

The Board of Trustees of the National Museums of Canada created a Consultative Committee on National Museum Policy, chaired by the Vice-Chairman of the Board and consisting of two representatives from the Secretary of State Department, a representative of the Canada Council, two members appointed by the Chairman of the Board from nominees submitted by the Canadian Museums Association and two members similarly appointed from the Canadian National Committee for the International Council of Museums.

In addition to this a Secretariat to the Consultative Committee on National Museum Policy has been established within the National Museums of Canada which assists the Consultative Committee and the Board of Trustees in carrying out the first eight of these programs. The Corporation also operates the Museumobile, which is a travelling caravan to bring museum exhibits to remote communities, and administers the National Inventory, which holds computerized data on all museum collections across the country. The Canadian Conservation Institute has responsibilities for the conservation and restoration program.

The early history of the National Museums is described in the *1972 Canada Year Book* pp 418-419. Recent activities of the museums are outlined below.

**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 internationally recognized art institution. Today, a board of trustees reporting to the Secretary of State administers all the National Museums of Canada, including the National Gallery, under the National Museums Act (RSC 1970, c. N-12).

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 12,200 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. The Vincent Massey Bequest of 100 works was received in 1968. Other important gifts and bequests of Canadian and European art include the Douglas Duncan Collection (1970) and the Bronfman Gift of Drawings (1973). 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 42,000 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.