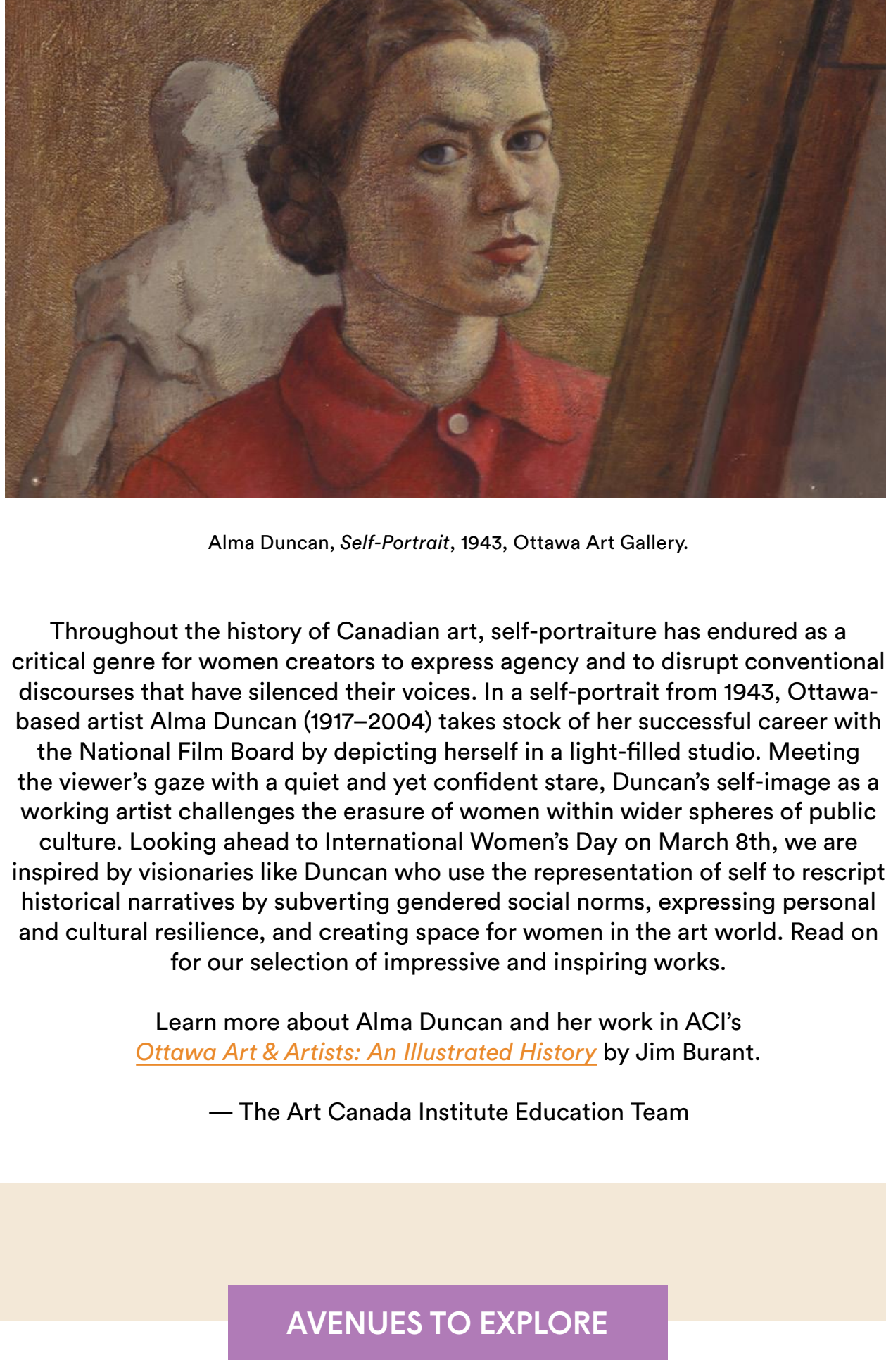


## EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

EXPRESSIONS OF CREATIVITY & RESILIENCE  
ART FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Inspire your students to explore women's histories and identities through self-portraits by five Canadian artists.



Alma Duncan, *Self-Portrait*, 1943, Ottawa Art Gallery.

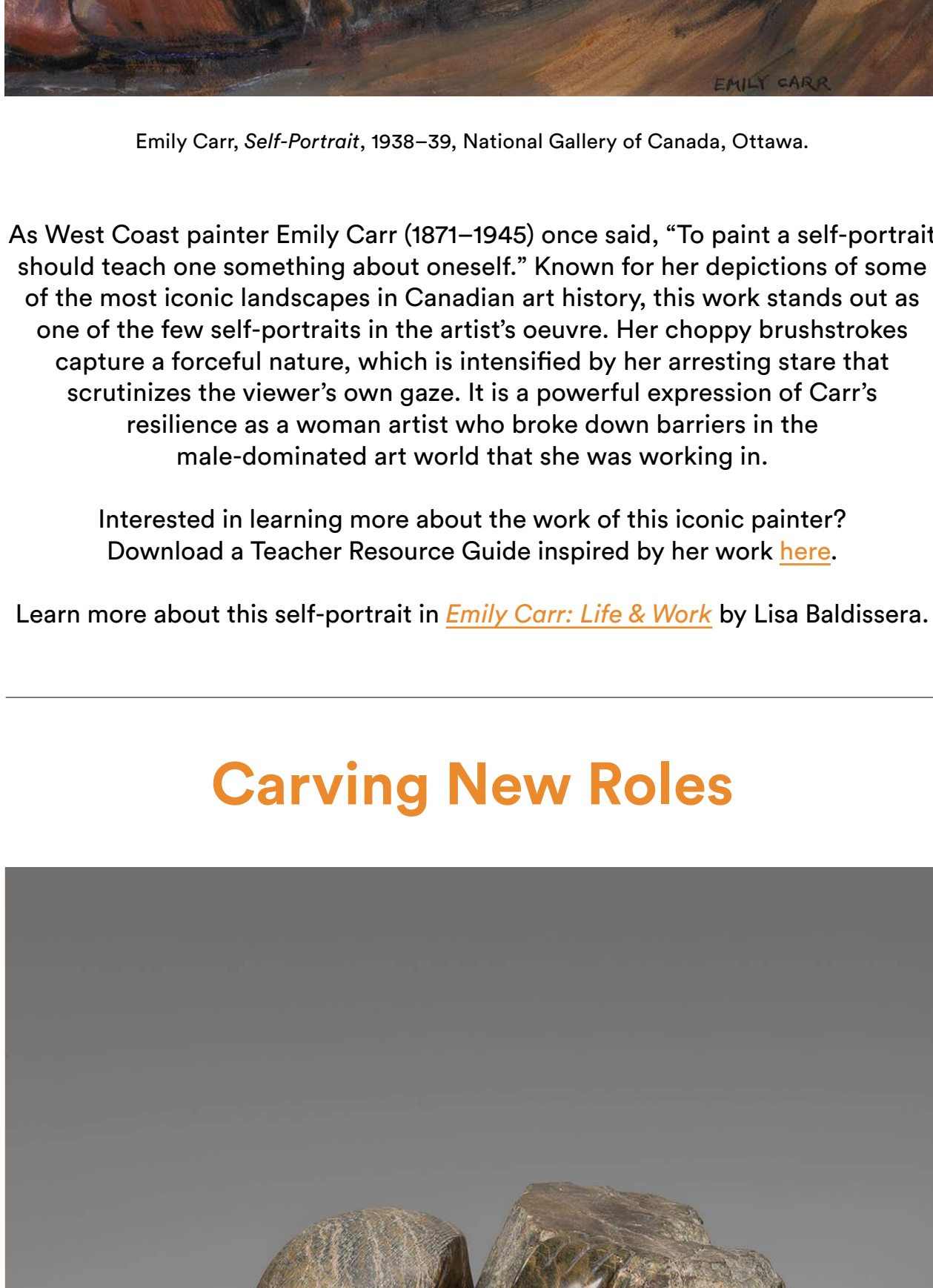
Throughout the history of Canadian art, self-portraiture has endured as a critical genre for women creators to express agency and to disrupt conventional discourses that have silenced their voices. In a self-portrait from 1943, Ottawa-based artist Alma Duncan (1917–2004) takes stock of her successful career with the National Film Board by depicting herself in a light-filled studio. Meeting the viewer's gaze with a quiet and yet confident stare, Duncan's self-image as a working artist challenges the erasure of women within wider spheres of public culture. Looking ahead to International Women's Day on March 8th, we are inspired by visionaries like Duncan who use the representation of self to rescript historical narratives by subverting gendered social norms, expressing personal and cultural resilience, and creating space for women in the art world. Read on for our selection of impressive and inspiring works.

Learn more about Alma Duncan and her work in ACI's [Ottawa Art & Artists: An Illustrated History](#) by Jim Burant.

— The Art Canada Institute Education Team

## AVENUES TO EXPLORE

## An Arresting Gaze



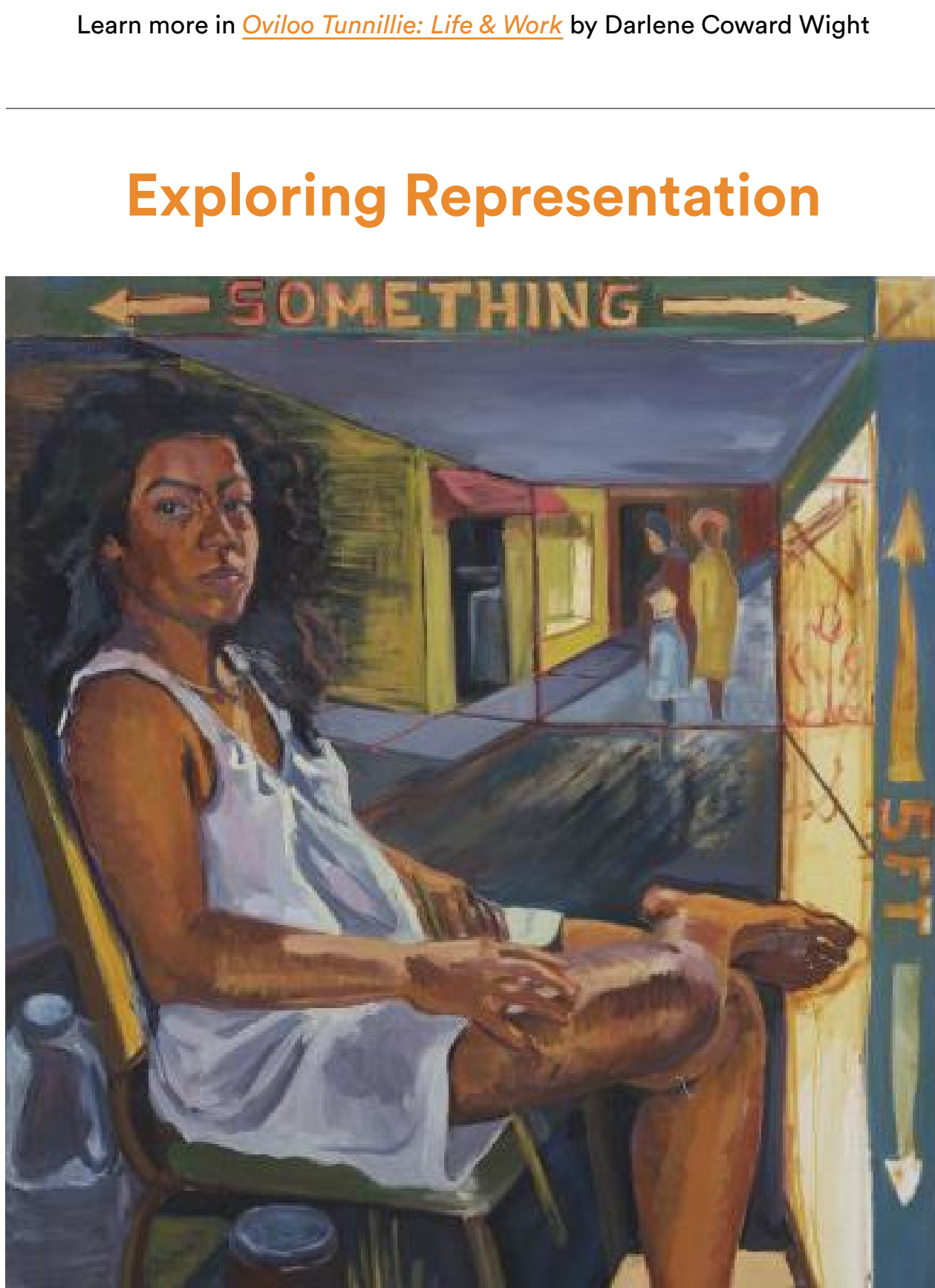
Emily Carr, *Self-Portrait*, 1938–39, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

As West Coast painter Emily Carr (1871–1945) once said, “To paint a self-portrait should teach one something about oneself.” Known for her depictions of some of the most iconic landscapes in Canadian art history, this work stands out as one of the few self-portraits in the artist's oeuvre. Her choppy brushstrokes capture a forceful nature, which is intensified by her arresting stare that scrutinizes the viewer's own gaze. It is a powerful expression of Carr's resilience as a woman artist who broke down barriers in the male-dominated art world that she was working in.

Interested in learning more about the work of this iconic painter?  
Download a Teacher Resource Guide inspired by her work [here](#).

Learn more about this self-portrait in [Emily Carr: Life & Work](#) by Lisa Baldissara.

## Carving New Roles

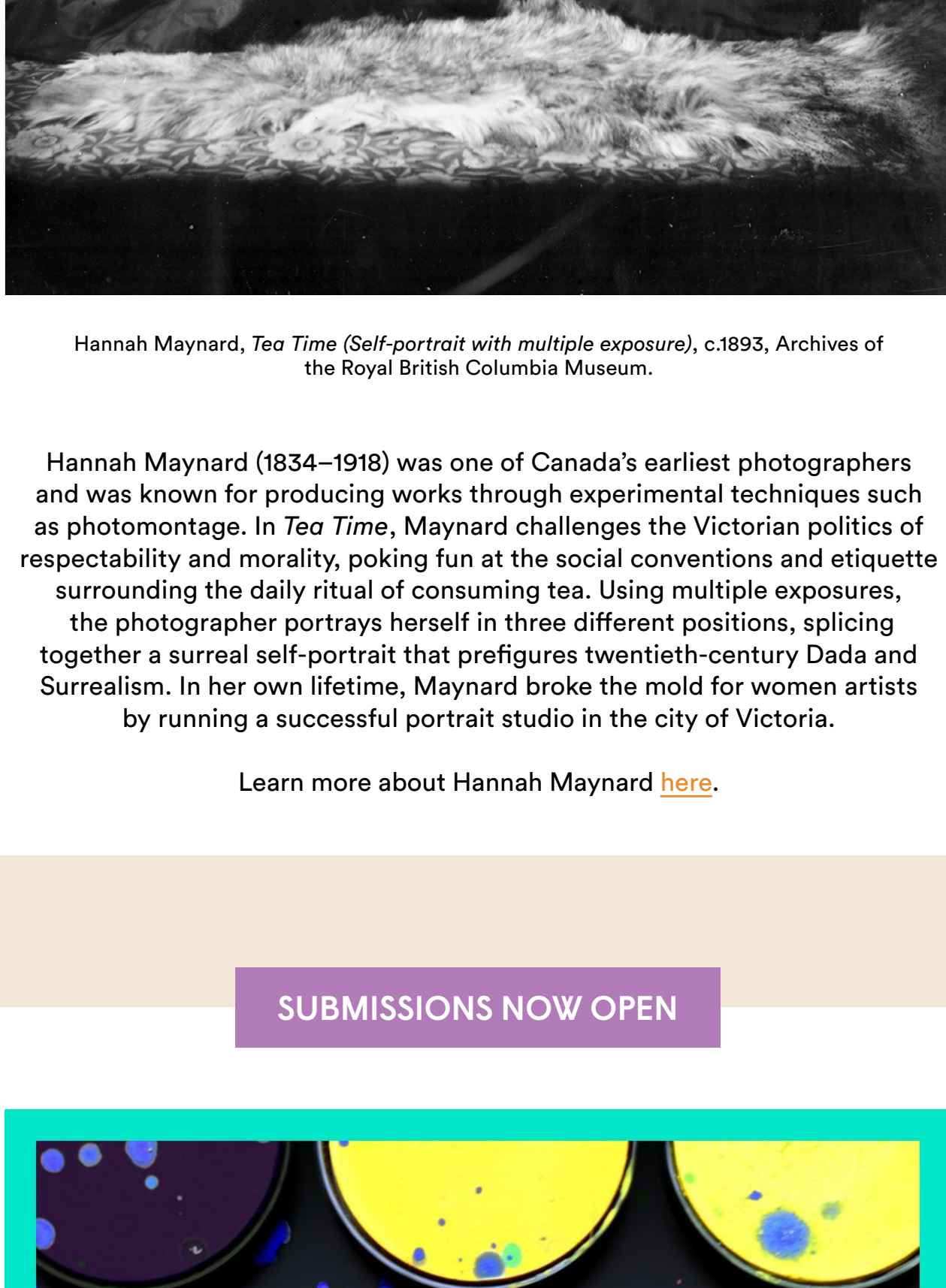


Oviloo Tunnilie, *Self-Portrait with Carving Stone*, 1998, collection of Fred and Mary Widding.

Kangia-born and Kinngait-based artist Oviloo Tunnilie (1949–2014) was one of the first Inuit women artists to gain national recognition as a stone carver in Canada. Inspired by her own experiences, Tunnilie often produced autobiographical works that engaged with the process of making art, as in this self-portrait depicting her with a piece of serpentine. The rough texture of the uncarved stone suggests the transformative work that artists perform as they reshape the world around them through the materials in front of them. Tunnilie's self-portrait attests to the significance of women carvers like herself, highlighting the key roles they play in their communities as makers and visionaries.

Learn more in [Oviloo Tunnilie: Life & Work](#) by Darlene Coward Wight

## Exploring Representation

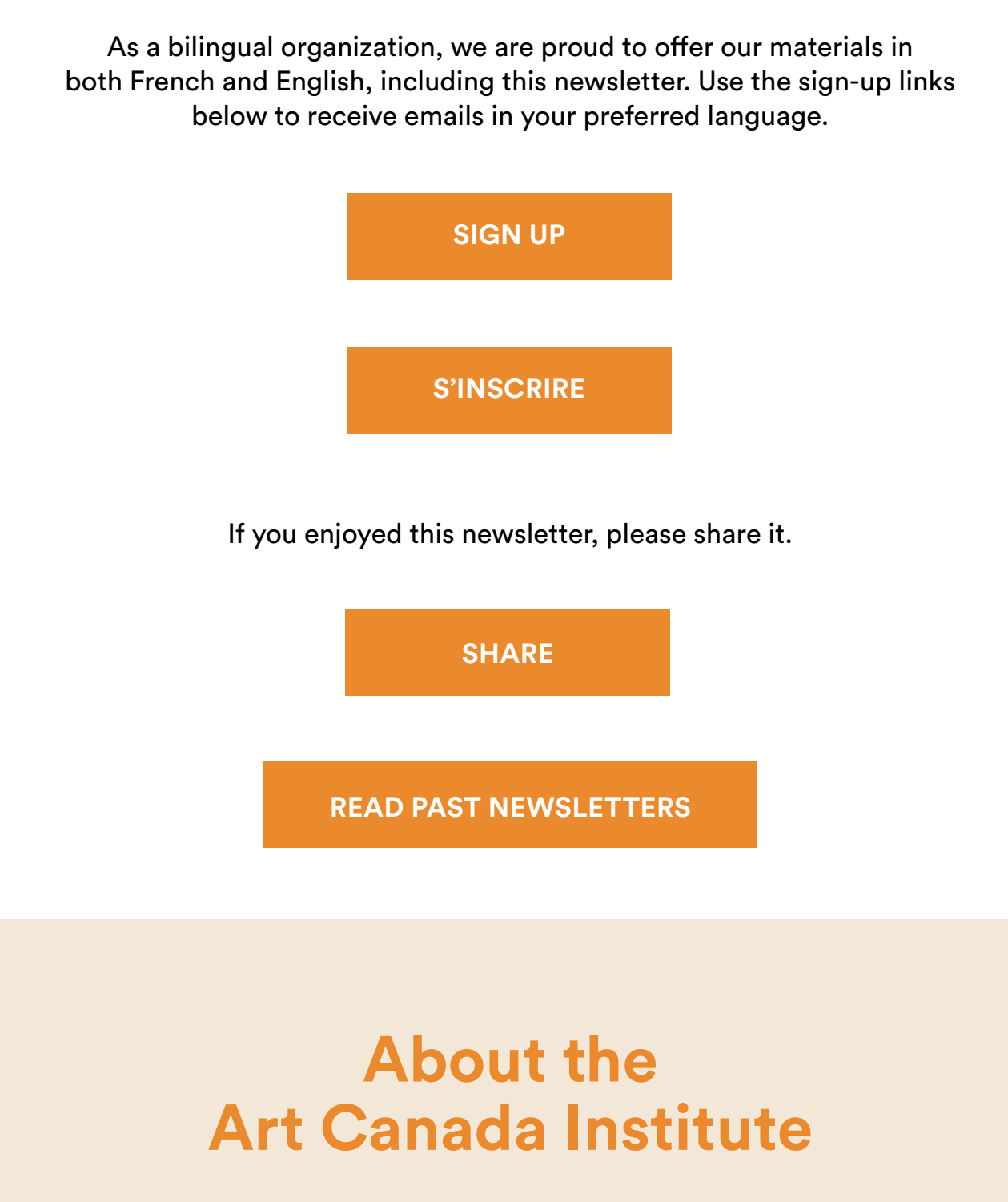


Denyse Thomasos, *Untitled (self-portrait)*, c.1984–85, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

Trinidadian Canadian artist Denyse Thomasos (1964–2012) is celebrated for her semi-abstract, monumental works that often reference vernacular architecture from around the world, through structural elements like intersecting lines and grids. This painting is one of the artist's few self-portraits, and it illustrates her unparalleled ability to push the boundaries of painted representation through her intensive and dynamic use of line and colour. Thomasos's introspective representation of the self is a brilliant exploration of her own likeness within an undefined space that is contained and yet integrated with the loosely rendered street scene in the background.

Learn more about Denyse Thomasos [here](#).

## Pioneering Photography



Hannah Maynard, *Tea Time (Self-portrait with multiple exposure)*, c.1893, Archives of the Royal British Columbia Museum.

Hannah Maynard (1834–1918) was one of Canada's earliest photographers and was known for producing works that challenge experimental techniques such as photomontage. In *Tea Time*, Maynard throws the Victorian politics of respectability and morality, poking fun at the social conventions and etiquette surrounding the daily ritual of consuming tea. Using multiple exposures, the photographer portrays herself in three different positions, splicing together a surreal self-portrait that prefigures twentieth-century Dada and Surrealism. In her own lifetime, Maynard broke the mold for women artists by running a successful portrait studio in the city of Victoria.

Learn more about Hannah Maynard [here](#).

## SUBMISSIONS NOW OPEN



If you are facilitating art projects inspired by Canadian art this International Women's Day, we encourage you to submit student work to the Canadian Art Inspiration Student Contest. Submissions are now open for the 2023 edition of ACI's flagship educational initiative, open to students from Grade 7 through Grade 12. The deadline to submit student works is April 7, 2023, and you can learn more by heading over to our student challenge website.

Learn more about the student challenge [here](#).

For project ideas, consult the 2023 Student Creativity Booklet [here](#).

As a bilingual organization, we are proud to offer our materials in both French and English, including this newsletter. Use the sign-up links below to receive emails in your preferred language.

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## About the Art Canada Institute

Launched in 2013, the Art Canada Institute is the only national institution whose mandate is to promote the study of an inclusive, multivocal Canadian art history to as broad an audience as possible, in both English and French, within Canada and internationally. The ACI works with more than fifty of Canada's leading art historians, curators, and visual culture experts who are dedicated to the creation of authoritative original content on the people, themes, and topics that have defined Canadian art history.

We are creating a central digital resource to tell the world about Canada's most important works of art and where they are located. By functioning as an online art museum, a [digital library](#), and an interactive Canadian art encyclopedia, the ACI is an indispensable resource on Canada's visual heritage.

Visit us at [aci-iac.ca](#)

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