Figure Painters Steal Show at Exhibition of Canadian Arts Academy

(Canadian Press Despatch.)

BY GUY E. RHODES.

Toronto, Nov. 5.—Figure painters stole the show in the 53rd annual exhibition of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, which opened Friday night at the art gallery of Toronto with a private reception and view for gallery members.

Two trends stood out in the exhibition, the increasing representation of artists from the extreme eastern and western ends of the Dominion, and the marked improvement in treatment of the figure. Landscape painting, however, the first love of modern Canadian art, has not been neglected.

Three hundred and sixty-nine paintings and drawings were hung, and 360 more, most of them dashed off hurriedly by younger artists, were relegated to the cellar as unimportant.

Of the figures, three force their attention on the visitor with almost equal clarity: "Colored Nude," by Dorothy Stevens, Toronto, a young negress shading her eyes against a background of warm sky and lush tropical foliage streaked and mottled with dazzling sunshine; "Portrait, Georgian Bay," by Lawrence Smith, Toronto, a tawny-blonde girl in a red shirt and green pyjama pants standing on a rock against a whipping breeze with a skyfull of scudding clouds in the background; "Benedicta," bare-legged and bare-shouldered woman clad in flowing gypsy garb with her back to sun-speckled water and rolling green hills. Randolph S. Hewton, Montreal, is the artist.

Four portraits stand out: Fur-coated and fur-capped Andre Illashenko, by Lillias Torrance Newton, Montreal; J. E. McAllister, by Evan MacDonald, Toronto; a full-length of the distinguished P. D. Ross, noted figure of Canadian journalism, by Ernest Forsbary, Ottawa; and Miss Constance Burns, dressed in two shades of green, finely lighted and finely drawn by Marion Long, Toronto.

Landscapes in which the virility of Canadian artists first gained the international notice have not suffered from the increased excellence of portraitist and figure painters. Such well-known artists as A. Y. Jackson and J. E. H. MacDonald are represented in their usual style, mellowed perhaps a little, by pictures of the Arctic, wintry weather and vast mountain scenery.

The exhibition showed, however, that other landscapists are being developed. Chief among these is J. W. G. MacDonald, of Vancouver, whose painting of "The Black Tusk" at Garibaldi Park, B.C., shows apparent influence of H Frederick Varley, himself represented by "Dharana," a sombre combination of figure and landscape.

From the maritimes Harry Britton, of Amherst, N.B., strikes an almost French touch in his "A Nova Scotian and Her Goats," scattered pleasantly over the side of a green hill. Stanley Royle and his 17-year-old daughter, Jean, recent arrivals from England, concentrated on scenes in the little Nova Scotia fishing village of Peggy's Cove, resort of many Canadian landscape and seascape painters.

Kathleen Morris, Ottawa painter whose quaint horses and sleighs appear in almost all her pictures, continues to bring pleasantly quiet reaction with her "Sunny Morning," the same horses, though more of them than usual, hitched to the same sleighs, waiting for their owners to come out of church.

The sculpture section is devoted mainly to portraiture, and contains works of most of the important sculptors in Canada.