenic prints, 127 x 93.98 cm; 127 x 87.63 cm; 127 x 93.98 cm, various collections. © Suzy Lake.