

FALLING INTO CANADIAN FALL

12 AUTUMN ART MOMENTS

*Harvesting, migration, colours, and celebration:
enjoy the season through these 12 works*



Heading into the long weekend we're looking at art that reflects all of the extraordinary juxtapositions of this time of year: sunshine and winds; ripe fruits and savoury meals; bright lush foliage and deep blue skies. Inspired by autumn, we're showing some of our favourite examples of how Canadian artists have responded to the season in a multitude of surprising and unexpected ways. From iconic landscapes to harvest-based cultural traditions and patterns of wildlife migration, the works below offer thought-provoking and personal reflections on the cultural, environmental, and symbolic significance of fall. We hope that they bring you joy this long weekend, a holiday when many of us will be distancing and celebrating apart. From all of us at the Art Canada Institute, best wishes for a safe and happy Thanksgiving!

Sara Angel

Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

IN THE NUN'S GARDEN

by Sarah Robertson

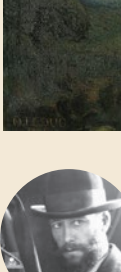


In this colourful scene, Sarah Robertson (1891–1948), an important member of Montreal's Beaver Hall Group, places three nuns at work in the garden of their Mother House, which can be seen in the distance. Their forms are surrounded by hearty gemstone-like pumpkins of varying hues that decorate the large canvas and capture the rhythms, warmth, and sumptuous colours of nature in autumn. Reviewing the artist's retrospective of 1952, organized by the National Gallery of Canada, critic Robert Ayre praised this painting for exemplifying Robertson's arrival at the "fullness of her own style."

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DANCER

by Rajni Perera

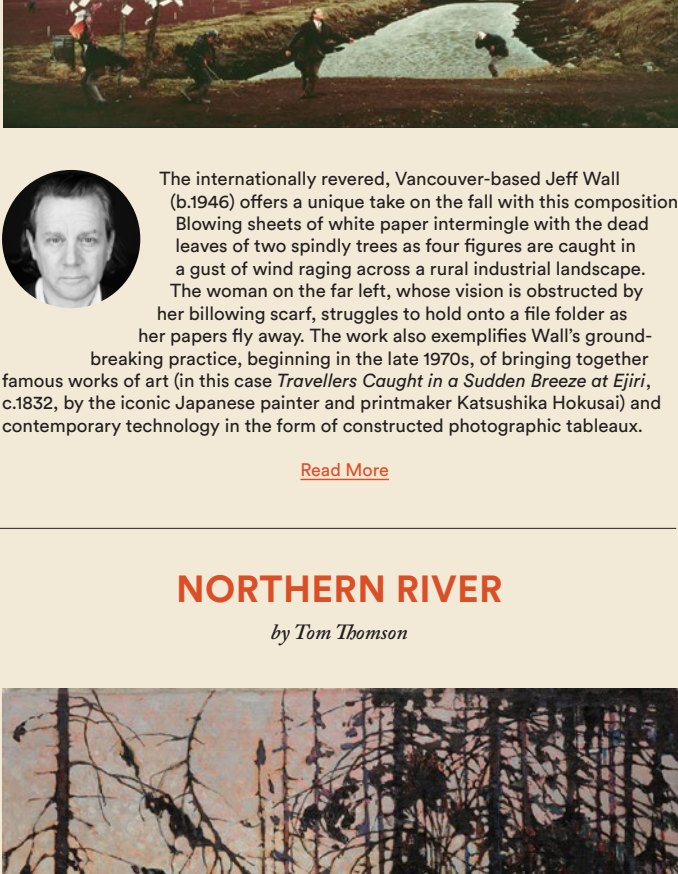


This depiction of a dancing blue celestial figure with a colourful band wrapped around its body brings to mind the celebration of Diwali, which takes place in October or November each year. The Hindu festival of lights honours the triumph of light over darkness, and good over evil. Possessing glowing fingers and toes and an elongated head, this jubilant figure is part of Toronto-based artist Rajni Perera's (b.1985) series *Dancers*, 2016–18, which brings together the aesthetics of science fiction and the dynamics of human motion. Perera elaborates, "Dance became a medium I became interested in for its ability to create gestures of ideas, however abstract or particular. These have evolved over time and recently I've incorporated jewellery design motifs into these celestial silhouettes of swaying or undulating bodies."

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AUTUMN LANDSCAPE #7

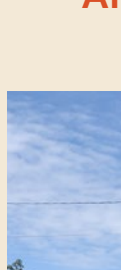
by Gershon Iskowitz



Although the colour purple is not typically associated with autumn, the Polish-Canadian, Toronto-based artist Gershon Iskowitz (1920 or 1921–1988) made it the focus of this bright and vibrant painting. In this work—part of his pivotal 1967 series of twenty abstracted landscapes—Iskowitz represents leaves floating in the air, against a blue field, seen when looking straight up at the sky. As the painter remarked, "Everything was falling down. The leaves were falling down." In *Autumn Landscape #7*, Iskowitz first experimented with depicting colourful ovoid forms, which soon became a hallmark of his style that brought him international acclaim.

GREEN APPLES (POMMES VERTES)

by Ozias Leduc



With this masterpiece, Ozias Leduc (1864–1955) presents an abundance of green apples growing in the warm, golden glow of early autumn setting sun. One of Quebec's most important artists and teacher to the great avant-garde painters Paul-Émile Borduas and Jean Paul Riopelle, Leduc positions us, his viewers, at the tree's trunk, looking outward through the branches, into a vast field stretching into the distance. With its meticulous brushwork and masterful articulation of light, *Green Apples* celebrates the plenitude and tranquility of nature, as well as the artist's own life: Leduc himself was an apple grower.

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A SUDDEN GUST OF WIND (AFTER HOKUSAI)

by Jeff Wall

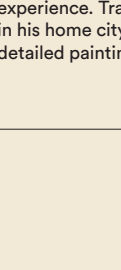
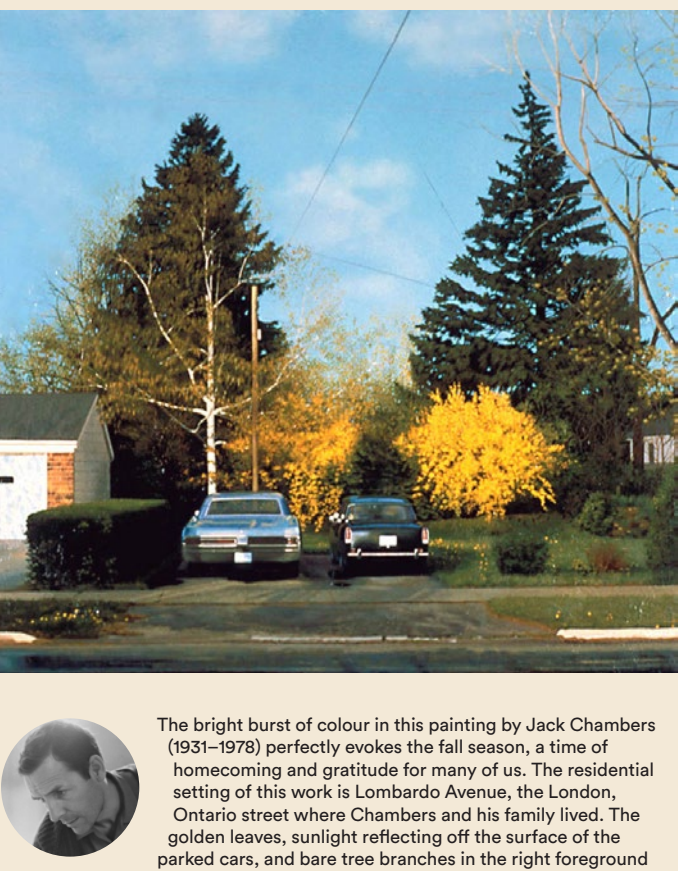


The internationally revered, Vancouver-based Jeff Wall (b.1946) offers a unique take on the fall with this composition. Blowing sheets of white paper intermingle with the dead leaves of two spindly trees as four figures are caught in a gust of wind raging across a rural industrial landscape. The woman on the far left, whose vision is obstructed by her billowing scarf, struggles to hold onto a file folder as her papers fly away. The work also exemplifies Wall's ground-breaking practice, beginning in the late 1970s, of bringing together famous works of art (in this case *Travellers Caught in a Sudden Breeze* at *Ejiri*, c.1832, by the iconic Japanese painter and printmaker Katsushika Hokusai) and contemporary technology in the form of constructed photographic tableaux.

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NORTHERN RIVER

by Tom Thomson

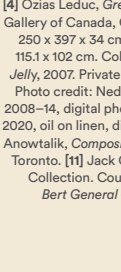
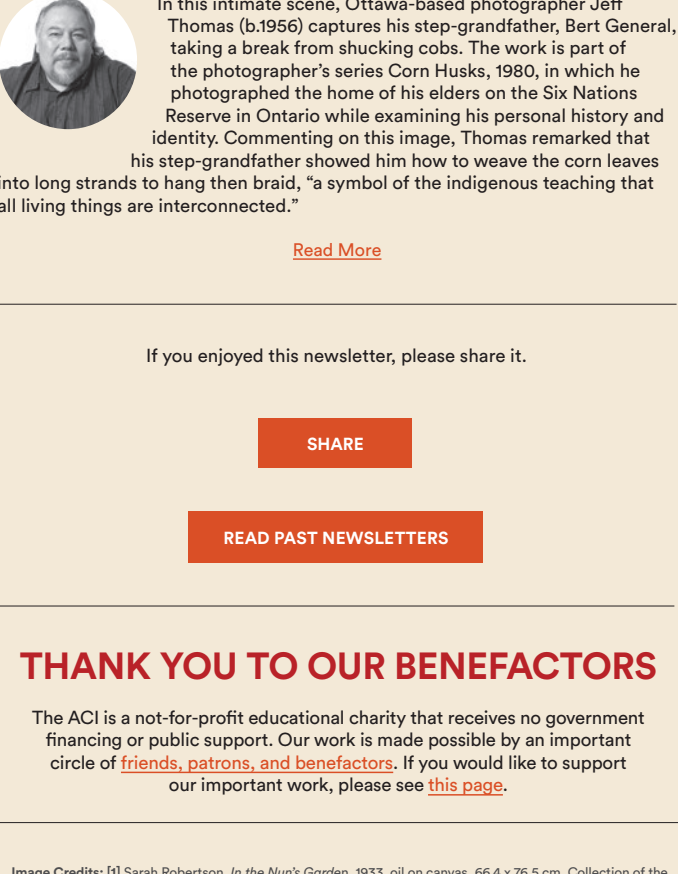


As Tom Thomson (1877–1917) scholar David P. Sligo tells us, the subject of this painting is an ordinary one that the iconic painter might have found in almost any of the places he travelled. "What he has done, however, is take a scene common to Algonquin Park and, with tense concentration, transform it into an extraordinary one. As viewers thread their way around and through the tending mesh of branches, they encounter an array of riches: a glimpse of the full autumn colours and their reflections on the river's surface, or a line of sight through to the bend in the river or even to the hill in the distance on the right." The National Gallery of Canada, swayed by the painting's distinct originality when it was exhibited in 1915, purchased it for \$500.

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SMEARS OF JAM, LIGHTS OF JELLY

by Mary Pratt

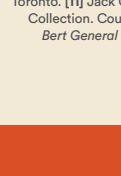
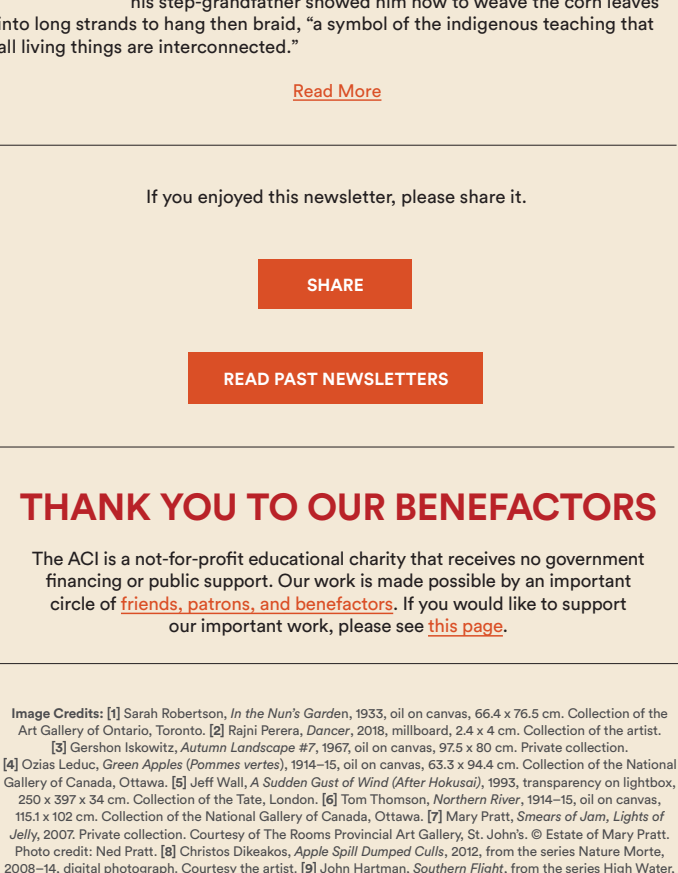


The celebrated Newfoundland painter Mary Pratt (1935–2018) explains, "The jelly that [my family] had [when I was a child] was usually red, and it would sit in place of honour at the table at Thanksgiving and at Christmas. My mother said it was best to leave the red till last, leave the best till last." Pratt, an accomplished realist painter who could turn an ordinary scene of preserves into an exquisite display of colour and light, attributed the centrality of the colour red in her paintings to her mother's appreciation of it as a finishing accent in her meals. The painter's fascination with the way light struck jars of jelly developed at her mother's side.

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APPLE SPILL DUMPED CULLS

by Christos Dikeakos

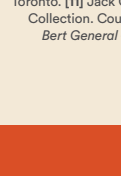
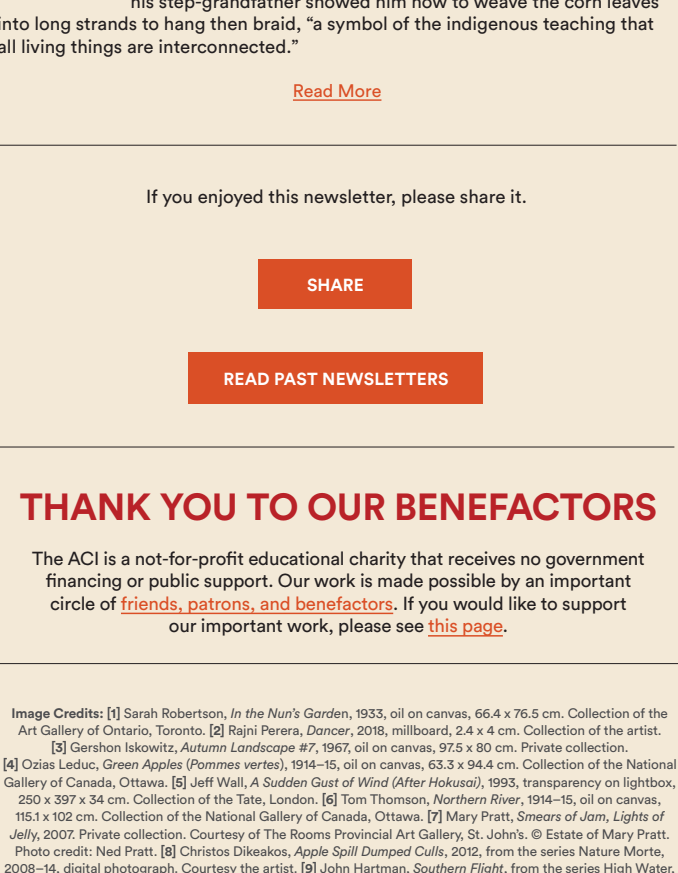


This photograph, part of Christos Dikeakos's (b.1946) body of work "Nature Morte," reminds us that harvest is not without hardship. The French title of the series refers to both the still life artistic tradition and the literal death of nature in the southern Okanagan region where the Vancouver-based photo-conceptualist has a home. Dikeakos presents a massive heap of discarded red and yellow apples on a sloping piece of unkempt land to document the declining rural farming and orchard landscapes of the Okanagan Valley. The figure in the photograph is Dikeakos's neighbour, who dumped the apples after harvesting them because it wasn't economical to transport them to a packing house or juice factory.

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SOUTHERN FLIGHT

by John Hartman



In this large-scale painting, the Ontario-based artist John Hartman (b.1950) depicts himself paddling a canoe, accompanied by a group of migrating birds and a canoe across Georgian Bay. Hartman's most autobiographical work to date, the surreal aerial view features the region's iconic rock formations and waters, fervently depicted by Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven. Georgian Bay has always held special significance to Hartman, who has spent much time there over the course of his life and has frequently made it the subject of his work. Weaving together the figure, nature, and landscape, *Southern Flight* is part of Hartman's latest series *High Water*.

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COMPOSITION (SUMMER AND FALL)

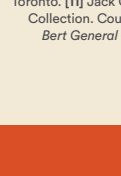
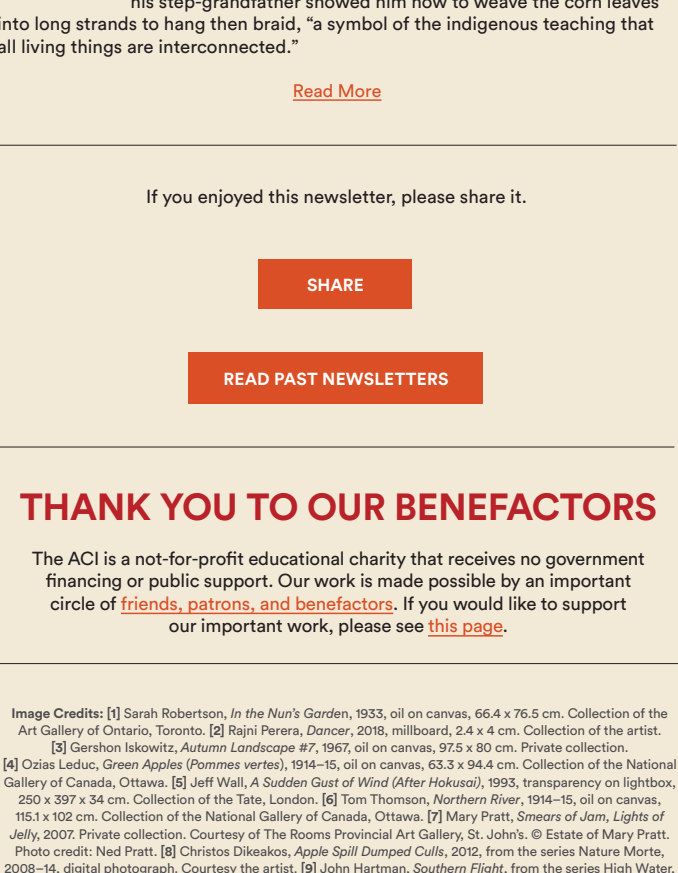
by Mary Ayaq Anowtalik

In this richly coloured composition, Nunavut-based Inuk artist Mary Ayaq Anowtalik (b.1938) presents an aerial view of two pieces of land separated by a curving body of water. In contrast to the grassy field in the lower right, comprising shades of green, yellow, and orange, the land in the upper left is covered with snow. As the title of the work indicates, Anowtalik has simultaneously captured the appearance of the landscape in summer and autumn. The swift marks of coloured pencil reflect the rapid changing of the seasons and the transformation of the physical landscape. The temperature drops below zero in October in Arviat, located on the western shore of Hudson Bay. Although Anowtalik is best known for her sculpture, in her later years she has also produced coloured pencil drawings.

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LOMBARDO AVENUE

by Jack Chambers

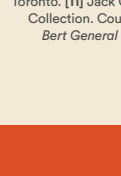
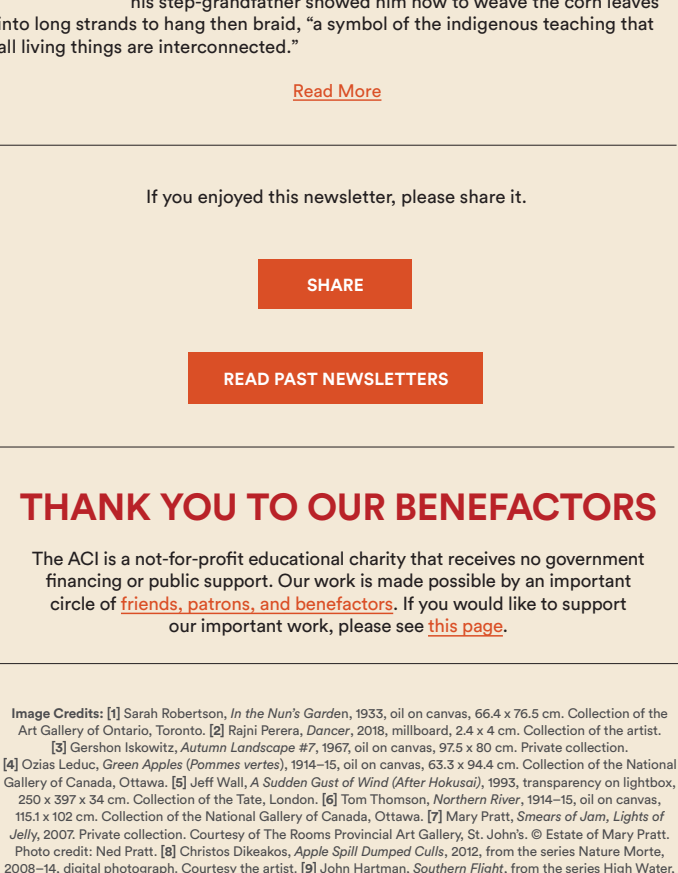


The bright burst of colour in this painting by Jack Chambers (1931–1978) perfectly evokes the fall season, a time of homecoming and gratitude for many of us. The residential setting of this work is Lombardo Avenue, the London, Ontario street where Chambers and his family lived. The golden leaves, sunlight reflecting off the surface of the parked cars, and bare tree branches in the right foreground reflect Chambers's "perceptual realism," a term he coined to describe realist painting that emphasizes primary sensory experience. Training his camera on his family, his house, and other beloved places in his home city, Chambers used the resulting photographs as the basis for his detailed paintings.

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CORN HUSKS

by Jeff Thomson



In this intimate scene, Ottawa-based photographer Jeff Thomas (b.1956) captures his step-grandfather, Bert General, taking a break from shucking cobs. The work is part of the photographer's series *Corn Husks*, 1980, in which he photographed the home of his elders on the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario while examining his personal history and identity. Commenting on this image, Thomas remarked that his step-grandfather showed him how to weave the corn leaves into long strands to hang them braided, "a symbol of the indigenous teaching that all living things are interconnected."

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