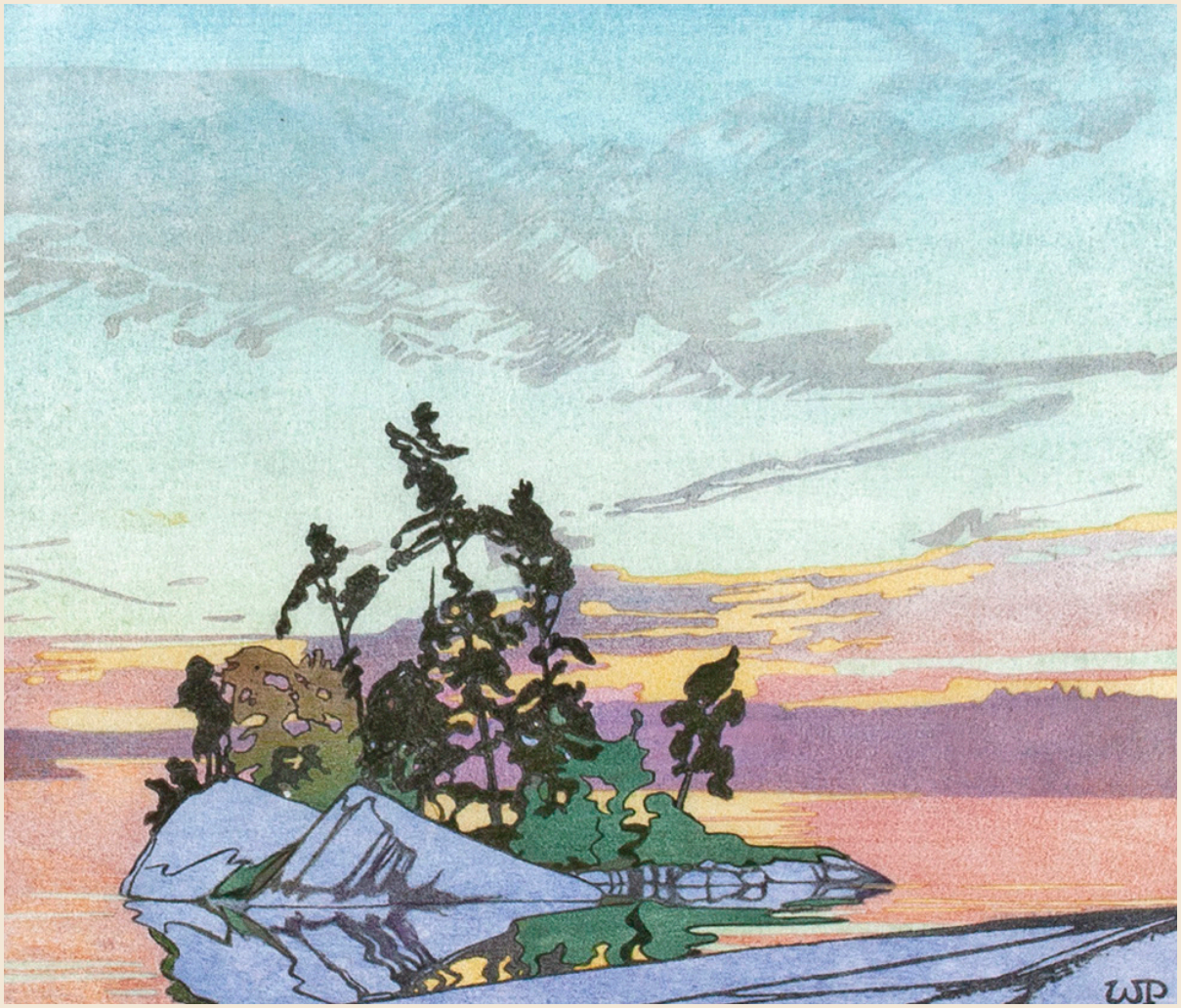
ART CANADA INSTITUTE | INSTITUT DE L'ART CANADIEN

JULY 29, 2022

A TASTE FOR TRAVEL
11 CANADIAN WORKS

Inspired by the promise of adventure this long weekend, we're showcasing artists who capture the pleasures of travel and the destinations that enchanted them.



Walter J. Phillips, *Sunset, Lake of the Woods*, n.d., Courtesy of Mayberry Fine Art, Toronto.

In Doris McCarthy's memoir *My Life* (2006), the legendary Canadian artist and world traveller writes of her desire as a nonagenarian to go on painting trips accompanied by friends—"but of course, at ninety-six I have outlived most of them and I am certainly in no state to go camping in a van." McCarthy's words hint at how wanderlust nourished her soul, creativity, and friendships throughout her long life and seventy-five-year career. As we look forward to new adventures this long weekend, we're highlighting works by McCarthy (below) and other Canadian artists that depict their journeys within this country and abroad, or to famous local destinations. From Annie Pootoogook's drawing of Scotland's ancient Balvenie Castle, to André Biéler's painting of the Hamilton waterfront in Bermuda, to Walter J. Phillips's lithograph of Lake of the Woods at sunset, we hope you enjoy the selections below and that they inspire excursions of your own this long weekend.

Sara Angel
Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

Georgian Bay

GEORGIAN BAY FROM THE AIR

by Doris McCarthy

Doris McCarthy, *Georgian Bay from the Air*, 1966, Doris McCarthy Gallery, Toronto.

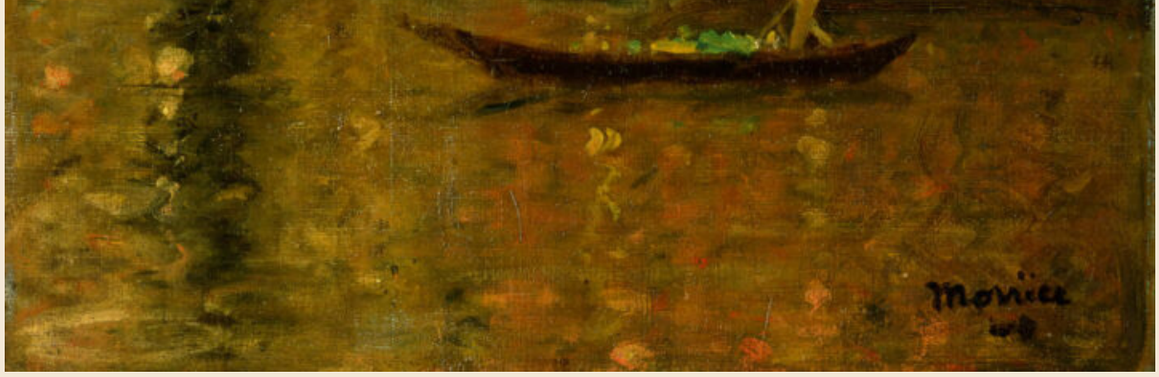
In this work by the celebrated Canadian painter Doris McCarthy (1910–2010), an aerial view of a peninsula in Ontario's iconic Georgian Bay is given vibrant and rhythmic form. Along with four other women artists, McCarthy co-owned two cottages in the area and spent her summers exploring and painting the stunning natural environs. A student of the Group of Seven, in the mid-1960s she started to experiment with a new hard-edged style of depicting landscape scenes. Here McCarthy has distilled her subject to its most simple yet beautifully vivid components: the lush forest is represented by the zigzagging dark green lines in the centre, the variations in topography suggested through the encircling pink and yellow shapes, and the shore and water signalled by the surrounding wavy white, blue, and turquoise lines.

Learn more about Doris McCarthy

Venice

VENICE AT THE GOLDEN HOUR

by James Wilson Morrice



James Wilson Morrice, *Venice at the Golden Hour*, c.1901–02, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

This masterpiece by Montreal-born James Wilson Morrice (1865–1924) transports us to Venice's Grand Canal. One of Canada's leading modernist painters, Morrice captured the city at the "golden hour," when the setting sun bathes every surface it touches in a warm glow. The lower portion of the painting, based on sketches made as he sat at a café patio table one evening, is rendered in shadow; a figure standing on a boat moves through the dark water, whose glimmering surface reflects the bright colours of the surrounding architecture. This was one of Morrice's favourite spots in Venice—a city he repeatedly visited in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Learn more about James Wilson Morrice

Chilliwack, British Columbia

FARM NEAR CHILLIWACK

by E.J. Hughes

E.J. Hughes, *Farm Near Chilliwack*, 1959, Courtesy of the Estate of E.J. Hughes.

The prolific West Coast painter E.J. Hughes (1913–2007) drew endless inspiration from the splendour that surrounded him in British Columbia, often incorporating daily life into his detailed landscapes as he does in this view of a farm on the outskirts of Chilliwack, east of Vancouver. The precisely rendered barn, houses, and other buildings are integrated among the distant mountains, hanging clouds, and the majestic tree in the foreground of this sunny scene. Hughes began his career as a decorative muralist and then served as an official war artist during the Second World War. Following his return home, he sketched his way across the province, parking his Oldsmobile and documenting the vistas before him. Later, in his spare bedroom/studio, Hughes transformed the drawings into his charming, meticulous, and widely admired paintings.

Learn more about E.J. Hughes

Bermuda

FRONT STREET

by André Biéler

André Biéler, *Front Street*, 1922, Masterworks Museum of Bermuda Art.

Swiss-born Canadian artist André Biéler (1895–1989) is best known for his modernist paintings of rural life in Quebec, but his 1922 trip to Bermuda prompted this glistening, sun-dappled scene of the capital's waterfront. Hamilton Harbour is busy with boats that are docked to deliver goods to the nearby market and with a rowboat holding a ferryman who awaits a passenger. The simplified forms of the ships and buildings, bright patches of pastel colours, and visible bits of canvas betray the influence of Fauvism and French artists like André Derain (1880–1954). For the remainder of his career, Biéler would continue his modernist explorations of light and colour in Canada and Switzerland.

Learn more about André Biéler

Shediac, New Brunswick

SHEDIAC BEACH (N.B.)

by Molly Lamb Bobak

Molly Lamb Bobak, *Shediac Beach (N.B.)*, 1972, Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa.

A smattering of gestural brushstrokes captures the lively energy at a beach in Shediac, New Brunswick, in this painting by Fredericton-based artist Molly Lamb Bobak (1920–2014). Although it's impossible to make out the individual faces of the sunbathers, the feeling of basking by the seashore on a balmy afternoon, surrounded by the sound of waves lapping, is clearly evoked. Crowds were a favourite subject of Bobak's and appeared frequently in her paintings—even those she produced as Canada's first and only officially appointed female war artist during the Second World War. Curator Hilary Letwin has noted, "Molly Lamb Bobak's paintings are full of talk: people excitedly calling to each other in the crowd, chatting about this and that."

Read more in ACI's
Molly Lamb Bobak: Life & Work by Michelle Gewurtz

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New York

BILLBOARDS

by David Milne

David Milne, *Billboards*, c.1912, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

A bright façade full of advertisements dominates the composition of this masterful painting of New York by the celebrated Canadian artist David Milne (1882–1953). Having grown up as the youngest of ten children in Bruce County, Ontario, Milne first moved to New York to study art when he was in his early twenties. From 1911 to 1916 he continued to hone his distinctive style and was recognized as one of the most talented avant-garde artists in the city. *Billboards*, c.1912, is abstracted yet clearly recognizable in its subject matter. Our eyes dart across the canvas, taking in the contrasting colours, fragments of text, sparsely leafed trees, sketchy figures, and horse-drawn carriage that make up the bustling metropolis. Later in his career, Milne would turn to quieter locations like Temagami and Baptiste Lake near Bancroft, Ontario, but painted them with the same probing intensity.

Learn more about David Milne

Lake of the Woods

SUNSET, LAKE OF THE WOODS

by Walter J. Phillips

Walter J. Phillips, *Sunset, Lake of the Woods*, n.d., Courtesy of Mayberry Fine Art, Toronto.

The English-born watercolourist and master printmaker Walter J. Phillips (1884–1963) is renowned for his breathtaking views of Lake of the Woods, including this woodblock print depicting the picturesque landscape at sunset. Located between southern Manitoba and Ontario, the region, as Phillips's work shows, is characterized by more than 1,400 rocky islands dotted with jack and white pines. The artist and his family had a cottage in the area and spent many of their summers there from the 1910s to 1929. For more than thirty years, Phillips produced countless colour woodcuts, watercolours, etchings, and engravings dedicated to Lake of the Woods, which, he explained, "appeals with an intimacy that makes every rock and every tree a possible shrine of beauty."

Learn more about Walter J. Phillips

Scotland

BALVENIE CASTLE

by Annie Pootoogook

Annie Pootoogook, *Balvenie Castle*, 2006, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

Kinngait artist Annie Pootoogook (1969–2016) depicts the enchanting ruins of Balvenie Castle in this drawing she created during an artist's residency in Dufftown, Scotland, in 2006. Instead of illustrating the grandeur of the whole thirteenth-century edifice, Pootoogook unexpectedly focuses on a section of the exterior façade, delighting in the irregular shapes of the stones and the patterns they form. She vivifies the ancient grey building—one of Scotland's oldest stone castles—and its surroundings, using her signature bold colour palette, rendering the stones in red, blue, orange, yellow, grey, and white. Scotland served as a rich source of inspiration for Pootoogook, who continued using the experience as subject matter upon her return to Canada.

Read more in ACI's
Annie Pootoogook: Life & Work by Nancy G. Campbell

Nova Scotia

UNTITLED (DIGBY FERRY PASSING POINT PRIM LIGHTHOUSE)

by Maud Lewis

Maud Lewis, *Untitled (Digby Ferry Passing Point Prim Lighthouse)*, 1950s, private collection, Nova Scotia.

This painting by the beloved folk artist Maud Lewis (1901–1970) records the spectacular seaside view at Point Prim in Digby, Nova Scotia, which has long been a prime tourist attraction. Lewis depicts the Digby ferry passing by the Point Prim Lighthouse in the distance as waves crash into the rocky cliffside in the foreground. Since Lewis's time, the Digby ferry has brought Americans and travellers from the rest of Canada to rural Nova Scotia during the summer tourist season. From the shore, visitors can catch glimpses of seals, porpoise, and even whales swimming in the Bay of Fundy. The Point Prim Lighthouse, which has existed for two centuries, is an iconic feature of Nova Scotia's maritime landscape.

Read more in ACI's
Maud Lewis: Life & Work by Ray Cronin

South of France

MARKETPLACE

by Helen McNicoll

Helen McNicoll, *Marketplace*, 1910, The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa.

Crowds peruse the stalls at a market in the south of France in this work by the Montreal-born Impressionist artist Helen McNicoll (1879–1915), who spent the majority of her career in Europe. In the upper left, a woman carrying an empty basket surveys the cornucopia of colourful fruits and vegetables on display, while the busy vendor on the right tends to another customer. *Marketplace*, 1910, is one of several canvases McNicoll painted of rural market towns in Brittany and Normandy. Instead of spending time in Paris—the undisputed capital of the art world at the time—she opted for locations on the northern coast and the south of France and also worked at Grez-sur-Loing, an artists' colony southeast of Paris that was popular with American and Scandinavian Impressionist artists.

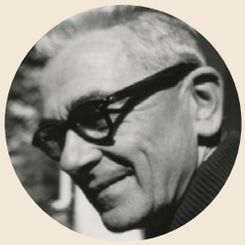
Read more in ACI's
Helen McNicoll: Life & Work by Samantha Burton

Manoir Montmorency, Quebec

SUMMER OF 1914 (L'ÉTÉ DE 1914)

by Jean Paul Lemieux

Jean Paul Lemieux, *Summer of 1914* (*L'été de 1914*), 1965,
Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City.



Quebec City artist Jean Paul Lemieux (1904–1990) depicts the grand Kent House hotel (now the Manoir Montmorency), which overlooks the extraordinary Montmorency Falls in Quebec, in the upper left corner of this painting inspired by his childhood memories. Growing up, Lemieux and his family stayed at the summer resort each year from May to November. This work recalls the pivotal summer of 1914, when the ten-year-old Lemieux, who is portrayed on the left, met an American artist named Parnell who was painting pictures at the Kent House for the restoration of one of the hotel lodges. Fascinated by Parnell's large canvases and inspired by the spectacular view of Montmorency Falls, Lemieux produced his first watercolour that summer.

Read more in ACI's
Jean Paul Lemieux: Life & Work by Michèle Grandbois

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