

Among the leading fine arts organizations of national scope, exclusive of museums and art galleries, are: Association of Canadian Industrial Designers, National Design Council, Canadian Conference of the Arts, Canadian Craftsmen's Association, Canadian Society for Education through Art, Canadian Group of Painters, Canadian Guild of Potters, Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Canadian Museums Association, Canadian Society of Graphic Art, Canadian Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers, Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour, Canadian Society of Landscape Architects, Federation of Canadian Woodcarvers, Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, Sculptors' Society of Canada, Town Planning Institute of Canada, Canadian Centre for Films on Art, and Community Planning Association of Canada.

7.4.1.2 The National Gallery of Canada

The beginnings of the National Gallery of Canada are associated with the founding of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in 1880. The Marquis of Lorne, then Governor General, had recommended and assisted in the founding of the Academy and among the tasks he assigned to that institution was the establishment of a National Gallery at the seat of government. Until 1907 the National Gallery was under the direct control of a Minister of the Crown but in that year, in response to public demand, an Advisory Arts Council consisting of three persons outside government was appointed by the government to administer grants to the National Gallery. Three years later, the first professional curator was appointed.

In 1913, the National Gallery was incorporated by Act of Parliament and placed under the administration of a board of trustees appointed by the Governor General in Council; its function was to encourage public interest in the arts and to promote the interests of art throughout the country. Under this management, the Gallery increased its collections and developed into an art institution worthy of international recognition. Today, a board of trustees, reporting to the Secretary of State, administers all the National Museums of Canada, including the National Gallery.

The Gallery's collections have been built up along international lines and give the people of Canada an indication of the origins from which their own traditions are developing. The collection of Canadian art, the most extensive and important in existence, is continually being augmented. Over 60% of all new acquisitions since 1966 have been Canadian. The present Canadian content of the permanent collections is: paintings, 79%; sculpture, 66%; prints, 17%; drawings, 61%; and all other acquisitions, 74%. There are now more than 11,600 works of art in the collections. Included are many Old Masters, 12 having been acquired from the famous Liechtenstein collection. The Massey collection was presented to the Gallery during 1946-50 by the Massey Foundation. There is a growing collection of contemporary art, prints and drawings, and diploma works of the Royal Canadian Academy. The services of the Gallery include the operation of a reference library open to the public containing more than 40,000 volumes and periodicals on the history of art and other related subjects.

In 1972, the Gallery's National Conservation Research Laboratory underwent change. It had been established in 1964 to provide technical information on works of art from public and private collections across Canada and to be responsible for the conservation of the national art collections. In addition, research was carried out on the effects of environment on works of art and on the durability of artists' materials. The latter role was given to the newly constituted Canadian Conservation Institute with the broadened responsibility of conducting research into methods of preserving, restoring and transporting all types of cultural objects, the training of specialists in these fields, and the provision of consultant services to museums. The new Institute remains a part of the National Museums of Canada. The National Gallery retains its conservation function, which was established long before the creation of the National Conservation Research Laboratory. This division of the Gallery has been designated as the Restoration and Conservation Laboratory.

An active program of exhibitions, lectures, films and guided tours is maintained for visitors to the Gallery in Ottawa. The interests of the country as a whole are served by circulating exhibitions, lecture tours, publications, reproductions and films prepared by the National Gallery staff. Promotion of and information on art films are handled by the Canadian Centre for Films on Art, and their distribution by the Canadian Film Institute. The Gallery promotes interest in Canadian art abroad by participating in international exhibitions such as the Biennials of Venice and Paris, and by preparing major exhibitions of Canadian art for showing in other countries. It also brings important exhibitions from abroad for showing in Canada.