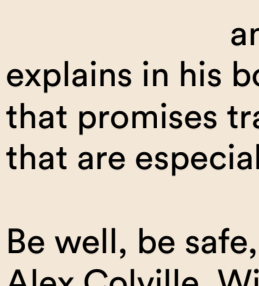
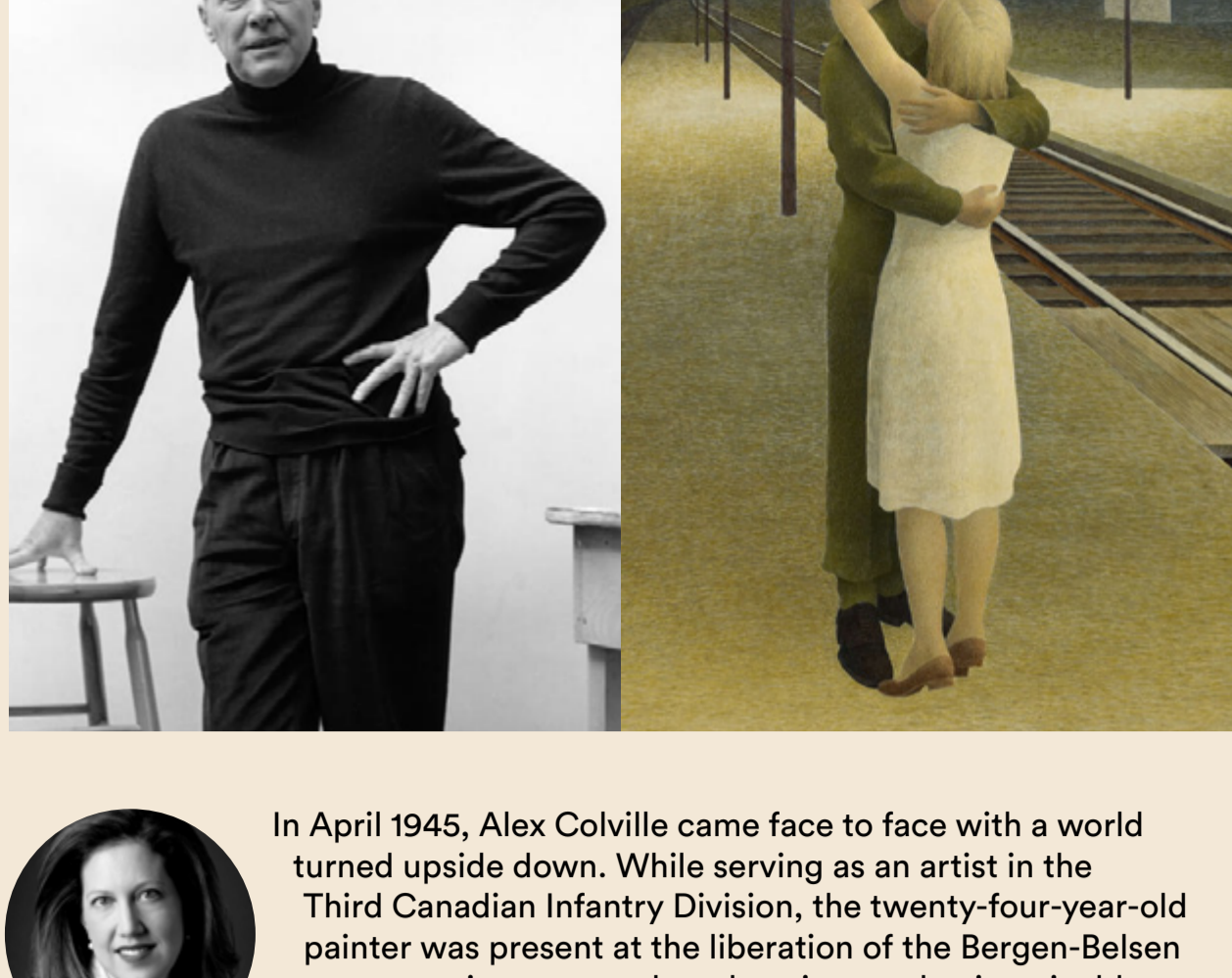


# THE COMFORT OF COLVILLE

*How the beloved East Coast artist Alex Colville (1920–2013) forged order through chaos in his paintings of everyday life*



In April 1945, Alex Colville came face to face with a world turned upside down. While serving as an artist in the Third Canadian Infantry Division, the twenty-four-year-old painter was present at the liberation of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where he witnessed unimaginable depravity. The traumatic encounter led the Maritime artist to create works that for the most part were about order, serenity, and a celebration of his surroundings. As ACI author Ray Cronin explains in his book *Alex Colville: Life & Work*, the artist revolted “against a world that promises tragedy.” In defiance of chaos, Colville painted comfort—scenes that are especially meaningful right now.

Be well, be safe, and enjoy this Art Canada Institute content about the great Alex Colville. Wishing you a happy long weekend,

**Sara Angel**  
Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

[Online Art Book](#)

## ALEX COLVILLE: LIFE & WORK



Ray Cronin examines Colville's trajectory from student to official war artist to Canadian icon. Over the course of his career, Colville explored the themes of family life, desire, individual will, and relationships between men and women, humans and animals, nature and the machine, and, above all, order and chaos. The drive Colville had to make sense out of life is at the heart of his significance as an artist.

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[The Essay](#)

## AN EYE FOR ANIMALS



Throughout his career, Colville portrayed the relationship between animals and humans—between those who *act* and those who *think*—to express balance in the world around us. While people are often consumed by the pursuit of knowledge and meaning, animals offer a respite; they are a calming presence, untroubled by the unknown.

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[Video](#)

## WHAT MAKES COLVILLE'S ART CANADIAN?

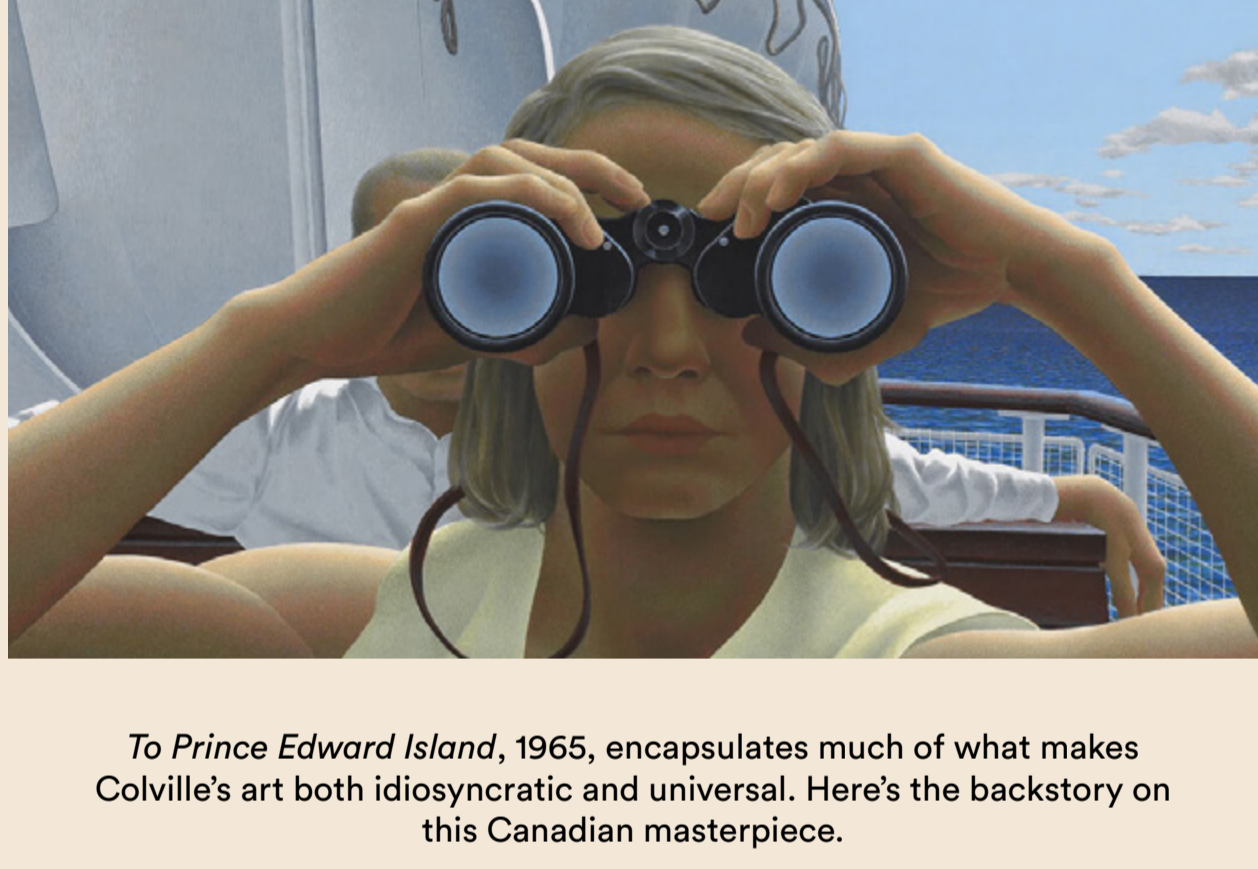


Ray Cronin discusses how Alex Colville painted some of the most memorable images ever created in this country. His iconic paintings of bucolic Maritime life have come to represent a unique vision of Canada.

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[Spotlight](#)

## THE ART OF LOOKING



*To Prince Edward Island, 1965*, encapsulates much of what makes Colville's art both idiosyncratic and universal. Here's the backstory on this Canadian masterpiece.

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[Online Exhibition](#)

## AN EVERYDAY ORDER



According to Ray Cronin, “Colville was intent on creating a world of order from the reality of chaos.” In this online exhibition, Cronin explores some of Colville's most important works that encourage us to be steadfast and hopeful in the face of life's challenges.

[Explore Here](#)

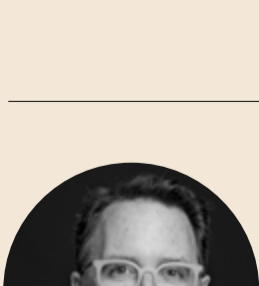
[Spotlight](#)

## THE FELINE AND THE FUTURE



In his print *Black Cat, 1996*, Colville addresses the subject of geometry in a quest for order, domesticity, and the challenge of confronting the future.

[Learn More](#)



Ray Cronin is a Nova Scotia–based writer and curator. A former director and CEO of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, he is the regular contributor of the *Visual Art* section for *Halifax Magazine* as well as several Canadian and American art magazines. His forthcoming title for the Art Canada Institute, *Mary Pratt: Life & Work*, will be available online April 24, 2020.

We wish you a safe and healthy long weekend, and hope that you find comfort in these works by Alex Colville. If you enjoyed this newsletter, please share it.

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Image Credits: [1] Alex Colville, C.C. (Companion, Order of Canada), 1986, photograph by Harry Palmer. [2] Alex Colville, *Soldier and Girl at Station*, 1953, glazed tempera on hardboard, 40.6 x 61 cm, The Thomson Collection at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. [3] Alex Colville, *Cyclist and Crow*, 1981, acrylic on hardboard, 70.6 x 100 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. [4] Alex Colville, *Dog and Groom*, 1991, acrylic polymer emulsion on hardboard, 62.4 x 72 cm, private collection. [5] Alex Colville, *Dog, Boy, and St. John River*, 1958, oil and synthetic resin on Masonite, 61 x 82.6 cm, Museum London. [6] Alex Colville, *To Prince Edward Island*, 1965, acrylic emulsion on Masonite, 61.9 x 92.5 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. [7] Alex Colville, *Couple on the Beach*, 1957, casein tempera on Masonite, 73.4 x 96.4 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. [8] Alex Colville, *Black Cat*, 1996, serigraph on paper, edition of 70, 36 x 36 cm, Owens Art Gallery, Mount Allison University, Sackville.