Canadian Art Reaches Peak At R.C.A. Show

Splendid Examples of Best Work of National Group Displayed at Art Gallery Await Purchasers

Spectacle of some 200 original paintings in oils, water-color or other medium, shedding their lustre on practically vacant rooms at the Art Gallery of Toronto, produced the suggestion: Sell them by auction, at the close of an exhibition.

Pervade praise of painter's coloring or technique is more substantial and appreciated if the eloquent person buys a picture or two. Canadian artists pay taxes and subsistence bills, like other mortals. They are toiling to make a living and advance art. It is rather maddening to a painter to produce his best, have it praised in reviews and by spectators and officials, and have it and a dozen other works handed back to be placed in a rear room already over-stocked.

The artist who cannot sell his paintings, is like a manufacturer who keeps on producing clothing which he cannot get to the market. Experience shows that display of pictures at an academic exhibition sells not over 10 per cent. of them.

LOTS OF BUYERS HERE.

Is Toronto not a big enough art centre to absorb 200 paintings by the best men and women artists in the country? Would not Toronto people acquire fine original pieces by native craftsmen, rather than pick up spurious things ascribed to Courbet, Jacquet, Verboeckhoven, Moreland, Roybet, Corbet, Diaz, Titian and hundreds more? Naturally, the peculiar condition is that there are thousands of people in this city, let alone outside, who would like to own one or more fine or interesting Canadian pictures. They don't belong to the Art Gallery, perhaps, or they don't go to the private views, nor the subsequent two weeks exhibition. Doubtless, a proportion of them would attend an advertised auction of Art Gallery paintings, and it is almost certain, in that event, they would clean the walls and leave substantial cash for the working painters.

THE R.C.A. EXHIBITION.

The present showing at the 50th exhibition of the Royal Canadian Academy comprises a very diversified range of paintings mostly of a fair dignified size, and embodying the peak of our contemporary talent. Most people don't appreciate how really excellent some of the paintings are, because they look them over hastily, once or twice, and do not accord them the tribute of study. A picture cannot be seen at once. Its message may be veiled and the beauties of its technique may not appear.

GIFT OPPORTUNITIES.

R.C.A. exhibition is an important show. Good things displayed range in value from $10 to $1,000 or more. It is an opportunity for one to buy an etching by Owen Staples, for instance, for a very modest sum, or woodcuts or flower pieces, or wood engravings, at small outlay.

Suozzo-Cote, of Montreal, hangs a large landscape in a medaillae frame which is all bine and gold, a fine decoration and a wonderful picture. J. W. Beatty, of Toronto, shows four paintings, "The Rapid, Autumn," among them. A fellow artist notes how Beatty gets his water flat, through gradations of color tone on the water and the quality of line definition as its boundaries. Any Canadian gallery or home could have a Beatty to advantage.

Across from a hanging portrait done by E. Wylie Grier, is an oil sketch, "Mother and Child," by Stella Grier. This is clever, from more than one angle. It is a somewhat daring use of unrelated pattern. It seems a successful double portrait, with the child naive and frank, lacking any cupid-like touchings.

Kenneth Forbes, of Montreal, shows a portrait of Arthur Hewitt, Toronto, an adequate likeness and an exhibition of scientific accomplishment in producing flesh substance and tone and texture of apparel.

MANY GOOD PORTRAITS.

Tom Greene contributes in "Passing Storm" a successful handling of storm in the fury round and breaking sun in the distance. E. Wylie Grier has four portraits. To study and note the different manners of Grier, Allan Barr, Forbes, Marion Long, Charles McGregor, and then shift to Manly McDonald's portrait of Miss Edna Fraser, or other portrait sketches, is a privilege of the observer. Actual comparison is use-

Clever Double Portraiture, by Stella Grier

Showing an unusual pattern, which becomes interesting in combination with an individual color scheme.
less. Marion Long’s portrait of Dr. W. D. Cowan, of Saskatoon, pleases artist and layman alike.

MENTAL MANOEUVRES.

Gallery habitues or visitors are quite entitled, in trying to create their own art code, to match the result of one artistic personality with that of another, not to “like” or “dislike,” but to clear away their natural barriers of confusion and achieve a reasonable point of view. To “love” Frans Hals and “hate” Degas is all right biologically, but indicates the closed mind. To deliberately compare Kathleen Morris’ “The Fish Market, Quebec,” with A. Y. Jackson, for instance, may be a good mental manoeuvre. The fish market is a bold, representational and entirely static oil sketch. It tries to be nothing else. The color is full and emphatic.

In one of his winter scenes, A. Y. Jackson has an equal chance to be static, or quiet, because all he shows is snow, old fence fangs, huts and a few dabby trees. Snow covers nine-tenths of the picture. It is, however, broken up into some nine horizontal planes, snow covering real ground as nature lays ground. These nine planes, each boldly brushed in, take up about sixteen inches, but they lead, step by step, to the hill horizon past a curved line of shacks running right across the middle distance. Everything is molded. The “crude” brush sweeps seem to symbolize the wind that plies up and contours the snow masses. The buildings are pitched in for what they may be worth. The color scheme is a study in itself.

A ZEST FOR COLOR.

Franz Johnston contributes temper as showing his zest for color and his marked drafting ability to portray and pattern. He produces also a well-named “Autumn Tapestry” in oils. What is so emphatic, is the remarkable versatility of Canada’s painting wing, as a whole, and how far many have gone on the highway of progress. Those pictures of ducks and chickens, by the late Mrs. McGillivray Knowles are distinguished paintings. Then include Andre Sapine, Charles Jeffreys, Challener, Elizabeth Styring Nutt, G. A. Reid, in his “A Canadian Lake”; C. Horne Russell, Suzor-Cote; to stop there, these are workmen of ability which ranks them and their products high, and denotes Canada as marching ahead.—N.H.

Fort Rouille, Built 1749, by F. S. Challener

A very large mural, or semi-mural, of the old French trading post at Toronto.
PAINT MOLDING AND CLEVER COLOR SCHEME

WINTER MORNING, by A. Y. Jackson, on exhibit at R.C.A. Exhibition.

AN AUTUMN RAPID, BY J. W. BEATTY OF TORONTO

Successful handling of a difficult picture setting. One of the R.C.A. exhibits.
STRONG STATIC AND WITH HEAVY COLOR EMPHASIS

A Quebec fish market scene, by Kathleen Morris.

LUNENBURG HARBOR, NOVA SCOTIA, BY HARRY BRITTON

One of the pictures now hung at the Art Gallery of Toronto.