

GET TO KNOW THE ARTIST HOMER WATSON

0:01

Homer Watson believed in maintaining sustainable relationships with nature and preserving the environment.

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When Watson was eleven, he received a set of watercolours. Four years later he was given his first oil paints.

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Yet Watson had little formal art training: he spent his childhood studying and copying illustrations in books from his family's library.

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Watson as a boy.

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The southern Ontario scenery of Watson's childhood—Doon and the Grand River—became a touchstone for his art throughout his career.

1:00

Watson believed humans should respect the natural world and made this an important part of his art.

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Watson's career took off when his painting "The Pioneer Mill" (1880) was purchased by Canada's Governor General as a gift for Britain's Queen Victoria.

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Watson's "Pioneer Mill" that Queen Victoria owned.

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The prominent Irish playwright and poet Oscar Wilde declared Watson "the Canadian Constable," comparing him to the famous British landscape painter John Constable (1776–1837).

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Watson is famous for setting an example as an artist "who first saw Canada as Canada." After travelling abroad, he returned home in 1890 because he didn't want to paint in a European style.

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Watson was determined to capture quintessential Canadian subjects: the country being built—including its roads and forestry—and its landscapes.

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Watson's landscapes are not literal representations of what he saw: they are combinations of various places he visited.

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Turbulent skies, with their contrasts of light and dark, appear frequently in Watson's works.

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In 1907, Watson became president of the Canadian Art Club, and in 1918, he was elected president of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts—he was a leader in the Canadian art world.

3:09

"I always felt the line and rhythm of forms of earth... and I hope to get others to see it, too." —Homer Watson