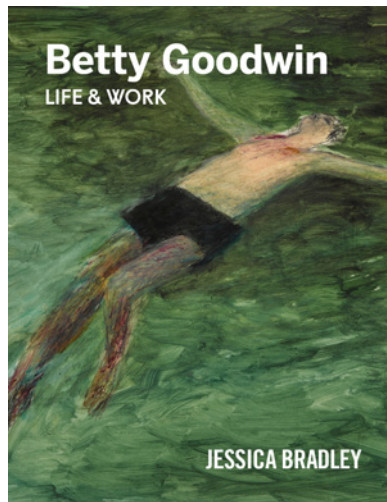


New book on Betty Goodwin spotlights a giant of contemporary Canadian art in honour of Women's History Month

Betty Goodwin: Life & Work, the newly published open-access online art book by Jessica Bradley, details the indelible impact of an artist who established a critically acclaimed career in the early 1970s after a major breakthrough in printmaking. Celebrated for her haunting prints and drawings, Goodwin emerged in mid-life as an artist of consequence, becoming one of Canada's greatest contemporary creators.

A selection of press images is available through the link at the end of this release.



LEFT: Betty Goodwin, *Vest One*, 1969. CENTRE: Cover of *Betty Goodwin: Life & Work*.
RIGHT: Richard-Max Tremblay, *Betty Goodwin* (detail), 1987.

October 22, 2024, FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—*Betty Goodwin: Life & Work* by Jessica Bradley, a free, open-access online art book now available in English and French, chronicles the career of the distinguished Montreal artist Betty Goodwin (1923–2008) and her rise to the pinnacle of Canadian contemporary art in the 1970s. Referencing the loss of her father, her iconic prints of vests marked the beginning of Goodwin's profound explorations of mourning, memory, and the human condition in her art.

The central themes of Goodwin's prints, drawings, sculptures, and installations stemmed from the hardships she endured in childhood in Montreal. Her father, a Romanian-born tailor who owned a vest-manufacturing company, unexpectedly passed away when she was nine. Goodwin's mother took over the business, but the Great Depression left the pair in dire financial straits. Despite these difficult circumstances, Goodwin's mother instilled in her daughter an interest in art. Goodwin was largely self-taught, although in the 1940s and 1950s, she was mentored by a group of Jewish artists dedicated to social justice.

A breakthrough in printmaking

Goodwin made a breakthrough in her own practice—and in contemporary printmaking—in the late 1960s, when, searching for a more personal form of artistic expression, she put items of clothing, including a vest, through a press. “The resulting ghostly image recalled the childhood trauma of losing

her father,” explains author Jessica Bradley. “The vest prints... [which] were the first works [Goodwin] understood as being meaningful and entirely her own... received enthusiastic critical recognition.” Emerging with her innovative printmaking practice in midlife in the early 1970s, Goodwin built her acclaimed career over the next four decades.

Upending artistic traditions

“Goodwin cemented her status as one of the leading voices in contemporary art as she broke away from artistic traditions,” says Sara Angel, Founder and Executive Director of the Art Canada Institute. Goodwin’s dynamic and evocative site-specific installations gained her widespread attention and were exhibited in Canada, the United States, and Europe. Her greatest contribution, asserts author Jessica Bradley, was to elevate the status of drawing as a significant contemporary medium in the 1980s. Goodwin’s renowned life-size depictions of swimmers struggling to stay afloat helped legitimize drawings as finished pieces of art rather than preliminary works.

Responding to global turmoil

Informed by world events, Goodwin’s artistic reflections on injustice, suffering, and the fragility of life continue to exert a visceral impact today. In the 1980s, preoccupied with news stories about political unrest, Goodwin introduced steel elements into her figure drawings to convey themes of torture and confinement. In *Without Cease the Earth Faintly Trembles*, 1988, a thin steel rod hangs vertically in the centre of the work, suggesting physical harm to the drawn figure beside it.

Looking both inward and out at the world around her, Goodwin courageously explored deeply personal and political themes in her art. In 2003, her singular vision earned her a Governor General’s Award in Visual and Media Arts and the Order of Canada. With *Betty Goodwin: Life & Work*, author Jessica Bradley presents the first comprehensive English-language account of the artist’s career since her death.

Betty Goodwin: Life & Work advances ACI’s mission to create a central digital resource to share Canada’s most important artists, and works of art, with the world. To date, ACI has published sixty-four expert-authored digital books that are available free of charge. As well, ACI develops Canada’s only comprehensive art education guides for teachers and students from kindergarten to grade 12—content that is also free and available online and serves over 700,000 educators.

To explore the Art Canada Institute’s open-access digital book *Betty Goodwin: Life & Work* by Jessica Bradley, please visit: <https://www.aci-iac.ca/art-books/betty-goodwin/>.

For **media requests** or for an **interview** with **Jessica Bradley**, author of *Betty Goodwin: Life & Work*, and/or **Sara Angel**, Executive Director, Art Canada Institute, please contact:

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About Jessica Bradley

Jessica Bradley is a distinguished art historian, curator, and former gallerist who has published extensively and spearheaded numerous exhibitions at some of Canada’s leading institutions. She served as Curator of Contemporary Art at the Art Gallery of Ontario (1995–2004), Associate Curator of Contemporary Art at the National Gallery of Canada (1980–87), and Commissioner for the Canada Pavilion at the Venice Biennale on three occasions. From 2005 to 2015, she directed her own commercial gallery in Toronto, creating over eighty exhibitions featuring an emerging generation of artists.

About the Art Canada Institute

The Art Canada Institute is the only national institution whose mandate is to promote the study of an inclusive, multi-vocal Canadian art history to as broad an audience as possible, on a digital platform, and free of charge in both English and French, across Canada and internationally. To accomplish this, ACI works with Canada's leading cultural institutions, art historians, curators, and visual culture experts, and is dedicated to the creation of authoritative original content on the people, themes, and topics that have defined Canadian art history.

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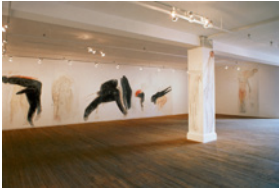





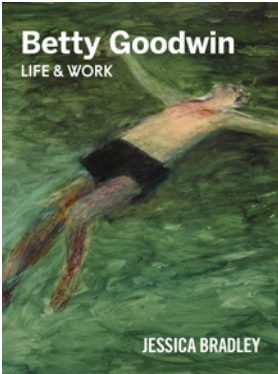
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1. Betty Goodwin, *Waiting*, 1950, oil paint, over black chalk, 60.1 × 101.7 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Gift of Betty and Martin Goodwin, 1999 (99/677). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario. © Betty Goodwin Estate. Photo credit: AGO.
2. Betty Goodwin, *Falling Figure*, 1965, oil on canvas, 102.1 × 117.2 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Gift of Betty and Martin Goodwin, 1999 (99/704). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario. © Betty Goodwin Estate. Photo credit: AGO.
3. Betty Goodwin, *Vest One*, August 1969, soft-ground etching, etching, drypoint, and roulette with oil pastel and graphite on wove paper, 70.7 × 56 cm (overall), 60 × 45.9 cm (plate). Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Gift of Betty and Martin Goodwin, Montreal, 1999 (40300). Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. © Betty Goodwin Estate. Photo credit: NGC.
4. Betty Goodwin, *Tarpaulin No. 3*, 1975, gesso, pastel, chalk, and charcoal on canvas with metal grommets and rope, 231 × 293.5 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Purchased 1976 (18532). Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. © Betty Goodwin Estate. Photo credit: NGC.
5. Betty Goodwin, *In Berlin: A Triptych, the Beginning of the Fourth Part*, 1982–83, oil, oil pastel, charcoal, crayon, white and coloured chalk, graphite, watercolour, frameworks: pine, steel, tin plate, plywood, paint, variable dimensions. Collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Purchase, Saidye and Samuel Bronfman Collection of Canadian Art and Canada Council Grant (1983.18f h). Courtesy of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. © Betty Goodwin Estate. Photo credit: MMFA.
6. Betty Goodwin, *Moving Towards Fire*, 1983, oil, coloured chalks, graphite, watercolour(?), each sheet: 291 × 108 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Purchase, 1985 (85/296). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario. © Betty Goodwin Estate. Photo credit: AGO.
7. Betty Goodwin, *Carbon*, 1986, charcoal powder, wax, oil pastel, pastel, graphite, oil, and gesso on dimpled galvanized aluminum, 275 × 975.6 cm. Collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Purchase, Horsley and Annie Townsend Bequest (1987.13a-h). Courtesy of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. © Betty Goodwin Estate. Photo credit: MMFA. Installation view at Galerie René Blouin, Montreal, September 27–November 1, 1986. Photographer unknown.
8. Betty Goodwin, *Untitled (Nerves, No. 1)*, 1993, oil, pastel, tar, and wax over Cronaflex print on Mylar, 196.3 × 134.5 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Gift of Alison and Alan Schwartz, 1997 (97/1590). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario. © Betty Goodwin Estate. Photo credit: AGO.
9. Betty Goodwin, *Vest Earth*, 1974, mixed media, 99 × 58.5 × 11.5 cm. Collection of Gaétan Charbonneau / Betty Goodwin Estate. Photo courtesy of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. © Betty Goodwin Estate. Photo credit: Richard-Max Tremblay.
10. Betty Goodwin, *Without Cease the Earth Faintly Trembles*, 1988, mixed media on Transparga film and sectioned steel bar, 193 × 113 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Gift of Alison and Alan Schwartz, 1997 (97/1589). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario. © Betty Goodwin Estate. Photo credit: AGO.
11. Richard-Max Tremblay, *Betty Goodwin*, 1987, printed 2001, gelatin silver print, 50.4 × 40.4 cm. Collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Richard-Max Tremblay (inv.2004.295). © Richard-Max Tremblay. Photo credit: MMFA.
12. Jessica Bradley, author of *Betty Goodwin: Life & Work*. Photograph by Rita Leistner.
13. Cover of *Betty Goodwin: Life & Work*, by Jessica Bradley, featuring a detail of Betty Goodwin, *Untitled*, from the series *Swimmers*, 1982, oil, oil pastel, graphite on paper, 76.9 × 108.3 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Gift of Martin and Betty Goodwin in memory of Clare Roodish and Paul Goodwin, with the support of the Volunteer Committee in celebration of its 50th Anniversary, 1996 (96/285). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario. © Betty Goodwin Estate. Photo credit: AGO.