

The Art Canada Institute Releases Free Expert-Authored Online Art Books to Offer a 21st-Century Take on Canadian Art History

New initiative digitizes the nation's visual culture and builds a resource of Canada's art

TORONTO, November 25, 2013 – More than 50 leading Canadian art historians, curators, and museum professionals have come together to launch the Art Canada Institute (ACI), a non-profit organization that is redefining, compiling, digitizing, and distributing Canadian art and its history for free, in both English and French. The institute is a non-governmental initiative, made possible through private and corporate donations.

“We recognized a gap in the Canadian cultural landscape and a need that had to be filled,” said Sara Angel, Founding Executive Director & Publisher of the Art Canada Institute and Trudeau Scholar at the University of Toronto. “We want to tell the story of our nation’s art history, bringing audiences closer to our extraordinary artists—some of whom are world-renowned, and others who aren’t yet household names but should be—in a smart, accessible format, designed for expanding online audiences.”

The inaugural program of the Art Canada Institute is the “Canadian Online Art Book Project.” The project launches on November 28, with the release of *Jack Chambers: Life & Work*, the first title in a series of 50 free online art books.

According to the Canadian Museums Association, over 58 million people visit Canadian museums and galleries every year, and surveys show that Canadians believe the arts enhance their quality of life.* The Art Canada Institute will serve this enormous audience, enhancing the museum experience while also bringing art, at no charge, to the thousands of Canadians without access to a local gallery.

“This is a first for Canadian art history,” said Dr. Anna Hudson, Art Canada Institute Commissioning Editor and Art History Professor and Associate Dean at York University.

**Ipsos Reid, 2005*

“In an unprecedented move, the country’s art historians and museum professionals have come together to create original online content that provides much-needed information on the people, themes, and topics that have defined Canada’s visual arts heritage. Until now, this information has not been available digitally.”

Art Canada Institute online art books will give Canadians unprecedented access to the images, documents, and stories that define our visual culture. Each online book features a visually spectacular entree into the life and work of an artist, including biographical information, a selection of annotated major works, a selection of primary research documents, and an overview of the debates surrounding the artist’s legacy. The first titles to be released, which will be free to download to a mobile device or computer from the Art Canada Institute website, include these artists:

- **Jack Chambers** 1970s Realist painter and experimental filmmaker
by Mark Cheetham, Professor, University of Toronto
- **Kathleen Munn** Trail-blazing 1920s artist who exhibited with the Group of Seven
by Georgiana Uhlyarik, Associate Curator, Art Gallery of Ontario
- **Michael Snow** A leading figure in new media and conceptual art
by Martha Langford, Professor, Concordia University
- **William Notman** Montreal’s 19th-century photography pioneer
by Sarah Parsons, Associate Professor, York University
- **Paul-Émile Borduas** Abstract art revolutionary who scripted Quebec’s Quiet Revolution
by François-Marc Gagnon, Founding Director, Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art
- **Mungo Martin** Totem pole carver who taught the heritage of the Kwakwaka’wakw nation at a time when Canada suppressed it
by Leslie Dawn, Professor, University of Lethbridge

The Art Canada Institute will unveil further programs in the coming years, including the ACI Massey Art Lecture Series, the ACI Art Apps, the ACI Secondary School Art Connect, and the ACI Virtual Art Exhibitions.

About the Art Canada Institute (<http://aci-iac.ca>)

The Art Canada Institute is a bilingual research organization and registered Canadian charity based at Massey College, University of Toronto. It is the only national institution whose exclusive mandate is to promote the study of Canadian art history to as broad an audience as possible.

The Art Canada Institute Board of Directors:

Sara Angel (Founding Executive Director & Publisher), John Fraser (Founding Chair), Jalynn H. Bennett, Charlotte Gray, Roy L. Heenan, Jane Huh, Sarah Milroy, John O'Brian, Sandra L. Simpson, David P. Silcox

The Art Canada Institute works with more than 50 of Canada's leading art historians and curators who are dedicated to the creation of authoritative original content on key topics in Canadian art history. ACI contributors include the following:

Katerina Atanassova, Chief Curator, McMichael Canadian Art Collection
Lisa Baldissera, Chief Curator, Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon
Bruce Barber, Professor, NSCAD University
Michèle Grandbois, Curator, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec
Michelle Jacques, Chief Curator, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
Steven Loft, Coordinator, Aboriginal Arts Office, Canada Council for the Arts
Marc Mayer, Director, National Gallery of Canada
Erin Morton, Assistant Professor, University of New Brunswick
John O'Brian, Professor, University of British Columbia
Ruth Phillips, Canada Research Chair, Carleton University
Dennis Reid, Professor, University of Toronto
Christine Ross, Professor, McGill University

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