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CANADIAN PRAIRIE WATERCOLOUR LANDSCAPES

I VISITORS WEST

FOR THE PURPOSES OF watercolour landscape painting in prairie Canada (with the exception of Paul Kane and Lewis Hine who traveled overland earlier in the century and were concerned primarily with documentation) our history begins in 1887 when William Van Horne, then general manager and subsequently president of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Van Horne issued railroad passes to artists, encouraging them to paint scenery from the interior of the new country — especially what were to become the mountain parks. He shrewdly judged that the images would attract both tourists and settlers both of whom would be obliged to use the railway. In a sense, this use repeated the conditions of the Grand Tour as well as Turner's visits to the Alps and Italy in search of the picturesque and the sublime: both the purpose and character of the trip and the scenery pursued were English in spirit — one can imagine the artists perusing and applying the principles of Ruskin's *Modern Painters* throughout the journey. Equally English were the means chosen — the artists worked from nature in watercolour as often as not, and produced large "exhibition watercolours" based upon them. They also painted oils, but like so many of their British counterparts of the day, their oils tended to be still and pedestrian.

By way of contrast, consider the contemporary practice of the French Impressionists. They, too, were essentially landscape painters, but they tended to paint domestic scenery in oils, all but ignoring the sublime and the conventionally picturesque. Despite their interest in light and atmosphere, they seldom painted with watercolour, perhaps because they resisted its lack of substance, preferring the more substantial and "resistant" medium of oil paint.

The water-based medium seems to have suited the English, as did sublime subjects. Of the artists represented here, O'Brien, Matthews, and Bell-Smith gravitated to the mountains, ignoring the prairies (as did Jackson, Macdonald, Varley, Lismer, and Harris of the Group of Seven in the next century.) Of the 19th century artists, only F. H. Verner painted the prairies, albeit somewhat in the tradition of Paul Kane and Lewis Hine before him. Early in the 20th century, C. W. Jefferys visited the prairies on several occasions and was probably the first artist of note to intuit its unique character as a subject for painting.

ARTISTS

LUCIUS RICHARD O'BRIEN, b. Shanty Bay, Upper Canada 1832; d. Toronto, 1899). O'Brien was considered the country's most proficient landscapist, in both oil and watercolour. One of the first artists to capture the scenic variety of the new country, he painted in Ontario and Quebec, on

Grand Manan and along the Atlantic seaboard and, sponsored by the CPR, in the Rockies and along the Pacific. O'Brien was one of the first artists to make use of the CPR passes made available to artists by William Van Horne. Many of his landscapes are distinguished by a sense of light similar to that in paintings by Albert Bierstadt and the American "luminists," but his use of watercolours remains firmly in the English tradition. The painting of a rain forest was probably done on or as a result of his first trip west in 1887. It's a n outstanding example of an exhibition watercolour, carefully done, richly detailed. The subject is an example of the sublime — man rendered insignificant by overpowering nature yet poised to conquer.

FREDERICK ARTHUR VERNER b Upper Canada 1836; d. London, Eng. 1928. Verner studied at Heatherly's Art School, London, returning to Canada in 1862, where he earned a living as a photographer. The first of the railroad artists to appreciate the prairies, Verner became a renowned painter of Prairie Indians, seeking accuracy in his subjects. He also studied the buffalo, a subject which became his hallmark. He moved to London, Eng., in 1880. Turned Out of the Herd is a mellow, late-Victorian exhibition watercolour of a prairie subject imbued with gentle melancholy.

MARMADUKE MATTHEWS b. 1837, Barchester, Warwickshire, England, d. 1913. Matthews was one of several artists who painted the West — especially the Rocky Mountains — under the patronage of William Van Horne. Apparently he rode through some of the mountain country sketching from the cowcatcher of a locomotive. He traveled to the Kicking Horse Pass in 1887. This exhibition watercolour was probably done on that journey or from sketches made at the time. Like many of the artist visitors of the late 19th century, Matthews painted romantic landscapes in the Victorian tradition specializing in exhibition watercolours.

FREDERIC MARTLETT BELL-SMITH b. London, England, 1846, d. 1923. Bell-Smith traveled to the Rockies and the West Coast on several occasions between 1887 and 1918, at first on CPR passes made available by William Van Horne. In the Selkirks is painted in the high Victorian style, attempting to suggest atmosphere through blurring and smudging of washes.

CHARLES WILLIAM JEFFERIES, b. Rochester, Kent, England, 1869; d. 1951. Jefferys is remembered primarily for his bold illustrations of Canadian history, but he was also an accomplished painter in the English manner, producing sturdy oils and often delicious watercolours. One of the rare artist-visitors who didn't paint the mountains, Jefferys especially loved the Saskatchewan prairie in its many moods, painting at Last Mountain Lake and the Battlefords. (Illingworth Kerr studied under Jefferys at the Ontario College of Art in the late 20s. Jefferys related to him that he loved especially the color of Wolf Willow). Jefferys was the first artist to perceive the unique character of prairie landscape:

"... that has no striking topographical shapes, that consists of earth, sky, space, light air, reduced to their simplest elements and baldest features. In this severe austerity, the grasses, the flowers, the shrubs, claim our attention, attract the eye and assert their individual charms. Vision becomes subtly discriminating, compares hues, tones, colors, all of them within a narrow range of what the

artist calls values; yet under this compulsory and refines analysis, revealing an astonishing variety...”

“Rain in the Foothills” is painted in the classic English manner, reminiscent above all (and to its great credit) of Cotman.

II MANITOBA

CURIOUSLY, MANITOBA SEEMS to lack an extensive watercolour tradition, despite the fact that in the 20s and 30s it claimed two of Canada’s finest practitioners. Valentine Fanshaw was the earliest, though by no means the best. English born and trained, he arrived in 1912, just a year before Walter Phillips, who may have been influenced initially by the elder artist.

Phillips proved to be one of the most remarkable artists Canada has seen, one of the rare Canadian artists to command a market outside the country, for both his unique woodblock prints as well as his accomplished watercolours. Phillips’ precise layouts recall Cotman, although he lacks Cotman’s remarkable ability to incorporate detail within broad design. He compensated for this by a vivid sense of colour, using colours that weren’t available in the early 19th century and using them with rare sensitivity. Phillips lived in Winnipeg from his arrival in 1913 until 1941, when he moved to Calgary, there becoming an important influence on both the Alberta and Saskatchewan art scenes through his involvement with the Banff School of Fine Arts.

The other substantial Manitoba watercolour painter was Lionel Lemoine FitzGerald. FitzGerald was a devoted painter of watercolours, although he worked in other media as well. He also was one of the first painters to bring a strong influence of modernism to the Canadian West. One senses that his paintings in all media were based first and foremost upon still life, upon arrangements of “forms”. His paintings are precise, pointillist, and relentlessly muted — often to a fault.

ARTISTS

VALENTINE FANSHAW, b. 1878, Sheffield, England, studied in London and Antwerp, came to Canada 1912, d. in Winnipeg, 1960. Fanshaw may have influenced Walter Phillips, eight years his junior, who arrived in Winnipeg from England a year after Fanshaw. Whatever is the case, Phillips quickly surpassed him. Fanshaw’s art tends to be well designed rather than inspired and lacks Phillips richness of colour or A. C. Leighton’s deft drawing.

WALTER JOSEPH PHILLIPS, b. 1884 Barton on Humber, England, migrated to Winnipeg, 1913, moved to Calgary, 1941 and on to Canmore, d. Victoria, 1963. Phillips studied art in England and shortly after taking up residence in Canada took up printmaking. His beautiful colour woodcuts in the Japanese manner earned him an international reputation. He was also one of Canada’s most accomplished painters in watercolour, becoming famous in his latter years for his mountain subjects. He worked in the English manner, sketching from nature in watercolour and in the studio expanding those sketches into exhibition watercolours. His larger works sometimes appear over-

generalized, as though detail appropriate to the scale had been lost in the transition from sketch to finished work, but his smaller works are exceptional — some of the finest watercolour landscapes painted by a Canadian — and his colour, generally, is exceptional as well. His work demonstrates a strong sense of design, but one senses that it owes more to Cotman and Japanese prints than to modernist painting.

L. L. FITZGERALD, 1890-1956, lived his entire life in Winnipeg. He was attracted to drawing at an early age after reading *The Elements of Drawing* by John Ruskin, the great Victorian art critic. Ruskin was enormously influential throughout the latter half of the 19th century, though his conflation of truth to nature and morality doesn't strike a responsive chord today. Yet, considering his isolation, FitzGerald was a remarkable artist, attempting in his own way to reconcile modernism with truth to nature. His style is delicate and rather pointillist, combining something of the softness of some Victorian watercolours with the precision and subtlety of Neo-Impressionists like Seurat. (He also admired the work of the 20th century American, Charles Sheeler.) Curiously, FitzGerald was admitted as the final member of the Group of Seven (replacing the deceased J. E. H. Macdonald) in 1931, though he exhibited with the Group only once before it disbanded in 1933. His style — intimate, urban, hardly robust — seems in many respects antithetical to the manner and ideals of the Group. Curiously, the work of his colleague in Winnipeg, W. J. Phillips seems closer in spirit to the Group of Seven.

III ALBERTA

ALBERTA IS RICH in watercolour painters, especially in the Calgary and Banff areas, due no doubt to the attraction of mountain scenery. Mountain subjects have been close to the heart of watercolour landscape since its beginnings in the 18th Century where it was closely associated with the Grand Tour as well as with a developing interest in the sublime. The Rockies were to Canada as the Alps were to the British. There are practical and formal reasons as well as romantic inclinations for painting mountain subjects. The practical one — to some extent displaced by photography in the 20th century — was that the materials of watercolour were light and portable. This made them ideal for working out of doors, especially where some trekking was involved. The formal reason had to do with the fact that the experience of mountains is usually affected by atmosphere: ironically, the very massiveness of mountains means that they can be seen in their totality only from a distance where their substance is coloured by light and air. These reasons were affected as well by a cultural one, the fact that British oil painting in the latter half of the 19th Century seemed to struggle to convey the substantial mass of mountains — possibly to impress the viewer with their sublimity — with results that were all too often heavy-handed.

In the early 20th century the CPR continued its patronage of landscape painting, particularly as a stimulant to tourism to the new national parks. To this end they engaged the young A. C. Leighton to travel to the Rockies in 1927. He was so impressed that he returned and stayed, becoming the second head of the Alberta College of Art in the early '30s. The mountains also lured Walter Phillips from Winnipeg in 1941 and the Alberta College of Art engaged Illingworth Kerr as head after W.W.II. The presence of Walter Phillips and Leighton in particular — both

English-trained and adept at watercolours — had a substantial effect upon subsequent watercolour painting in Alberta and to a lesser extent on Saskatchewan.

Kerr was cast very much in the Group of Seven mould, having studied in the late 20s at the Ontario College of Art under some members of the Group as well as C. W. Jefferys. From Jefferys he learned that he needn't be ashamed of his love of the prairies, but in his latter years he spent much time in the foothills and mountains. In the '70s and '80s, Barbara Ballachey and Ken Christopher painted from nature on a bold scale — often working of full sheets (22 x 30 inches) of paper. Both artists had strong connections with international modernism, and were close to the spirit of the Emma Lake Workshops of the 1970s. Christopher's watercolours, in particular, have something of the open, seemingly casual arrangements of Reta Cowley, from Saskatoon.

Artists in Edmonton often turned to watercolour only occasionally or on a modest scale. Robert Campbell was an early, English-born amateur of considerable talent. H. G. Glyde painted landscape watercolours from time to time, apparently as a sideline to his interest in figure paintings. After the '60s, artists absorbed influences from by international modernism. Robert Sinclair and Harry Savage in Edmonton painting intimate, stylized landscapes.

ARTISTS

FREDERICK G. CROSS, b. England, 1881, d. Canada, 1941. Little is known about Cross apart from the fact that he was born in England and migrated to Canada some time prior to 1917. He was an engineer by profession, but also an accomplished watercolour painter in the English manner. He apparently provided transportation for A. Y. Jackson in one of the latter's trips to the foothills during the '30s. This large foothills painting is hardly the work of an amateur; it suggests formal training and a passing familiarity with Cotman. Few Cross paintings can be found in Canadian public collections.

ALFRED CROCKER LEIGHTON, b. Hastings, England, 1901, d. Millarville, Alberta, 1965. Leighton was an enormously accomplished draughtsman and an outstanding painter of watercolours in the English tradition. Virtually untouched by modernism in his early years, he painted from nature in a classic English manner, producing detailed drawings in pencil heightened by warm and cool washes, mostly raw umber and Prussian blue. Colour in Leighton was subdued and generally distrusted — so different from the practice of Phillips — but at his best was more than compensated for by precise and delicate drawing that suggests the 19th century art of William Callow, Thomas Girtin, and Richard Parkes Bonington. As the View of Edmonton suggests, Leighton was a masterful architectural draughtsman. The reproduction of Cathedral Mountain in the introduction to the Alberta section of this site demonstrates how he, and seemingly he alone, could translate that mastery into the depiction of mountains. Leighton was the second director of the Alberta College of Art and one of the founding forces behind the Banff School of Fine Arts. After 1935 he retired from the ACA for health reasons and departed from Alberta, returning in 1950. By that time he'd become reclusive and his influence waned.

WALTER J. PHILLIPS moved from Winnipeg to Calgary in 1941 and later to Canmore. This page from a sketchbook reveals his mastery of colour and unusual sense of composition. His woodcuts and large watercolours were derived in the studio from these sketches.

ILLINGWORTH HOLEY "BUCK" KERR, b. Lumsden, Saskatchewan, 1905, d. Calgary, Alberta, 1989. Kerr has the distinction of being the first prairie-born artist of substance. He absorbed influences from a variety of sources, notably the Group of Seven (he studied under Arthur Lismer and F. H. Varley as well as J. W. Beatty and C. W. Jefferys at the Ontario College of Art in the mid '20s.) He painted the prairies in a Group of Seven manner in the late '20s and early '30s, before moving to England to escape the depression. He returned during the war and in 1947 was appointed head of the Alberta College of Art in Calgary. Taking early retirement in 1967, he lived and painted in and around Calgary until his death. His postwar work reconciles the Group of Seven manner and subjects with contemporary modernism, learned primarily from Hans Hofmann, with whom Kerr studied in Provincetown in 1954. Although primarily a painter in oils, Kerr painted frequently in watercolour. His work in that medium has a cubist-derived sense of architecture, no doubt derived from Hofmann. It deserves to be better known.

HARRY SAVAGE, b. Camrose, Alberta, 1938. Savage is an Edmonton painter who, in the '70s and '80s produced delicate, small watercolours of prairie and seascapes, often based carefully-laid horizontal washes, exploiting controlled "bleeds". While seemingly modest, the format posed difficult formal problems, particularly that of suggesting recession in relatively flat, featureless spaces. Savage resolved these with skill and imbued them with subtle poetry. The small scale of the works was in keeping with the English tradition.

ROBERT WILLIAM SINCLAIR, b. Saltcoats, Saskatchewan, 1939. Since 1965 Sinclair has lived and worked in Edmonton, Alberta, where he teaches art at the University of Alberta Department of Art and Design. He is primarily a watercolour painter, producing images which exploit large unpainted portions of the paper surface as a flattening design element. The images themselves — frequently landscapes — are highly stylized yet relate to specific locations.

KEN CHRISTOPHER, b. Swift Current, Saskatchewan, 1942. Christopher has lived most of his professional life in Calgary, though he has traveled widely throughout North America. He paints watercolours frequently, often of full or half sheets. The paintings are casual and somewhat gestural, reminiscent in many ways of Reta Cowley and of artists who have been involved with the Emma Lake Artist's Workshops in Saskatchewan, but derived very much from his own practice in oils and acrylics.

BRENT LAYCOCK, b. Lethbridge, Alberta, 1947. Laycock, like many of his contemporaries, tends to paint from nature on large sheets. His work is influenced to some extent by postwar abstraction, often taking advantage of controlled "accidents" caused by washes bleeding into adjacent washes, though it retains something of the broad handling and colour clarity of Walter Phillips.

BARBARA BALLACHEY, b. Edmonton 1949, Ballachey, like many landscape painters of her generation, started as an abstract painter. As a result, her paintings have absorbed something of the colour spread and patterned layout of colour abstraction from the '60s and '70s. This was reinforced by participation in artists workshops at Emma Lake and elsewhere alongside abstract painters. Although she has traveled widely, Ballachey works primarily in the Alberta foothills near Calgary.

IV SASKATCHEWAN

ALTHOUGH WATERCOLOUR PAINTING in Saskatchewan began in earnest in the 1930s, it had precursors in Inglis Sheldon-Williams, Augustus Kenderdine, and possibly R. D. Symons. For some reason it took hold in Saskatoon with a strength that wasn't found in Regina.

The establishment in a provincial city of a nucleus of significant contemporary paintings can be a powerful encouragement to developing artists. In Saskatoon, just such a nucleus developed in the '30s. Their choice of medium was probably influenced by its convenience and portability as well as its relatively modest cost, the latter an important consideration in a province devastated by depression. Stimulus came initially through evening classes taught by Augustus Kenderdine and Ernest Lindner complemented by a lively interest in contemporary art from a handful of professors at the University of Saskatchewan and, in the '40s, by Eva Mendel and her father Fred. Eva Mendel was herself a trained artist, familiar with contemporary French and German painting; with her encouragement her father had begun to collect contemporary painting, installing some of it in his offices at Intercontinental Packers in Saskatoon.

The medium was in such common use during the '40s and '50s in Saskatoon that it attracting and influenced artists from outside the city such as Bart Pragnell in Moose Jaw. Some credit for its flourishing state is owed to night classes in art in Saskatoon, as well as to the university's summer art classes at Emma Lake both before and after the war. But questions remain. The art scene in Saskatoon over several decades appears to have had an extraordinary cohesion. Artists in Saskatoon tended to stay, whereas in other cities many moved on.

Watercolour, of course, is bound up with amateurism, but not so much with what is known today as folk art. Folk artists in Saskatchewan gravitated more to oil paints, perhaps because their art was more anecdotal, more frequently done from memory and hence indoors. Since the 18th century in England, watercolours have been an indoor-outdoor medium. Many of the Saskatoon painters used it to work directly from the motif; many came to use it as a medium of choice indoors, or carried something of watercolour transparency into their work in canvas.

This richness of interaction among artists in Saskatoon during the '30s through '50s laid the groundwork for extraordinary development in the '60s and '70s. It provided a platform for the mature work of Dorothy Knowles and Reta Cowley. In their work, the English tradition was influenced by three decades of modest modernist experiment and a kind of synthesis was achieved. With Cowley it was primarily a synthesis of Marin, Klee, and naturalism via Walter Phillips,

with Knowles it was the result of a number of influences — Cézanne among them. She applied classical watercolour technique to her large canvases as well as to works on paper.

This development was reinforced by the Emma Lake Artists Workshops. Ironies abound about Emma Lake and its influence upon Canadian Prairie art. The lake was discovered in the 1930s by Ernest Lindner, who introduced it in turn to Augustus Kenderdine. Kenderdine in his turn persuaded the University of Saskatchewan to acquire property on the lake at Murray Point and he subsequently established university summer art camps there. Ironically, it was Regina painters who, in the mid '50s, took over the two weeks in late August following the art camp for an artists workshop, yet it was this Regina-inspired workshop which proved to stimulate Saskatoon artists, many from a new generation, and Saskatoon reinvigorated the workshops in the 1970s and '80s. Although the Emma Lake Workshops were ostensibly led by abstract painters and sculptors, landscape painters from across Western Canada were among the outstanding beneficiaries. Hence it is that Saskatoon has remained a vital center of stimulus for landscape painting and painting in watercolours that continues to this day.

ARTISTS

INGLIS SHELDON-WILLIAMS, b. 1870, Hampshire, England, d. England, 1940. Sheldon-Williams was the first professional artist who settled in Saskatchewan — if only for a brief time. He came first in 1887, settling with his Mother and sister in a homestead at Cannington Manor in South Eastern Saskatchewan (near what is now Carlyle). He returned to England to study art at the Slade School and, until 1903 returned periodically between stints as a trooper in the Boer War and journalist-illustrator for London illustrated magazines (the equivalent of today's photo-journalist.) In 1916 he was asked to set up the Art Department in Regina College, but gave up teaching after just one year. Thereafter he worked as an official Canadian war artist and on his own projects. He returned to Saskatchewan twice thereafter, in 1919 and 1922. Sheldon-Williams was a fine Edwardian artist-illustrator and one of the best portrait painters Canada has seen. His watercolors and gouaches give the impression of being rapid notations, characterized always by firm drawing. He had a great love of horses — especially draft horses — and these provide a personal touch to many of his paintings in both oil and watercolour.

AUGUSTUS FREDERICK LAFOSSE KENDERDINE, b. England, 1870, d. Saskatoon, 1947. In the late 1880's and early '90s Kenderdine studied art in Manchester, Blackpool, and Paris. He came to Canada in 1908, homesteading and ranching near Lashburn (west of the Battlefords). After 1921 he was involved with establishing art programs at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, among them the aforementioned summer art school at Emma Lake. Kenderdine seldom painted in watercolour, although he did several landscape studies in charcoal and wash, reminiscent of Gainsborough. A romantic strain in Kenderdine's nature led him to paint Arcadian woodland scenes. I suspect that a documentary strain was an important element in prairie landscape painters — something to offset conventional notions of what landscape consisted. Kenderdine lacked that, but his feeling for the breadth and sweep of the landscape affected later artists like Dorothy Knowles.

ROBERT NEWTON HURLEY, b. London, England, 1894, d. Victoria, British Columbia, 1980. Hurley had no formal training as an artist, though he'd enjoyed museum-going as a youth in London and had some training with layout as an apprentice printer-compositor. He became interested in painting after serving in the First World War, although had limited opportunity to pursue it in his early years in Canada (he migrated to Saskatchewan in 1923.) His interest was stimulated by Ernest Lindner, who taught him in night classes in Saskatoon in 1933-35. Primarily a watercolour painter and a great admirer of Cotman. Hurley was one of the first artists to find variety in unadorned prairie subjects. Some time during the '30s he discovered receding roads and telephone poles converging on a grain elevator, a motif which became his hallmark. In fact, Hurley was more accomplished than many of those paintings would suggest. Like many artists of the '30s, he embraced a form of modernist stylization based on exaggerated tilts and curves. Hurley added to this a perceptive and poetic sense of colour.

STANISLAW ERNST BRUNST, b. 1894, Birmingham, England, d. 1962, Vancouver, British Columbia. Brunst migrated to Saskatchewan in 1912, but had no formal training in art until the early '30s, when he took night classes from Augustus Kenderdine. Thereafter he was closely associated with the artistic community in Saskatoon, especially Ernest Lindner, Wynona Mulcaster, and Robert Hurley. Despite his dependence and isolation (he worked as a janitor for a local dry cleaner and furrier) his artistic horizons were broader than many of his contemporaries. By the mid-30s he was consciously "abstracting" from nature using cubist simplifications and enhanced colour producing a kind of pictorial Art Deco. His work was largely confined to watercolour, perhaps through economic necessity.

ERNEST FRIEDRICH LINDNER, b. Vienna, Austria, 1897, d. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1988. Lindner had no formal art training in Austria. He studied art in night classes under Augustus Kenderdine at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon following his migration to Canada in 1926. This may explain his early gravitation not only to watercolour but to watercolour in the English tradition. This tradition was adapted to more Central-European preoccupations in the '60s and '70s, when he began a series of large watercolours featuring decaying and regenerating vegetation — often moss-covered stumps from the areas of muskeg near his summer home at Emma Lake. Lindner was an accomplished artist in watercolour, which was his primary medium (his later work in acrylic essentially carried watercolour technique onto canvas,)

ROBERT DAVID SYMONS, b. Mayfield, England, 1898, d. Silton, Saskatchewan, 1973. Symons was the son of the English painter and professional illustrator, William Christian Symons, learning to paint watercolours literally at his father's knee. Symons migrated to Canada as a teenager. After service in WW I, he returned to Canada, working as a game warden in Saskatchewan and subsequently ranching in the Peace River block of British Columbia. He retired to Silton, Saskatchewan, in 1961. There he taught and wrote a number of books — both fiction and reminiscence — in the tradition of English nature writing. Although he was essentially an illustrator and naturalist, Symons remained close to artists in Saskatchewan. He knew and admired Kenderdine and in his later years befriended and encouraged younger artists in Regina. He worked primarily on paper, frequently in watercolour, drawing upon direct observation and a prodigious visual memory.

HORACE WATSON WICKENDEN, b. Hampshire, England, d. Saskatoon, 1995. Migrated to Canada in 1921, settling in Saskatoon the following year. Wickenden studied art over several decades under Kenderdine, H. G. Glyde, and Eli Bornstein and was associated with many of the Saskatoon watercolour painters. This exquisite miniature was probably done in the '40s.

BARTLEY ROBILLIARD PRAGNELL, b. 1907, Caron, Saskatchewan, d. 1966, Edmonton, Alberta. Pragnell studied at the Winnipeg School of Art under L. L. FitzGerald and later in a summer class at the Chicago Art Institute. He lived and worked in Moose Jaw during the '30s, but remained closely attached to painters in Saskatoon. This small view of a city in winter was probably done in the early '30s. It has a cubist-derived clarity combined with stylization common to American Scene painters of the era. After service in the RCAF during W.W.II, Pragnell taught and worked in Winnipeg, Vermont, and California between 1949 and 1958. In 1959 he returned to Canada, living first in Lethbridge. His last years were spent in Edmonton, where he taught at the University of Alberta. His most significant work appears to be his watercolours from the '30s.

ROBERT VINCENT, b. 1908, Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, d. Saskatoon, 1984. Vincent was mainly self-taught, although he benefited from association with professional painters in Saskatoon. His picture layouts and the subjects themselves — often landscapes drawn with professional precision (as with the perspective view of Saskatoon's Broadway Bridge) are typical neither of amateur nor naive art.

RETA SUMMERS COWLEY, b. 1910, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. Reta Cowley is one of the supreme watercolourists in Canada, fully the equal of Phillips and Leighton and arguably of David Milne. She studied art under major teachers in the west from several generations: Kenderdine at Emma Lake in the late '30s, Walter Phillips at the Banff School in the war years, Eli Bornstein at the University of Saskatchewan in the early '50s, and subsequently at Emma Lake Artists Workshops in the '60s and again in the '80s. From each she gained something. By the '70s, her work had combined elements of British naturalism with American modernism — the latter probably derived from John Marin via Eli Bornstein. But her mature work transcend influence. Unlike many painters in the tradition, her watercolours betray no under drawing in pencil — no doubt because she could draw from the landscape with such assurance. Delicate washes — almost detached one from the other, float across the surface and knit together a coherent a satisfying illusion.

EVA MENDEL MILLER, b. Recklinghausen, Germany, 1919. Eva Mendel escaped from Nazi Germany with her father and his family in 1939. She studied art in Vienna during the '30s and upon migrating to North America she continued her studies in New York and Montreal. She also persuaded he father to collect art and, upon settling in Saskatoon in the early '40s, her own art pursuits and her father's collection became an important focus in the Saskatoon art community, introducing substantial works of art along with a knowledge of recent developments in the art world. Although she and her husband traveled widely in the '50s and settled near Calgary in the '70s, she has continued an involvement with art in Saskatoon as well as Calgary. She brought to Canada an active knowledge in Central European expressionism that has coloured her work. Her recent watercolours owe more to Nolde than to Cotman and Bonington.

DOROTHY ELSIE KNOWLES, b. 1927, Unity, Saskatchewan. Dorothy Knowles is one of Canada's supreme landscape painters. Initially trained as a laboratory technician, she studied art in the late '40s and early '50s at night school and summer school in Saskatoon and Emma Lake and briefly, thereafter, in London, England. A turning point in her career came at an Emma Lake Artists Workshop in 1962 when she was encouraged by the American critic, Clement Greenberg, to pursue painting from nature regardless of the contemporary predominance of abstraction. Her paintings on canvas are firmly grounded in the British watercolour tradition — probably picked up via the Saskatoon art community. In fact, her early large canvases using thin washes of reduced colour over complex underdrawing, were essentially enlarged watercolours. This method of painting from nature came to have an enormous influence on younger painters across Western Canada, acquired in part through Knowles' frequent presence as both participant and leader at Emma Lake Artists Workshops. She has continued to paint prolifically in watercolour throughout her career — working in a variety of different manners. Storm is a classic Knowles. In essence it's an English-derived wash drawing in the tradition of Kenderdine, but Knowles' colour is more varied than his, her drawing more vigorous and forceful: description, suggestion, and a kind of abstract calligraphy interact with varied washes.

DAVID ALEXANDER, b. Vancouver, B.C., 1947. David Alexander studied art at Notre Dame University, Nelson, B.C. and subsequently in Saskatchewan at the University of Saskatchewan as well as several Emma Lake Artists Workshops in the later '70s and early '80s. One of the leading artists of the second generation in Saskatoon, Alexander has assembled influences from abstraction, modernist painting, and the English tradition. His paintings and drawings are boldly drawn and designed, often yoking together extreme contrasts. Alexander is anything but a pastoral painter. He has traveled widely to remote areas, especially in the North, and his work has a brooding, Nordic quality. Unlike many of the post-war painters in watercolours on the prairies, Alexander works on a variety of scales, frequently sketching from nature on intimate formats. The painting above, done in Nova Scotia, is one of these — an unusual close-up composition executed in muted grays. Despite being essentially monochrome, the work gives the impression of fully realized colour.

EDWARD JOHN EPP, b. 1950, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. As a high school student, Edward Epp was encouraged to pursue painting by Reta Cowley. He studied formal art at the University of Saskatchewan as well as at several Emma Lake Artists Workshops in the '80s. Epp works in a number of manners, but watercolour has been a special forte. Because the medium is easily set up and relatively portable, he has used it frequently on his extensive travels. He has painted in Liberia, Botswana, in China from Beijing to near the border of Tibet, and in the Canadian prairie provinces and British Columbia, where he now lives. He is an original in watercolour. Having learned the manner from Dorothy Knowles and Reta Cowley, he has developed a personal style based on loose underdrawing in charcoal combined with seemingly casual, saturated washes painted wet into wet.

CLINT HUNKER, b. Regina, Saskatchewan, 1954. Hunker studied at the University of Victoria and the University of Saskatchewan. He has absorbed the influence of Reta Cowley, Lorna Russell,

and David Milne, basing his watercolours of the '80s on cell-like patches of colour similar to Cowley's more amorphous washes. More recently Hunker has carried this practice into brilliant and beautiful pastels.

CATHERINE PEREHUDOFF, b. Saskatoon, 1958. Perehudoff studied art at the University of Saskatchewan followed by several artists workshops. The daughter of Bill Perekudoff and Dorothy Knowles, she has grown up amidst artists and has thereby imbued a strong sense of the landscape tradition in Saskatoon. She is a proficient painter in watercolour, with a light, decorative touch — quite unlike her mother's.