

The Quebec Connection

Artists who were born or lived in Quebec are of critical importance to the art on view in the exhibition **Canvas of War: Masterpieces from the Canadian War Museum**. Of the seventy-two works in the exhibition, twenty are by artists closely associated with the province. Excluding seventeen works by foreign artists and three sculptures, 40 per cent of the remaining Canadian works are by Quebec painters. In fact, this exhibition supports the thesis that Quebec's early twentieth-century art community played a key role in the development of Canadian art.

First World War artists A. Y. Jackson, Maurice Cullen, Richard Jack, Arthur Lismer and Mabel May established their careers in Quebec. Although they were not all trained there, they went on to influence generations of artists in the province and in Canada. Second World War artists in the exhibition who lived and worked extensively in Quebec include Harold Beament, Albert Cloutier, Edwin Holgate, T. R. MacDonald, Pegi Nicol MacLeod, Jack Nichols, Will Ogilvie, Moe Reinblatt and Campbell Tinning.

Quebec Subjects

Belgian artist Alfred Bastien was attached to the 22nd Battalion, the famed "Van Doos," during the First World War. Of the three works by him in the exhibition, the most celebrated is *Over the Top, Neuville-Vitasse*. Future Governor General Georges Vanier maintained that he was the soldier holding the pistol in the front of the painting. The "Van Doos" also fought at the Battle of Courcellette (1916), Ortona (1943), Campobasso (1944) and Carpiquet (1944). The Three Rivers Regiment was at Ortona (1944), the Sherbrooke Fusiliers Regiment was at Falaise (1944) and Carpiquet (1944), and La Régiment de la Chaudière fought at Falaise (1944). These events are all depicted in the exhibition.

The paintings also show how people in Quebec contributed to both war efforts. The women filling shells in Mabel May's composition are from Montreal. Victoria Cross winner Okill Learmonth, who also appears on the exhibition poster, was born and lived in Quebec City, while Native Canadian Lloyd George Moore was a member of the Three Rivers Regiment.



Over the Top, Neuville-Vitasse, Alfred Bastien, 1918 CWM CN8058

Belgian artist Alfred Bastien was assigned to the famous 22nd Battalion in October 1917. Governor General Georges Vanier later claimed that he was the officer with the pistol.



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