University of Alberta

Beyond "the Artist's Wife:"

Women, Artist-Couple Marriage and the Exhibition Experience in Postwar Canada

by

Catharine Margaret Mastin

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Abstract

When art critic Lucy Lippard named "the artist's wife" to be a socially-assigned identity for female artists in the early 1970s, she understood some of the significance of women's companionship status. This dissertation considers how "the artist's wife" was a diverse and hierarchical problem for six female artists during their efforts to access Canada's postwar exhibition market. Joyce Wieland of Toronto, Ontario, Marion Nicoll of Calgary, Alberta, Mary Pratt of St. John's, Newfoundland, and Kenojuak Ashevak of Cape Dorset, Nunavut all experienced this social phenomenon differently. Because the two studios of Wieland and Pratt were combined with domestic life they were also dubbed "kitchen artists." As Marion Nicoll learned, it took much conviction to pursue an art practice focused on abstract painting in traditional institutional and marital contexts. The category "Eskimo" added racial difference to Kenojuak's creative and marital identities. Frances Loring and Florence Wyle of Toronto were persistently called "the Girls," an identity that underscored their non-compliance with heterosexual marriage.

Using feminist theories of sexual difference and representation, and intersecting the traditionally distinct fields of history and art history, this study illuminates that the female artist's companionship status mattered much more than has been historically understood. These artists' experiences provide opportunity to reflect on curatorial practice and subject representation and expose that the solo exhibition cannot be fully separated from the artist-couple exhibition when studying the female artist's exhibition history. Their experiences also make visible that gender and female artist identities, including the category "woman artist," are important when studying the female artist in postwar North American art and marriage histories if the social conditions of women's art production are to be fully understood.

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List of Abbreviations

AC, Artist's Collection

AAF, Alberta Art Foundation, Edmonton, Alberta

AAM, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.

ACA, Alberta College of Art, now Albert College of Art and Design, Calgary, Alberta

AEAC, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, Ontario

AGA, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta

AGW, Art Gallery of Windsor, formerly the Willistead Art Gallery, Windsor, Ontario

ASA, Alberta Society of Artists, Calgary, Alberta

AGO, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario, formerly Art Gallery of Toronto (AGT) and former to that the Art Museum of Toronto (AMT)

BSFA, Banff School of Fine Arts, Banff, Alberta

CAAC, Calgary Allied Arts Centre, Coste House, Calgary, Alberta

CEAC, Canadian Eskimo Art Council

CNE, Canadian National Exhibition

CSGA, Canadian Society of Graphic Art

CPE, Canadian Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers

CPR, Canadian Pacific Railway

CSPWC, Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour

CCAB, Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa, Ontario

DINA, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs

GAAC, Government of Alberta Art Collection, Edmonton, Alberta

GL, Gallery Lambton, Sarnia, Ontario (formerly Sarnia Public Library and Art Gallery)

GMAG, Glenbow Museum and Art Gallery, Calgary, Alberta

GPL, Georgiana Public Library, Keswick, Ontario

LAC, Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario

LU, Location Unknown

MCAC, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario

ML, Museum London, formerly also the Elsie Perrin Williams Memorial Art Gallery, the London Public Library and Art Gallery and the London Regional Art Gallery

MUNAG/The Rooms, Memorial University of Newfoundland Art Gallery, now incorporated into The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador, St. John's, Newfoundland

NGC, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario

NFB, National Film Board, Ottawa, Ontario

OSA, Ontario Society of Artists, Toronto, Ontario

PC, Privately-Owned Art Collection

PITA, Provincial Institute of Technology and Art, Calgary, (now Alberta College of Art and Design)

RAIC, Royal Architectural Institute of Canada

RCA, Royal Canadian Academy of Arts

SSC, Sculptors' Society of Canada

UAA, University of Alberta Archives, Edmonton, Alberta

UTAC, University of Toronto Art Collection, Toronto, Ontario

VAG, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia

WAG, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba

WBEC, West Baffin Eskimo-Cooperative, now Kinngait Studios, Cape Dorset, Nunavut

Chapter One

Introduction: Beyond "The Artist's Wife"

Introduction

In 1973, American critic and curator Lucy R. Lippard reflected on her life in marriage to the painter Robert Ryman and made this observation:

> I had once been an artist's wife, serving tea and smoothing the way for visitors, and had had my own infuriating experiences in that anonymous role, [and] I continued to go to men's studios and either disregard or matronize the women artists who worked in the corners of their husband's spaces, or in the bedroom, even in the kitchen.[1]

Being cast as secondary in marriage was an experience shared by many female art professionals of Lippard's generation, as her testimony reveals.[2] It was a gradual process that led to her understanding of how men had come to dominate twentieth-century art production and exhibitions, and the teaching and practicing of art history and criticism in the United States.[3] "The birth of her feminist consciousness," as Lippard described it, had enabled her, however, to name a persistent problem—the social casting of a female artist in an artist-couple marriage as "artist's wife."[4] Joyce Wieland (1931-1998) likewise observed of her marriage to Michael Snow (b. 1929) in 1971 that, "I was on my way in a sense to becoming an artist's-wife type…until I got looking around in history for female

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[1] Lucy Lippard, "Prefaces to Catalogues of Women's Exhibitions (three parts): II, Why Separate Women's Art, 1973," in *From the Centre: Feminist Essays on Women's Art* (New York: Dutton, 1976), 47.

[2] Lippard and Ryman married in 1961, together had one son, and later divorced. Her professional life included the position of senior art critic for the journal *Art International*.

[3] Lippard completed her Master of Arts thesis in 1962 on surrealist Max Ernst at New York University under Robert Goldwater whose privileging of the male subject is evident throughout his writings. Mira Schor discusses the gendered politics of women's post-secondary visual arts educations, as Lippard would have experienced, in *Wet: On Painting, Feminism and Art* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997). Lippard's first major writings, including *Pop Art* (New York and Washington: Praeger, 1966), *Surrealists on Art* (Engelwood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice Hall, 1970) and *Changing: Essays in Art Criticism* (New York: Dutton, 1971) were dominated by male artists. By the mid-1970s, however, her writings were demonstrably concerned with women's work, notably her volumes *Eva Hesse* (New York University, 1976) and *From the Centre: Feminist Essays on Women's Art.*

[4] Lucy Lippard, "Introduction: Changing Since Changing," in *From the Centre: Feminist Essays on Women's Art,* 4.

lines of influence."[5] It was after reading women's writings and researching their histories that Wieland claimed she had been able to "invent herself as an artist."[6] Wieland and Lippard each worked differently through their "artist-wife" experiences and feminisms—Wieland through her art practice and research on women's history, and Lippard through her curatorial practice and art criticism.[7]

Lippard's articulation of this social conundrum for women had identified two important issues: first, she observed how women's companionship status was interwoven with their lives as artists; and second, she observed how their social casting as subordinate subjects was linked with their difficulties in being taken seriously. "Women are not more 'part-time' artists than anyone else," she explained. "Women have three jobs instead of two: their art, their work for pay, and the traditional unpaid work that's never done… It does not seem to occur to people that women who can manage all this and still be serious artists may be *more* serious than their male counterparts."[8] Lippard had envisioned "the artist's wife" as an American and heterosexual problem. In fact, though, it was a transnational one with considerable social, sexual and racial implications.

This study considers the experiences of six women in their artist-couple marriages to explore how "the artist's wife" was a diverse and hierarchical identity concern for female artists.

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[5] Joyce Wieland as quoted in "Kay Armatage Interviews Joyce Wieland," in *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, edited by Kathryn Elder (Toronto: International Film Festival Group, 1999), 155.
[6] Wieland, "Kay Armatage Interviews Joyce Wieland," 155.
[7] Lippard organized the exhibition *Twenty-Six Contemporary Women Artists* (Ridgefield, Connecticut: Aldrich Museum, 1971), and defended the exhibit *Women Choose Women*, New York Cultural Centre, 1973, as outlined in Lucy Lippard, *From the Centre,* 38-42. Lippard included Wieland in *Pop Art,* 196 and figure 161, and they remained in contact after Wieland's return to Canada in 1971. Lippard contributed the essay "Watershed," to the publication accompanying Wieland's 1987 retrospective, *Joyce Wieland* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario and Key Porter Books, 1987), 1-16.
[8] Lippard, "Preface to 1971: 'Twenty Six Contemporary Women Artists,'" and "Sexual Politics: Art Style," in *From the Centre,* 41, 33.

Joyce Wieland of Toronto, Ontario, alongside Marion Nicoll (1909-1986) of Calgary, Alberta, Mary Pratt (b. 1935), of St. John's, Newfoundland, and Kenojuak Ashevak (b. 1927) of Cape Dorset, Nunavut all experienced differently this social phenomenon.[9] Because the two studios of Wieland and Pratt were combined with domestic life they were dubbed "kitchen artists" in addition to "artist's wives." As Marion Nicoll learned through her experiences as art educator and marriage companion, it took much conviction to pursue an art practice focused on abstract painting in traditional institutional and marital contexts. The category "Eskimo" added racial difference to Kenojuak's creative and marital identities.[10] Throughout their life-long and same-sex partnership, Frances Loring (1887-1968) and Florence Wyle (1881-1968) of Toronto were called "the Girls," an identity that underscored their non-compliance with heterosexual marriage.

Lippard's insights regarding "the artist's wife" established a foundation on which to ask important questions which these six women's lives and art practices illuminate in further depth. How and why was it that women found themselves in artist-couple marriages? How was a female artist's identity to be described in same-sex artist-couple marriages? What about the experiences of Aboriginal women where there had not traditionally been a clear distinction between art and everyday life, where the identities "artist," "artist's wife" and "artist-couple" were conceptual and linguistic non-entities? Finally, as this study considers in some depth, how exactly did the social construction of female identities including "the artist's wife" and "the Girls" affect women in their public lives as exhibiting artists?

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[9] Reference to the six artists required careful consideration for this study. Dominantly, I use the artist's surname but, when making comparative reference to those with shared surnames (eg. Nicoll and Pratt), it has been important to differentiate them and, in these instances, the artist's first name or full name is used. When referencing Kenojuak Ashevak I have used her given Inuit name, Kenojuak in most instances, since she did not take up a surname until 1970. When discussing Loring and Wyle, their surnames or full names are used in nearly all references to avoid perpetuating phonetic confusion which has resulted by overuse of their first names in published forms.
[10] I use the term "Eskimo" when referencing its specific historical usage, such as when this descriptor appeared in exhibit reviews. Elsewhere, "Inuit" is used throughout the text when describing Kenojuak's cultural ancestry.

Historically, "the artist's wife" has been a multi-dimensional identity with plural meanings in the visual arts that also include the artist's muse and the artist's publicity-marketing agent.[11] However, in analyzing how the women in this study advanced in Canada's exhibition system after the Second World War, it becomes clearer how "the artist's wife" was so multi-layered and so female a problem in the postwar era: there was not a parallel identity to describe the male marriage companion as "the artist's husband."[12] In this exhibition economy, where solo and artist-couple exhibitions were regularly described as "one-man" and "two-man" showings (even when both artists were female), gender was clearly an obstacle for women. While these six artists were granted opportunities for exhibition, however, their solo and artist-couple showings also point to significant differences in their recognition as female subjects.

Nicoll, Wieland and Pratt—the three Euro-Canadian and heterosexual subjects in this study—each had access to the solo exhibition. However, the two art practices of Loring and Wyle remained confined to the artist-couple exhibition throughout and beyond their lifetimes. So too, Kenojuak did not exhibit solo in non-profit public venues without her first husband, Johnniebo Ashevak (b. 1923), until well after his passing in 1972. From "artist's wife" and "Eskimo artist's wife" to "the Girls," the identities assigned to these six artists significantly shaped their access to and representation in exhibitions. These examples illustrate that "the artist's wife" was a charged signifier of important hierarchies of difference between women,

[11] Saskia van Uylenburgh and Elaine de Kooning respectively modeled for their husbands Rembrandt van Rijn and Willem de Kooning, and Nancy Russell and Lee Krasner respectively worked to publicize the art practices of their husbands, Charles Marion Russell and Jackson Pollock. The abstract expressionist practices of painters of Elaine de Kooning and Lee Krasner are well-known beyond the support they gave to their husband's art careers.

[12] The term "postwar" varies in definition in North American historiography. There is consensus that 1945 marks its outset but the end-date is less clear. See Joanne Meyerowitz, *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994) and Magda Fahrni and Robert Rutherdale, eds. *Creating Postwar Canada*, *1945-1975* (Vancouver and Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2008). In this study, postwar extends to the early 1970s and concentrates thematically on how the expansion of non-profit and for-profit exhibition venues affected six female artists. It reveals that the term "prosperity," so often used as a central criterion to define postwar, varied significantly for these six women and that this concept was also deeply gendered.

articulated in relationship to the subject's sexuality and racial ancestry, and that Canada's postwar exhibition system played a critical role in both installing and perpetuating these differences. As practicing artists, these six women's sexual companionship status was continually impressed on their public and private lives in profound ways.

Theoretical Frameworks and Influences

This study draws on a wide range of feminist scholarship and interdisciplinary theoretical writings produced during the last century. From Virginia Woolf's work on women's economic sustenance and private work space as writers to Judith Butler's work on the enactment of sex-gender performance, the offerings are rich, plural and provocative. From the outset, this study has strategically been interdisciplinary, drawing on these and other feminist scholars concerned with fostering new understandings between traditionally distinct fields of academic study. Specifically, this project brings together the fields of feminist theory with histories of companionship, marriage, sexuality and the visual arts to explore women's experiences in artist-couple marriages and the significance of their companionship status, most notably as exhibiting artists.

Theories of women's experience, identity construction and sex-gender performance have been crucial, but this study is also indebted to earlier feminist writings concerned with the articulation of sex-gender difference in representational and ideological forms. Texts by Laura Mulvey and Mary Ann Doane in film studies exposing representations of sex-gender differences on screen and in still-photography have been crucial to engaging in a parallel deconstruction of sex-gender difference in exhibitions.[13] In the visual arts, essays by Linda Nochlin and Griselda

[13] In Laura Mulvey's essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Visual and Other Pleasure* (Bloomington and Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989), 14-26, she argues how the subject "woman" is staged in film representation as the "bearer, not maker of meaning." In Mary Ann Doane's essay, "Film and the Masquerade:

Pollock have informed understandings of how forms of sex-gender ideology worked to cast female artists as Simone de Beauvoir's "second sex" in histories of art.[14] By building on these four authors' theories, the exhibition is exposed as an important social venue for the representation and ideological shaping of sex-gender differences and identities.

The writings by Denise Riley and Joan Scott on the categories "woman" and "experience" and Judith Butler on sex-gender performance have been central to this study's analysis of women's experiences in companionship and exhibitions. The theories of these three authors have fostered analysis of identity categories in women's lives and enhanced understandings of the wide-ranging factors affecting subject experiences. Indeed, the social imposition of identities on subjects is at the centre of this study, concerned as it is with designations including "the artist's wife" and its related variants as applied to the lives of Nicoll, Wieland, Pratt, Loring, Wyle and Kenojuak.

Denise Riley's transformative critique of the category "woman" to recognize the necessity of differentiating women's multi-dimensional experiences grids this project in multiple ways.[15] Using the analytical trinity of gender-race-class differences still important to ongoing work in feminism, the significant differences to be found in the criteria of generation and region are also considered. The temporal focus of most of this dissertation on women's postwar exhibitions has enabled comparative assessment of these latter two concerns in crucial ways. Those artists born between the 1880s and 1910 (Frances Loring, Florence Wyle and Marion

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Theorizing the Female Spectator," in *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 17-32, she demonstrates how Robert Doisneau's still photography privileged the masculine gaze in exhibition viewing experiences.

[14] Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists," (1971) in *Women, Art and Power: and other Essays* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 145-178; and Griselda Pollock, "Feminist Interventions in the histories of art: an introduction," in *Vision & Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and the Histories of Art* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 1-17.

[15] Denise Riley, "Does Sex Have a History?" in *Am I that Name? Feminism and the Category 'Women' in History* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1988), 1-17.

Nicoll) were given access to solo and artist-couple exhibitions much later in life than those born in the 1920s and 1930s (Kenojuak, Mary Pratt and Joyce Wieland). The younger artists benefited significantly from widened access to expanding exhibition opportunities in both non-profit and commercial venues that developed in postwar Canada subsequent to the Massey Commission.[16]

Region has also been an important factor for the study of difference as numerous scholars of Canadian history have explored.[17] Reasons for this include understandings that distinct communities and cultures exist within and across Canada's mapped borders and that these realities resist singular conceptions of national unity. Indeed, the geo-political locale of women's art practices has informed these six women's lives and been crucial to subject selection in this study.[18] In her marriage to Christopher Pratt (b. 1935), Mary Pratt found that living in Newfoundland was a very different experience than living in her native-born province of New Brunswick. Joyce Wieland and Marion Nicoll had different regional experiences when they each made their first abstractions in Toronto and in Calgary during the late 1950s. Equally, the urban lives of Nicoll, Wieland, Loring and Wyle did not offer parallel subject experiences to living in remote and non-urban spaces like those of Kenojuak and Pratt.

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[16] Formation of the Massey Commission commenced following a national artists' conference in 1941 led by André Bieler where an infrastructure expansion of Canada's non-profit national exhibitions for artists was discussed. Conference proceedings for this event have been published in Michael Bell and Frances K. Smith, eds., *The Kingston Conference Proceedings: Conference of Canadian Artists (1941 Kingston, Ontario)* (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1991). The Massey Commission history is further explored in these two texts: Paul Litt, *The Muses, the Masses and the Massey Commission* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); and Maria Tippett, *Making Culture: English-Canadian Institutions and the Arts before the Massey Commission* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

[17] Historians have conceptualized region to include provincial and trans-provincial geographies. Two examples are: Adele Perry's *On the Edge of Empire: Race, Gender and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); and Sheila McManus' *The Line which Separates: Race, Gender and the Making of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands* (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 2005).

[18] In this study, region is considered in relationship to civic and provincial boundaries, urban and non-urban spaces, and combinations of these factors but is not specific to any of these concerns. By way of example, Kenojuak's pre-settlement life was not tied specifically to Cape Dorset, and Pratt's pre-married life in Fredericton, New Brunswick and her married life in Salmonier, Newfoundland can be seen to represent two regions defined respectively by provincial and Atlantic Canadian geographies.

A concentration on subjects predominantly associated with art practice in Canada can also be viewed as a criterion for the exploration of differences between women. Following Lippard's identification of "the artist's wife" as a social identity applied to women in the United States, the experiences of these six women reveal the differences to be found in five artist-couple marriages north of the 49th parallel. These six artists' "Canadianness," however, is also complicated by this study's inclusion of two American-born women (Loring and Wyle) who spent the bulk of their lives practicing in Canada, two Canadian-born women who worked in the United States (Wieland and Nicoll), and two Canadian-born women who lived only in Canada (Kenojuak and Pratt) but who exhibited in international exhibitions.[19] Their experiences are significant to thinking about how permeable North American borders were for them and also how the extent to which they identified with national forms of citizenship varied considerably. Frances Loring changed from American to Canadian citizenship eleven years following her arrival in Toronto from New York.[20] In contrast, Kenojuak is not known to have remarked on being "Canadian:" rather, she spoke consistently about the importance of her Inuit cultural traditions to her daily life, art and identity. After spending time working in the United States, Marion Nicoll had little desire to return to Canada whereas Joyce Wieland insisted on it: both women kept their Canadian citizenship, but, whereas the matter was of great relevance to

[19] Loring and Wyle were both American-born and remained in the United States until 1913. From 1911-13 they participated in feminist culture in New York's Greenwich Village including time with activist Emma Goldman. Wieland lived in New York from 1962-1971. Marion Nicoll spent a half year of study working with Will Barnet at the Art Students' League and was offered a teaching post at Cooper Union School of Design. As referred to in subsequent chapters, Kenojuak exhibited in the United States, as did most others in this study and Pratt exhibited in the international exhibition, Paul Duval, *Aspects of Realism: Belgium, Canada, England, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Korea, U.S.A., Spain, Switzerland* (Stratford and Toronto: Gallery Stratford and Rothman's Canada, 1977), cat. 7, unpaginated.

[20] Frances Loring was American born but became a naturalized Canadian citizen in 1926. As documented in "1987 Accrual Materials," Box 1, File 1.1, Loring and Wyle Fonds, Art Gallery of Ontario Library and Archives, Toronto (hereafter Loring and Wyle Fonds) where her "Naturalization Certificate," is dated 2 July 1926.

Wieland, it was not of much significance to Nicoll. For the most part then, these six artists transcended and remapped national identities to meet their needs.

Christine Boyanoski has explored how permeable the border was for artists between 1920 and 1940 and so it was also for the six artists considered in this dissertation.[21] This study thus considers North American visual arts as a continental economy rather than a nationally-divided one that grounds an artist's identity in the concept of "nation." Nonetheless, this study concentrates on women's exhibitions in Canada and asserts the importance of understanding the experiences of women within the cultural, economic and political specificity of Canada's postwar exhibition system as its histories of exhibition and curatorial practice yield new meanings to the identity category, "the artist's wife."

For these six subjects self-identification with the category "woman" was varied. Kenojuak's identities as wife and mother held stronger weight for her in Inuit culture than did the identities woman and artist, for example. Sculptors Loring and Wyle found the category "woman" to be both enfranchising and disenfranchising and they each worked differently through their relationships with this sex-gender identity. In her signatory practices as abstract painter, Marion Nicoll rendered her identity androgynous by using only an initial for her first name. For Joyce Wieland and Mary Pratt, however, the category "woman" was central to their self-realization.

As Julia Kristeva and other scholars have agreed, "woman" is both variable among subjects and resists specific and biological definition.[22] For Denise Riley, "'woman' is a volatile collectivity in which female persons can be very differently positioned, so that the apparent

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[21] Christine Boyanoski, *Permeable Border: Art of Canada and the United States, 1920-1940* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1989).

[22] Julia Kristeva argues that "the category woman cannot be said to exist," in "Woman Can Never Be Defined," in *New French Feminisms: An Anthology,* edited by Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, translated by Marilyn A. August (New York: Schocken, 1981), 400.

continuity of the subject 'woman' is not to be relied on; 'women' is both synchronically and diachronically erratic as a collectivity."[23] The female subject, however, clearly still lies at the centre of this study for all of its un-definability because the project of continuing to explore the diversity of female subjectivity remains ongoing work in the twenty-first century. As Riley has also argued, the category "woman" is one that feminists are required to both lay claim to and refute if we are to understand it at all.[24] Additionally, Judith Butler contends that identities are also revisable in lived experience and "woman" is shown in this study to be a diverse, changeable and contested identity.[25]

This study also explores what Jo-Ann Wallace and Bridget Elliott have framed as the enabling and disabling forces of twentieth-century modernity for female creative producers. Regarding women's visibility between 1900 and 1940, they explain that while hegemonic sex-gender ideology worked to *disable* women's participation in public life these decades also *enabled* their "unprecedented blossoming."[26] In contributing to continued understandings of the category woman in history, then, this study exposes those social mechanisms in Canada's postwar exhibition system which, on the one hand, witnessed women's increasing presence and, on the other hand, worked to cast female artists in subordinating ways through their marital companionship status.

Any study exploring the differences between women is also concerned with women's experience and consequently Joan Scott's pivotal work on this topic occupies a central place in the theoretical framing of this study. As she has argued, the subject's own account (what he or

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[23] Riley, "Does Sex Have A History" in *Am I That Name,* 2.
[24] Ibid., 3-4.
[25] Judith Butler, "Preface (1999)" in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007 edition, first published 1990), xxiv-xxv.
[26] Jo-Ann Wallace and Bridget Elliot, *Women Artists and Writers: Modernist (im)positionings* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 10-11.

she has lived through) cannot stand alone as "uncontestable evidence of experience."[27] Scott contends that when we use experience in this way, "experience is taken as the origin of knowledge, the vision of the individual subject [and it] becomes the bedrock of evidence on which explanation is built."[28] Alternatively, Scott suggests that historians also consider the question of "how subjects are constituted through experience."[29] Given that the subject is preceded by normative social structures including state-sanctioned marriage and ideals of nuclear family composition and, in this study, also specific modes of exhibition such as the solo and artist-couple formats, the subject is both shaped in experience by these structures and, in that process of being socially shaped, also has her own experience. Women's formative histories in familial and cultural life, education, work and the law were significant factors to constitute them as subjects in and of experience, and these contexts informed their companionship formations in significant ways, a problem that is addressed in Chapter Two. Chapters Three through Six illuminate the exhibition as an important social mechanism to constitute these artists in and of experience since it has played an instrumental role in both installing and perpetuating female identity categories, including "the artist's wife" and "the Girls."

Subject testimonies are integral to the research from which this analysis proceeds but artists' commentaries are also considered with critical speculation to account for their silences. Mary Pratt once commented on the artist's place in the formation of truth claims that, "I sometimes wonder if painters ever really tell the truth when they discuss their work…I'm sure it is better to look at my work than to read what I write about it."[30] The unspoken-unwritten account is here considered an equally important form of "the evidence of experience," and

[27] Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (Summer 1991): 777.
[28] Ibid., 777.
[29] Ibid., 779.
[30] Mary Pratt, "Artist's Statement," *Some Canadian Women Artists* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1975), 55.

notations have been made throughout marking those silences left behind in the historical record which are reason for pause.

In using women's autobiographical testimonies, this study emphasizes those themes repeatedly asserted by the subjects and considers these patterns in relationship to their historical contexts. As with any study, my authorial voice grounded in curatorial practice in the years prior to those dedicated to this study remains no silent one here. In hindsight, it has become clearer that those experiences led to a focused consideration of women's exhibitions as a critical hinge through which to explore female artist identity construction and the significance of artist-couple companionship for women. My family experiences in navigating the shadow-effects of one artist's legacy have given rise to an interest in female identity formation: there have been countless occasions when I have been described as "the artist's grand-daughter" and asked if "I too am a painter."[31] These experiences have raised my consciousness of the multiple factors shaping female identity in ways parallel to those experienced by Lippard and Wieland cited at the outset of this chapter. The findings of this study contribute to understanding the social identities applied to female artists.

Joan Scott's work demonstrates that women's experience intersects with what has been named "the social" in theoretical scholarship.[32] Scholars such as Dorothy Smith justly assert that "the social is not…an entity separable from actual people" and that "the social directs a focusing

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[31] The century-long legacy of my grandfather, founding Group of Seven artist, Franklin Carmichael (1890-1945), has been a powerful one for three generations of women in my family. In my professional life I have not made reference to this pedigree as among my credentials. Nonetheless this history has been referenced with deliberation by popular media, critics and colleagues throughout my work as a curator and writer.

[32] So too, Teresa de Lauretis sees experience to intersect with the social, noting that "the continuous engagement of a self or subject in social reality.[is] a complex of habits resulting from the semiotic interaction of [the subject's] 'outer world' and 'inner world.'" See Teresa de Lauretis, "Semiotics and Experience," in *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 182.

of sociological attention on how people's activities are coordinated."[33] In this study, however, it is Judith Butler's provocative work on sex-gender performance that has been critical to theorizing the relationship of female experience to the social. Her theories have released definitions of sex and gender from their historical attachment to human biology into a different social reality—one that accommodates the possibilities of sex-gender identity as revisable performances enacted through repetition and stylization. For Butler, "gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time."[34] She explains:

> Gender is capable of being constituted differently [even so] gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo. In its very character as performative resides the possibility of contesting its reified status….one does one's body and indeed, one does one's body differently from one's contemporaries and from one's predecessors and successors as well…The body is always an embodying of possibilities both conditioned and circumscribed by historical convention...the body is a historical situation [and a] corporeal project."[35]

Butler's ideas have significantly altered understandings of sex and gender to make visible how these have together formed an intersecting system of identity construction. She explains that "if [one's] significance is codetermined through various acts and their cultural perception, [then] it is not possible to know sex as distinct from gender."[36] For the six subjects in this study their companionships were integral aspects of their sex-gender performances and they were not always normatively abiding subjects. Clearly too, the exhibition was also an important public venue for sex-gender performance, a locale where artists' identities could be performed and

[33] Dorothy E. Smith, *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory and Investigations* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 6.
[34] Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory," in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader,* edited by Amelia Jones (New York: Routledge, 2003), 392.
[35] Ibid., 392-4.
[36] Ibid., 396.

revised, and where identities were both socially shaped and contested through object displays and exhibition narratives.

This study also responds to Butler's call to understand the social constitution of one's "livable life."[37] This direction in Butler's writings asserts the necessity of multiple forms of companionship recognition in contemporary law to acknowledge lived reality.[38] Throughout the six women's differing companionship histories considered here, there was only one form of companionship recognition sanctioned in Canadian law—heterosexual and monogamous marriage. Nonetheless, in both state-sanctioned and self-determined marriages, these six women reworked the concept of marriage to meet their needs, inside and outside the law. Indeed, none stood still when it came to necessities of self-revision in circumstances of economic need, cross-cultural experience, self-definition, self-fulfillment, and/or a combination of these factors. These women's art, their exhibitions, and their re-workings of the concept "marriage" are testimony to how they self-determined their lives to be as "livable" as their social and cultural inheritances deemed viable.

Methodologies and Artist Selection

In these five artist-couple marriages it has been significant to consider what marriage and companionship historians have identified as the "parallel" or "double" biography.[39] Given this study's focus on women's experiences, the biographies and art practices of the male marriage partners of Nicoll, Wieland, Pratt and Kenojuak include only those most salient points central to

[37] Judith Butler, "Preface (1999)," xxiii, and also Judith Butler, "Beside Oneself: On the Limits of Sexual Autonomy," in *Undoing Gender* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 17-39.
[38] Judith Butler, "Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?" in *Undoing Gender* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 102-130.
[39] Phyllis Rose uses the term "parallel" biography in *Parallel Lives: Five Victorian Marriages* (New York: Vintage, 1984), 6. Terry Crowley uses the term "double biography" in *Marriage of Minds: Isabel and Oscar Skelton Reinventing Canada* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2003), ix-xiii.

the dissertation arguments. In prioritizing women's experiences over men's it has not been the goal to cast men into "paper characters" as Terry Crowley observes.[40] Rather, as John Tosh has asserted, this study envisions that men's experiences in sex-gender identity formation and exhibition are distinct studies on their own and opportunity awaits scholars in this regard.[41]

It has been essential to concentrate on women to illuminate the social conditions of their companionship arrangements and their exhibitions in Canada's gendered postwar exhibition system in order to bring their experiences into closer view. The challenges of the double biography have here proven complicated enough since writings about the same-sex partnership of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle have persistently collapsed their lives together into the singularized identity, "the Girls," through the double biography.[42] Wieland, Nicoll, Pratt and Kenojuak have not been subjected to these same difficulties with the double biography, even in artist-couple monographs and exhibits.[43] Analysis of the experiences of Loring and Wyle in Chapters Two and Five thus concentrates on parsing their independent identities.

Given the significance of women's companionship formations and postwar exhibitions to this study, the selection of artists required that four criteria remain prominent. First, to reflect the diversity of Canada's marriage landscape, it was necessary to include various companionship

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[40] Crowley, *Marriage of Minds: Isabel and Oscar Skelton reinventing Canada,* x.

[41] John Tosh's writings include: *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire* (Harrow and New York: Pearson Longman, 2005); *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); and with Michael Roper, *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991). Key publications on Michael Snow, Christopher Pratt and James Nicoll are cited in the following chapters while none exist on Johnniebo. With the exception of Theresa de Lauretis's essay, "Snow on the Oedipal Stage" in *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1984), 70-83, there are virtually no studies on these four men that address their sex-gender identities.

[42] This issue is explored in Chapter Five but, briefly, the three important volumes include: Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle* (Toronto: Clark, Irwin, 1973): Christine Boyanoski, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1987); and Elspeth Cameron, *And Beauty Answers: the life of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle* (Toronto: Cormorant Books, 2007). It is also worth noting that the titles for both biographies singularize Loring and Wyle's lives by using "a biography" and "the life."

[43] There are few double-artist writings on the artists in this study other than Loring and Wyle, but neither Jane Lind's biography on *Mary and Christopher Pratt* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1989) nor the artist-couple exhibits of Snow and Wieland singularized their identities.

arrangements and outcomes including unions which were state-sanctioned, self-determined and culturally determined.[44] For the most part, all five partnerships were enduring relationships. Nonetheless, it has been important to include marriages ending in separation, divorce and remarriage to demonstrate the diversity of companionship outcomes. The selection of these five marriages also contributes to diversifying definitions of "the artist-couple" in artist-couple literature. As Kenojuak and Johnniebo's marriage illustrates, the artist-couple was by no means a self-chosen professional identity but was rather a culturally imposed one. The context for their art production was the result of colonial intervention in the Arctic world when the West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative (WBEC), now the Kinngait Co-operative, was formed in 1958 to offer Inuit people opportunity to assimilate into a cash-based economy through sales of their creative works. In this pre-determined graphic and sculptural economy, Kenojuak and Johnniebo each made drawings for print translation, copper plate etchings and sculptures.[45]

Second, as this project grew to focus on women's experiences in postwar exhibitions, it was necessary that these artists' lives traversed the middle and postwar decades of the twentieth century, and that they had actively exhibited in those decades in order to explore their exhibition experiences. As mentioned earlier in the theoretical section of this chapter, women's generational differences in exhibitions (my third criterion) amplifies discussions of how and in what ways these six women's art practices were also recognized differently in Canada's postwar exhibition market.

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[44] The research for this study did not yield a polyandrous or polygynous marriage for potential inclusion in this artist-couple analysis.

[45] Before formation of the West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative (WBEC), Kenojuak also made works in sealskin and fabric but the WBEC initiative emphasized work in sculptural and graphic media. She made only a few sculptures including, *Two Birds* (NGC, accession 40620) and *Bear and Woman* (NGC, accession 29102). A listing of graphic works (drawings and prints) by Kenojuak and Johnniebo is held in the WBEC collection on loan to McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario (MCAC) and contains reference to 2,547 works by Kenojuak and 276 works by Johnniebo.

The fourth criterion of region has also been crucial to this artist selection. The five Euro-North American women's experiences reveal multiple diversities in their experiences across Canada's major cities and provinces. Kenojuak's story, however, is especially important for what it reveals about regional difference and marriage history writing in Canadian history because, as Kerry Abel and Ken S. Coates explain, historians have struggled with ways to envelope the north into the broader project of "Canadian history."[46] A review of marriage and companionship literature in Canada reveals that Inuit marriage practices have not yet been considered by historians when conceptualizing Canada's marriage landscape.[47] Anthropologists and ethnologists have produced what knowledge is available on Inuit marriage.[48] The difficulties entailed in northern research have posed numerous challenges for researchers and historians and several of these have persisted here.[49] As Abel and Coates explain, though, Canada is a northern nation in global geography and it is no longer sufficient to romanticize Canada's northern regions through clichés of its "vastness" and "harsh winters," as does John Feeney's 1963 film, *Eskimo Artist: Kenojuak* (addressed in Chapter Six).[50] Kenojuak's marriage to Johnniebo in Inuit and Anglican traditions offers opportunity for the study of indigenous-newcomer relations in

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[46] Kerry Abel and Ken S. Coates, "Introduction: The North and the Nation," in *Northern Visions: New Perspectives on the North in Canadian History* (Peterborough, Orchard Park and Rozelle: Broadview Press, 2001), 7-22.
[47]Three important texts are as follows: Peter Ward, *Courtship, Love and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century English Canada*; (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); James Snell, *In the Shadow of the Law*: *Divorce in Canada 1900-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); and Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada to 1915* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2008).
[48] Rolf Kjellstrom, *Eskimo Marriage: An Account of Traditional Eskimo Courtship and Marriage* (Stockholm: Nordiska museet, 1973) and Lee Guemple's two studies, *Inuit Spouse Exchange* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961) and *Alliance in Eskimo Society* (Seattle: American Ethnological Society, 1972). These authors' views are discussed in Chapter Two.
[49] Shelagh D. Grant notes that challenges of northern research include funding, community access, climate, transportation and translation. See "Inuit History in the Next Millenium: Challenges and Rewards," in *Northern Visions*, 91-106. A research trip to Cape Dorset to interview WBEC officials and Kenojuak was planned for this project but there was no response to letter and phone communications made between January and October 2009. I met Kenojuak at the Cape Dorset 50th anniversary exhibition opening at the NGC (20 October 2009) but the artist was not then available for interview. I extend my gratitude to Leslie Boyd Ryan, Darlene Wight and Marnie Schreiber for their gracious assistance in advising and facilitating those efforts made to interview the artist.
[50] Abel and Coates, "Introduction: The North and the Nation," 17.

Cape Dorset and for cross-cultural analysis of marriage histories in Inuit and Euro-North American cultures.

Many women in Canada's artist-couple history could have been included in this study.[51] There were numerous challenges, however, posed by a larger subject selection. Several women's practices did not offer enough examples to permit in-depth single-artist analysis of their exhibition experiences.[52] In other cases, published and unpublished documents on the artists were too sparse.[53] One artist's fond was closed to researchers during this project's timeline.[54] Another artist who was approached for inclusion in this study declined participation.[55] The project could have been exclusive to heterosexual couples but this direction would have obscured the diversity of women's companionships and marriage arrangements and overlooked the important variant of the "artist-wife" identity in Loring and Wyle's casting as "the Girls." These six subjects' experiences facilitated exploration of various companionship and marriage formations and outcomes, and they illuminated the significant differences to be found in women's experiences across the criteria of sexuality, race, region and generation.

Exploring the autobiographies and biographies of these six women has involved working from both published and unpublished materials. The archival fonds of Nicoll, Wieland, Pratt, Loring and Wyle have offered rich and diverse sources. For Kenojuak, however, an archival fond does not yet exist and thus documents in the public realm have been crucial to the study of her

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[51] Prominent female artists include Molly Lamb Bobak, Françoise Sullivan, Hortense Gordon, Catharine Whyte, Elizabeth Wyn Wood, Dorothy Knowles, Bess Harris, Bobs Cogill Haworth, Vera Weatherbie, Mary Heister-Reid, Mary Wrinch-Reid, Sylvia Hahn, Barbara Leighton, Kay Daly, Barbara Kerr, Ghitta Caiserman, and Caroline Armington, among others.

[52] This is the case for Catharine Whyte, Bess Harris, Bobs Haworth and Vera Weatherbie.

[53] Significant biographical research is still needed for Sullivan and Bobak. Sullivan was married to Paterson Ewen and Molly Lamb Bobak is married to Bruno Bobak.

[54] Elizabeth Wyn Wood's archival fond was closed to researchers at the time of this study. She was married to sculptor Emmanuel Hahn.

[55] Dorothy Knowles was approached for inclusion but declined involvement given the time commitment and personal circumstances. She is married to William Perehudoff.

experiences in marriage and in exhibition. The archival fonds representing the other five women in this study also differ significantly. Whereas Wieland, Nicoll and Pratt all wrote diaries and letters, none is known to exist for either Loring or Wyle; and whereas Nicoll kept meticulous records tracking her exhibition history and sales, no parallel documents exist for any of the other five subjects. The implementation of Canada's legislated Privacy Act and research protocols for university-based research and publishing regarding living subjects has also meant that personal topics, including the Pratt and Wieland divorces, are not detailed here.

The published texts available on these six artists are also asymmetrical. Wieland, Pratt, Kenojuak, Loring and Wyle have all been the subject of important published biographies and/or autobiographies but not Nicoll. The unpublished archival record has been essential to establishing basic biography and autobiography on Nicoll to craft narratives that parallel the depth of analysis offered for the other five subjects. It has also been important to access the archival fonds of the art societies, government agencies, and institutions the artists worked with, including their exhibition archives. Visual forms of "evidence" offered by these artists' art practices have been an equally crucial source and researching their works has involved travel across Canada to private and public art collections and film archives so that their art could be integral to this study.

Oral history has been important to this study and methodologies for accessing the artists' biographies and autobiographies have included interviews with the artists, their peers and the curators of their exhibitions. These interviews have offered additional perspectives through which to explore the six subjects' lives, art and companionship arrangements, and they have brought new views to the historical record.

One final important source has been critical responses to exhibitions in popular media. Press announcements and reviews in newspapers, journals and magazines have yielded considerable insights into dominant social conceptions of sex-gender identity and have been instrumental in offering historical data regarding the social construction of women's identities in public life. These documents were especially important for studying the social configuration of female artist identities in exhibitions.

Historiography and Scholarship Context and Contribution

This study contributes principally to historiography in three fields of scholarship—marriage and companionship, women and artist-couples, and exhibition analysis.[56] The latter two areas offer enormous opportunity for original research given the expanding interest in these disciplines since the 1990s. Historians of marriage have studied its relationships to law, kinship, religion, courtship, gender, sex, sexuality, economics and feminism, among other areas. It is, however, the intersection of women's postwar experiences as exhibiting artists with their histories of marriage and companionship that has enabled this project to offer a unique and also feminist contribution to marriage and companionship histories and the other two scholarship fields. The project's interdisciplinary content also responds to certain absences in the fields of history and art history regarding how companionship, marriage and the artist have been addressed.

Companionship and marriage have continued to be important subjects throughout historical scholarship of the past three decades. The artist has not been encompassed as a subject

[56] Following recent scholarship models, exhibition analysis is conceptualized here as distinct from exhibition catalogues and reviews because of its turn away from exhibit documentation to exploring how exhibitions shape and represent subjects. Tony Bennett's *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995) has been crucial to the development of this expanding knowledge corpus on exhibition theory and analysis and his essay "The Exhibitionary Complex" first published in *New Formations* (1988), 73-102, has been a vital text in this regard.

in surveys of marriage history, however.[57] Marriage historians have used numerous other professional subjects, groups, communities and constituencies for their studies, and they have also drawn on legal and government documents and policies. The artist's absence from this literature begs the question of where histories of artistic companionship and marriage might alternatively be found. The field of art history is an obvious one for consideration and, indeed, creative companionship has begun to be revisited through artist-couple literature since the 1990s.[58] These topics have been addressed predominantly, however, through romanticized biographies, artist-couple exhibitions, and even contemporary film.[59] In effect, traditional art history before the 1990s considered the subject of creative companionship to be outside the discipline's conceptual boundaries.

An emphasis on studying artists as individual subjects in monographic books and exhibitions within art history has illuminated women's biographic histories and often the chronological development of their creative trajectories. This study builds on these writings by

[57] Key texts include: Elaine Tyler May, *Great Expectations: Marriage and Divorce in Post-Victorian America* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Nancy F. Cott, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2000); Joan Perkin, *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1989); Jack Goody, *The Development of the family and marriage in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); John R. Gillis, *For Better, For Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Constance Backhouse, *Petticoats and Prejudices: Women and Law in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1991); and Peter Ward, *Courtship, Love and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century English Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990).

[58] There are a several monographic artist-couple studies but those texts including more than one artist-couple include: Whitney Chadwick and Isabelle de Courtivron, *Significant Others: Creativity and Intimate Partnership* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993); Irving and Suzanne Sarnoff, *Intimate Creativity: Partners in Love and Art* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002); Renée Riese Hubert, *Magnifying Mirrors: Women, Surrealism and Partnership* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); and Anne Middleton Wagner, *Three Artists (Three Women): Modernism and the Art of Hess, Krasner and O'Keeffe* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1996).

[59] Three artist-couple monographs include: Benita Eisler, *O'Keefe and Steiglitz: An American Romance* (New York: Penguin, 1992); Lee Hall, *Elaine and Bill, Portrait of a Marriage: the Lives of Willem and Elaine de Kooning* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993); and Kim Mayberry, *Rocky Mountain Romance: the Life and Adventures of Catharine and Peter Whyte* (Canmore: Altitude, 2003). A recent artist-couple exhibition is *Love, Art, Passion, Artist Couples,* Gemeente Museum: The Hague, 2009, as documented in "Love, Art, Passion-Artist Couples, Opens Today," on the website www.artdaily.org. Popular films include Bruno Nuytten's *Camille Claudel*, 1988; Ed Harris's *Pollock,* 2002; and Julie Taymor's *Frida*, 2002.

pushing biography further to engage in comparative analysis of women's work, to show the differences in women's experiences and to emphasize the significance of gender and identity in women's lives as exhibiting artists. Art history has maintained a long-standing affection with biography for reasons including knowledge about subjects and the formation of object meanings based on biography. Such writings have often followed the model of traditional biography in their construction of linear and coherent subject narratives framed by the subject's birth and death dates. Analysis of these six women's experiences, however, furthers this form of biography by engaging in what Marilyn Booth and Antoinette Burton have framed as a critical feminist biography.[60] By asserting the differences between women, by illuminating how individual and collective histories have been written, and by inter-relating the criteria of sex-gender identity, companionship status and the exhibition, different biographical understandings of these six women's lives can be brought into view. As Booth and Burton have argued, while the "complexly gendered and raced landscapes of the times" are significant, "the pain of witnessing them" is equally significant. So too they consider the importance of the unevenness of biographical subjects. Wieland, Kenojuak, Loring and Wyle have all been the subject of biographical writings as referenced and analyzed throughout this dissertation.[61] This study builds on these previous studies by concentrating on how a critical feminist biography can illuminate new understandings of their lives and account for their sometimes partial and also contradictory beliefs and actions. Such histories acknowledge that subjects are not any less worthy of study but in fact are all the more intriguing for such contradictions. Chapter Five, for example, shows how Frances Loring and Florence Wyle partook in a radical living arrangement that exemplified their

[60] Marilyn Booth and Antoinette Burton, "Critical Feminist Biography," *Journal of Women's History* 21, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 7-12.
[61] Pratt and Nicoll are the only two artists in this study who have not been the subject of formal biographies.

independence from heterosexual marriage and motherhood, yet in their work exploring the female body they were far less adventurous about portraying women's social roles.

Artist-couple literature has introduced important questions since the 1990s but this scholarship has privileged certain analytical criteria over others including an emphasis on artist-couples from the United States and Northwestern Europe. This study draws attention to the contributions Canada offers to artist-couple literature for two reasons. First, artist-couples associated with art practice in Canada have not been seriously considered. Terry Crowley has likewise observed how this problem has a parallel in Canada's intellectual-writer couples and he contends that Canada's invisibility in this literature represents a significant asymmetry relative to other western nations.[62] Consideration of Canada's artist-couple histories enhances the capacity of this literature to be both international and transnational. Secondly, consideration of artist-couples practicing in Canada significantly widens understandings of regional and cross-cultural differences experienced by artist-couples: these factors were relevant for the six women in this study.[63]

Existing visual artist-couple studies emerging mainly from American scholars have privileged those artists that have resided principally in London, Paris and New York. This literature has continued to rely on a hegemonic and male-dominated modernist art canon that looks at those women whose works and lives have been associated with well-known male artists such as Lee Krasner, Georgia O'Keeffe, Camille Claudel, Leonora Carrington and Kay Sage, for example.[64] The emphasis on selecting women in artist-couples from this heterosexual pool has

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[62] Crowley makes this claim in *Marriage of Minds: Isabel and Oscar Skelton Reinventing Canada,* x.

[63] Some well-known artist-couples in contemporary art practice in Canada include: Jamelie Hassan and Ron Benner; Carol Condé and Karl Beveridge; Barbara Astman and Noel Harding; Yvon Cozic and Monique Brassard; General Idea; and Janet Cardiff and Georges Bures Miller.

[64] Opportunity awaits artist-couple scholars regarding cultural diversity and it is important that more examples are considered beyond Frida Kahlo whose reputation as a Mexican national icon in artist-couple histories continues to be perpetuated. There have been several studies of her marriage to Diego Rivera including Hayden Herrara's

also obscured important diversities to be found across the criteria of sexuality, race, culture, region and nation. The contributions of artist-couples in Canada demonstrate that these couples have hardly been silent figures on the international scene.

Joyce Wieland and Michael Snow were both central figures in experimental and Structuralist film in the United States during their decade-long residence in New York between 1962 and 1971.[65] Both Mary and Christopher Pratt participated in postwar High Realism and have been included in important international exhibitions.[66] Alberta's first dedicated painter in automatic and hard-edged abstraction, Marion Nicoll, gave courage and confidence to generations of artists following her, especially female art educators. Frances Loring's monumental bronze figurative statue of *Prime Minister Robert Borden* (1957) on Parliament Hill, Ottawa, garnered much attention throughout production and its public unveiling.[67] Florence Wyle's fountain and figurative reliefs and statuary graced many private residences and public sites, including her collaboration with Loring on two works for Canada's Parliamentary Library.[68] As representatives of Canada at Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan, Kenojuak and Johnniebo's mural commission achieved much attention abroad and in Canada.[69]

"Beauty to his Beast: Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera," in *Significant Others: Creativity and Intimate Partnership,* edited by Whitney Chadwick and Isabelle de Courtivron (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 119-135, and Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio, *Diego et Frida* (Paris: Stock, 1993).

[65] A history of Structuralist film is P. Sitney Adams' *Film Culture Reader* (New York: Praeger, 1970) but this author's gendered lens deliberately excluded Wieland from its first printing to much criticism. Her important contributions have subsequently been written into this and other histories of later twentieth century experimental film, including the monograph edited by Kathryn Elder, *The Films of Joyce Wieland* (Toronto: Toronto International Film Festival, 1999).

[66] Duval, *Aspects of Realism,* Christopher Pratt, cat. 6 and Mary Pratt, cat. 7. This exhibition toured to thirteen art galleries across Canada.

[67] Loring's monument to Prime Minister Robert Borden is detailed in Chapter Five.

[68] For the Parliamentary Library Loring and Wyle worked on the Memorial Chamber tympanum works entitled *The Recording Angel* and *War Widow*, 1926-28. Other prominent commissions included works for the Bank of Montreal's King and Bay Streets building (Toronto), St. Michael's Hospital (Toronto), and the Harry Oakes Pavilion (Niagara Falls).

[69] Kenojuak and Johnniebo's Expo '70 mural is detailed in Chapter Six.

Opportunity awaits Canadian scholars to address the relative absence of Canadian-based artist-couples from international artist-couple literature. There is but a handful of monographs on artist-couples and a multiple artist-couple study is yet to be produced.[70] Study of the six artists who are core to this project contributes to these two research areas and analysis of their exhibition experiences fosters new understandings of women's artist-couple histories. Artist-couple exhibition literature, including several staged for those artists included here, usually realized only modest handbills if any printed documentation was produced.[71] Canada's invisibility in artist-couple literature has thus persisted both inside and outside its political geography.

By asserting the importance of understanding artist-couple histories as a transnational knowledge field, this study builds on writing by Anne Middleton Wagner, Renée Riese Hubert, Whitney Chadwick and Isabelle de Courtivron. Following the models established by these authors, this project emphasizes both female subjectivity and comparative analysis of artist-couple experience.[72] Wagner was not concerned with women's critical acclaim relative to their male artist-partners but her attention to Eva Hesse has been important in considering the experiences of Marion Nicoll and Kenojuak Ashevak whose critical reputations have consistently exceeded those of their husbands as has Hesse's relative to her husband, sculptor

[70] Two studies on Canada's visual artist-couples include Jane Lind, *Mary and Christopher Pratt* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1989), and Kim Mayberry, *Rocky Mountain Romance: the Life and Adventures of Catharine and Peter Whyte.*

[71] The Nicolls had four artist-couple showings in Calgary: Glenbow Museum and Art Gallery, 1969; Glenbow and University of Calgary, 1971; and Muttart Art Gallery, 1982. The 1971 and 1982 exhibits were accompanied by small brochures. Kenojuak and Johnniebo had three artist-couple exhibitions: in 1967 at the National Library, Ottawa; in 1970 at Expo '70, Osaka, Japan; and in 1974 at Nova Scotia Technical College, Halifax. None was accompanied by published documentation. There were not publications for the two artist-couple exhibitions of Wieland and Snow in 1959 at Westdale Gallery, Hamilton, and in 1962 at Hart House, Toronto.

[72] Anne Middleton Wagner, *Three Artists (three women): Modernism and the Art of Hesse, Krasner and O'Keefe*; and Renée Riese Hubert, *Magnifying Mirrors: Women, Surrealism and Partnership.* Chadwick and de Courtivron's *Significant Others: Creativity and Intimate Companionship.*The latter volume is comprised of twelve individual essays on two-partner artist-couples. These essays stand alone, but the editorial introduction is among those few essays to initiative comparative analysis of artist-couples. All three texts adhere closely to monographic single-artist analyses.

Tom Doyle. Study of these women reminds historians to look elsewhere than to famous male artists in order to find important female artists in artist-couple relationships.

Finally, in focusing on women's exhibition experiences in Chapters Three through Six, this study contributes to scholarship on exhibitions, specifically those in the postwar era. Studies deconstructing the roles and functions of exhibitions have exposed over the past two decades that the staging of exhibitions within their institutional settings generates complex sets of power relations, systems of knowledge and forms of representation. This literature has critiqued exhibition format, curatorial practice, display strategies, and representations of race, culture and identity. For the editors of *Thinking About Exhibitions,* the shift to "writing about exhibitions rather than the works of art in them" was important even though this step could be seen as "a crisis in criticism and its languages."[73] These and other authors have asserted that "when the exhibition phenomenon comes under closer scrutiny, its failures and fissures become more apparent."[74] With few exceptions, however, gender has not been a significant subject of "fissure" in international exhibition theory and criticism and the artist-couple has not emerged in such analysis.[75]

In 1989, Carol Duncan broke important ground when she addressed the privileged status of the male subject in her analysis of the Museum of Modern Art's 1984 permanent collection exhibition to expose its persistent sex-gender disparities.[76] Dedicated attention to the role of gender in exhibition literature, however, has not fared as well as might be desired in larger-scope

[73] Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and Sandy Nairne, "Introduction," in *Thinking About Exhibitions* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 3.
[74] Ibid., 4. See also Lynda Jessup and Shannon Bagg, eds., *On Aboriginal Representation in the Gallery* (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2002).
[75] Some key analytical criteria include spectatorship, cultural and sexual representation, block-buster exhibition politics, connoisseurship, narrative, and knowledge formation.
[76] Carol Duncan, "The MOMA's Hot Mamas," *Art Journal* 48 (Summer 1989): 171-178.

critical museum studies anthologies.[77] The anthology, *Gender Perspectives: Essays on Women in Museums,* edited by Jane R. Glaser and Artemis Zenetou, is among the few studies to place gender at the centre of museum and gallery analysis, yet women's exhibition experiences are not analyzed.[78]

In exhibition publications, including significant group-artist studies, there has been a growing interest in women and gender since the 1980s, including writings by Kate Linker, Jane Weinstock, Griselda Pollock, Roszika Parker, Amelia Jones, and more recently Cornelia Butler. Given the focus of these texts and exhibitions on supporting the visibility of art by women these authors have tended to prioritize the staging of the subject as artist first, woman second. To raise questions of the relationship of female companionship and marriage to women's exhibition experiences is to raise the significance of gender differently: it is to point to the social contexts of women's art production and thus this literature has not surprisingly tended to skirt these historical topics.[79] This study contends that women's companionship status is not fully separable from the subjects explored in women's art practices and to their critical reception in exhibitions.

It has been the writings of Kass Banning and Johanne Sloan on women's exhibitions that this study responds most closely. Their detailed exhibition analysis of Joyce Wieland's two important solo exhibitions of 1971 and 1987 (those that raised Wieland to the status of "Canada's First Living Other") have served as models for my research on the six women's

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[77] The two anthologies *Thinking About Exhibitions,* edited by Reesa Greenberg, Bruce Ferguson and Sandy Nairne; and *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts,* edited by Bettina Messias Carbonell (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004) are ones where the subject of gender has not been considered as a prominent factor.

[78] Jane R. Glaser and Artemis Zenetou, eds. *Gender Perspectives: Essays on Women in Museums* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1994).

[79] Key publications are as follows: Marcia Tucker and Kate Linker, *Difference: On Representation and Sexuality* (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984); Griselda Pollock and Rozika Parker, "On Exhibitions," in *Framing Feminisms: Art and the Women's Movement*, 1970-1985, edited by Griselda Pollock and Rozika Parker (London and New York: Pandora and Routledge, 1987); Amelia Jones, *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996);and Cornelia Butler et al. *Wack! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Los Angeles, Cambridge and London: Museum of Contemporary Art and the MIT Press, 2007).

exhibition experiences considered here.[80] Banning and Sloan have placed concerns of gender, the solo exhibit, and institutional politics at the center of their work in important ways. They have, however, concentrated on exhibitions subsequent to those addressed in this study.

A focus on women's postwar exhibition experiences preceding those studied by Banning and Sloan introduces opportunity for detailed analysis of the exhibition as a subject contribution to the larger corpus of postwar North American historiography of women and gender. There have been important studies of popular culture, sexuality, identity, psychological education and political history by Valerie Korinek, Magda Farhni, Robert Rutherdale, Nancy Christie, Michael Gauvreau, Mary Louise Adams and Mona Gleason, but attention has not been placed on the female artist and her exhibition experiences in these studies.[81]

This study specifically responds to those writings concerned with postwar culture that address women's sexuality, identity, and companionship and it demonstrates the important roles played by the exhibition in shaping women's lives. The four monographs by Mary Louise Adams, Mona Gleason, Magda Fahrni and Valerie Korinek illuminate various mechanisms through which heterosexuality and women's social roles were normalized in English Canadian society. Adams' study concentrates on the processes used to socially shape sexual identity in Canada's youth including the education system, Gleason's concentrates on the role of psychology in public and private life, Fahrni concentrates on the effort to return women to

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[80] Kass Banning, "The Mummification of Mommy: Joyce Wieland as the AGO's First Living Other," (1987) in *Sightlines: Reading Contemporary Canadian Art,* edited by Jessica Bradley and Lesley Johnstone (Montreal: Artexte 1994), 153-167; and Johanne Sloan, "Joyce Wieland at the Border: Nationalism, the New Left and the Question of Political Art in Canada," *Journal of Canadian Art History* XXVI (2005): 80-107.

[81] Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Magda Farhni and Robert Rutherdale, eds. *Creating Postwar Canada, 1945-1975* (Vancouver and Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2008); Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, eds. *Cultures of Citizenship in Post-War Canada, 1940-1955* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2003); Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1997; and Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

unpaid family life in Montreal, and Korinek's explores the role of popular media, representation and women's magazines. Parallel to the findings of the authors included in the postwar anthology edited by JoAnne Meyerowitz on women and gender in the United States, these studies likewise demonstrate how the idea of a "normal" family was socially regulated and imposed on subjects; this literature also shows how subjects also contested such sexual and companionship roles and identities. The present study builds on the findings of these postwar studies on women, family, gender and identity to show how the exhibition was also a mechanism used to shape and represent women's lives and how the six women core to this project also used these experiences to assert their own voices.

Chapter Configuration

The chapters of this study argue that women's companionship status affected women's private and public lives as artists in multiple ways. Chapter Two discusses the historical contexts for marriage and companionship in twentieth-century Canada and offers a structural analysis of the five artist-couple marriages core to this study. The chapter considers how women's experiences in familial and cultural life, education, work and the law persistently directed women towards normative heterosexual companionship while also exploring how Canada's self-determined and culturally-determined marriage landscape had always been diverse.

Chapters Three through Six concentrate on the social importance placed on women's companionship status in their lives as exhibiting artists, specifically in their access to solo and artist-couple showings. In structuring these four chapters to expose the hierarchies of difference in women's exhibitions experiences, Chapters Three and Four address the solo exhibitions of Nicoll, Wieland and Pratt, and Chapters Five and Six address the artist-couple exhibitions of

Loring, Wyle and Kenojuak. Since this project is also comparative, thematic strategies have been important in developing the exhibition chapters. For example, in Chapter Four, Wieland and Pratt are shown to have been identified as "kitchen artists" in addition to being cast as "artists' wives."

Given the scope of these six women's total exhibition histories, only a selection could be analyzed in this study, notably those showings that opened for female artists at new and expanded exhibition venues in the postwar decades. Although some of these showings were described as "retrospectives" this study considers such exhibits as part of women's larger solo exhibit histories and does not concentrate on women's retrospectives per se. In focusing on women's postwar experiences, the profound changes in Canada's exhibition system which conditionally enabled their expanded participation in public life as exhibiting artists can be more fully understood.

Prior to the Second World War, women's access to exhibitions had been limited mainly to large group-artist and society-annual exhibitions in which one needed to be an elected member. In these male-dominated organizations—such as the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (RCA), the Alberta Society of Artists (ASA), and the Ontario Society of Artists (OSA)—one could submit a limited number of entries to annual juried exhibitions.[82] Organizations outside these societies, such as Canada's exclusively-male Group of Seven (1920-1932), only conceded to inviting women to their exhibitions for the first time on the occasion of its fifth presentation in 1926.[83] In these inter-war years almost no solo exhibitions were granted to living artists and those retrospective exhibitions that were organized usually doubled as memorial showings for

[82] Two exceptions included the Sculptors' Society of Canada (SSC) in which Loring and Wyle both played an instrumental role and the Beaver Hall Hill Group (BHHG) comprised mainly of female members.
[83] These four artists were Bess Housser, Doris Heutis Mills, Marion Huestis Miller and Anne Savage.

male artists.[84] In most society-annual exhibits, painting (followed by sculpture) was the preferred medium and this reality also dominated exhibition contents.[85] The expanded art market after 1945, however, gave rise to the formation of new commercial and public art gallery venues and widened mandates for existing ones from which these six artists were to benefit.[86] In such venues, possibilities opened for work in both traditional and non-traditional media and solo and artist-couple exhibitions were made available to living female artists in Canada for the first time.

In the non-profit public sector, the Art Gallery of Toronto (founded 1900) made a name change to the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) in 1966 and this event also marked the end of its participation in the member-entry and juried exhibitions of Canada's various art societies.[87] The National Gallery of Canada (NGC) transitioned its living-artist group exhibition commitments from society annuals to its legendary Canadian Biennial exhibits (1955-1968) and such showings were henceforth selected by in-house and guest curators named by the NGC.[88] Although women participated in these Biennial showings, their presence was marginal relative to that of their male peers.[89] Both the NGC and AGO remained resistant to staging solo showings for living female artists throughout the 1960s.[90] In the commercial sector there was considerable expansion with

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[84] The NGC organized memorial exhibitions for Tom Thomson (1922), J.E.H. MacDonald (1933); and J.W. Morrice (1937). Franklin Brownell's living-artist retrospective (1922) was not the norm. Emily Carr and Prudence Heward were among the first women to be given memorial retrospectives at the NGC in 1945 and 1948 respectively. See Gary Mainprize, "The National Gallery of Canada: A Hundred Years of Exhibitions," *RACAR* XI no 1-2 (1984): 3-66.

[85] Because of this privileging of medium outgrowth societies were also formed including the Canadian Society of Graphic Art (CSGA) and the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour (CSPWC).

[86] Two examples of newly-formed galleries include the Mackenzie Art Gallery (formed 1953) and the Mendel Art Gallery (formed 1964).

[87] The AGO's exhibition history leading to this change is summarized by Karen McKenzie and Larry Pfaff in "Sixty Years of Exhibitions, 1906-1966," *RACAR* 7, no. 1-2 (1980): 62-91.

[88] For a listing of the NGC exhibitions between 1950 and 1970 see the website at www.gallery.ca under "Exhibitions—Past Exhibitions." The Biennial exhibitions catalogues (1955-1968) detail the curators involved.

[89] A short statistical analysis of women's inclusion in the NGC Biennials between 1955 and 1968 was created for this study (Appendix 1) and percentages of women's representation ranged from 6% in 1957 to 19% in 1959.

[90] Joyce Wieland was the first living female artist to disrupt the gendered boundaries of solo exhibitions at both the NGC and AGO with her mid-career showing, *True Patriot Love* (NGC, 1971) and her retrospective exhibition, *Joyce Wieland* (AGO, 1987).

the entrance of prominent dealers Dorothy Cameron, Avrom Isaacs and Jerrold Morris, among others, as they established important venues for the exhibition and sale of contemporary art. It is the temporal focus of postwar, then, rather than chronologies of individual women's inaugural or mid-career exhibition timelines that shapes the selection of exhibits considered here.

Conclusion

After 1971, many of Lucy Lippard's curatorial projects and publications focused on art by women and these projects improved women's visibility in the postwar exhibition market. Since this work, however, the role of exhibitions in shaping female artist identities has remained unexplored. To understand women's experiences as artists, exhibitors and companions re-shapes social understandings of their art practices and it re-writes the female artist's companionship and exhibition experiences into histories of marriage and creative union.

This study illuminates how "the artist's wife" was a diverse experience for women showing in Canada's postwar exhibition system. To be female, to be a companion, and to have a public life as an exhibiting artist entailed multiple subject identities and, as Joan Scott has contended, subjects were socially-shaped in and of those experiences. The formation of their "livable lives" as artists intersected with their cultural and familial histories, their education and work experiences, and the law: the exhibition was not exempt from the ideological effects of these social systems and structures. These six subjects were and are far more than "artist's wives."

Chapter Two

Socializing Women to Marriage: The Five Artist-Couple "Marriages" of Marion Nicoll, Mary Pratt, Joyce Wieland, Frances Loring, Florence Wyle and Kenojuak

Introduction

Writing in her diary in 1954, Joyce Wieland observed this of her nascent artist-couple relationship: "For five months I've been in love with that bastard Mike Snow. And today I've found I'm really deeply and crazy in love with him. He does not love me."[1] At this moment of self-reflection, Wieland understood that love was not necessarily a shared experience in her heterosexual companionship and marriage. Nevertheless, she would pursue this relationship, and for some two decades she and Snow remained companions and marriage partners. She left many silences in the historical record regarding her reasons for continuation. Her comment, however, reflected that the concept of "love" had been an important factor that led her to embrace the institution of heterosexual companionship and marriage.[2] Wieland soon understood that this elusive concept would not occupy so central a place in matters of companionship and marriage. In the years that followed, the subject of love virtually disappeared from view in her personal testimony.

This chapter explores the multiplicity of mechanisms used in the socialization of women to direct them towards heterosexual marriage, including women's experiences in familial and cultural life, education and work, and the nation-state's recognition of companionship structure in law. The Canadian nation-state worked in tandem with the Christian faith to sanction the

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[1] Joyce Wieland, *Diary for 1951-52* (Entry of early 1954), unpaginated, File 53, Box 1990-014/004, Joyce Wieland Fonds, Clara Thomas Library and Archives, York University, Toronto, Ontario (hereafter Wieland Fonds). Even though this diary was for the calendar year 1951 to 1952, Wieland used it until 1955. This quotation is also cited in Jane Lind, *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire* (Toronto: Lorimer, 2001), 92.

[2] As Nancy F. Cott explains in *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2000), 225, "love is exalted in our society [and is] the food and drink of our imaginations…Even with failed marriages staring them in the face, individuals still hope to beat the odds."

singular marriage model of heterosexual and lifelong monogamy. The Reverend Alfred Henry Tyrer explained in his widely-read, *Sex, Marriage and Birth Control* (1936) that:

> There is no institution in human society of greater importance than the institution of marriage. I believe that monogamous marriage, to which both parties are faithful through life, is the only possible basis of a permanently stable and happy home, and that such a home is the only foundation of any sound human society.[3]

This marriage model had deep roots in Canada and the six women whose lives were circumscribed by this social reality were not exempt from its hegemonic and powerful effects. This structure, however, did not recognize that marriage and companionship histories and practices in Canada had always been diverse, including common-law and same-sex partnerships, civil unions, and polygamy as Sarah Carter's study of marriage in western Canada reveals.[4] Neither, in the end, was this model a workable one for the any of the six women artists in this study since it was buttressed by the ideology of separate spheres which assigned specific sex-gender identities to men and women, respectively as breadwinners and homemakers: yet, all six women were economic contributors in their diverse companionships and marriages. While the nation-state worked actively to sanction monogamous and heterosexual marriage it was not so concerned with its shortcomings, leaving subjects to fend for themselves economically and socially. Marion Nicoll, Mary Pratt, Joyce Wieland, Frances Loring, Florence Wyle and Kenojuak Ashevak each worked their way through questions of companionship and marriage to diverse results: some had choices in their marriages and others did not. Their companionships included state-determined and self-determined marriages, and heterosexual and same-sex

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[3] Reverend Alfred Henry Tyrer, *Sex, Marriage and Birth Control* (Toronto: Marriage Welfare Bureau (1936, seventh edition, 1943), 8, 3, 2. This book was in its 29th printing in just seven years. A. H. Tyrer (1870-1942) immigrated to Canada from Britain in 1887 and entered the Anglican ministry in 1895. His popularity among married couples grew through his promotion of the birth control movement. His work with organizing the Canadian Birth Control League (1931) and the Birth Control Society of Canada (1932) is explored in Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), 93-97.
[4] Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada to 1915* (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 2008).

arrangements. Their five partnerships yielded lifelong unions, relations ending in separation and divorce, and also remarriages.

This chapter explores the multiple and intersecting factors at play in women's socialization towards marriage. There were no easy solutions as these women navigated their lives as companions and artists. First, I establish how important ideologies of sexuality, marriage and companionship persistently shaped these women's lives and how the nation-state recognized companionship status in law. These histories are significant to understanding how women were socially channeled toward the heterosexual and monogamous imperative. Second, I concentrate on analyzing the structures of the five artist-couple marriages. Companionship structure has historically played a crucial role in determining women's social citizenship and economic lives.[5] Meg Luxton and Harriet Rosenburg have argued, for example, that "love" remains directly hinged to marriage because of women's economic realities in waged employment. They explain that in the 1980s women still earned only 60% of men's earnings and thus there remained "major economic imperatives surrounding the decision to marry or divorce."[6] "Love," then, is hardly separable from complex forms of social power and economic survival in women's marriage.

Analysis of these five artist-couple marriages further demonstrates how women's formative experiences in familial and cultural life, and education and work, were also central to shaping both their sex-gender identities and conceptions of marriage. In their heterosexual marriages, Nicoll, Pratt and Wieland each addressed differently the complications of the husband's traditionally privileged role in determining residential place of settlement in their

[5] This point is argued by Philippa Levine, *Feminist Lives in Victorian England: Private Roles and Public Commitment* (Oxford and Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1990), Lenore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), and Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1990).
[6] Meg Luxton and Harriet Rosenburg, *Through the Kitchen Window: The Politics of Home and Family* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1986), 10, 19.

marriage contracts. Loring and Wyle avoided heterosexual marriage altogether and formed their own same-sex relationship as two professional women. There were still complications, though, in how these two women worked out a residential place of settlement and economic survival in their partnership. Kenojuak and Johnniebo were married to each other twice—first in Inuit custom, followed by Anglican custom. These stories demonstrate that the Canadian marriage landscape was anything but homogenous and they reflect complex regional, sexual and cultural differences in women's lives. The diversity of their experiences remains important to understanding marriage and companionship composition and its effects on the female artist in Canada during the twentieth century.

Part I: Marital and Sexual Ideologies and Canada's Marriage Landscape

Despite a diverse marriage landscape, women's socialization toward marriage anticipated their abiding cooperation with the institution of heterosexuality. Adrienne Rich explained its "compulsory" effects in her pivotal essay of 1980 when she observed that: "the question is not raised whether or not women would choose heterosexual coupling and marriage; heterosexuality is presumed the sexual preference of most women either implicitly or explicitly."[7] For Monique Wittig, the binary conceptualization of "sex" as male to female has literally fused the category "sex" to heterosexual marriage because "men appropriate for themselves the reproduction and production of women and also their physical persons by means of a contract called the marriage contract."[8] Wittig called for the total destruction of "sex" because of its tight hold on women. For Judith Butler, though, it has been a matter of exploring the meanings, assumptions and impact of

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[7] Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality," in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, edited by Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale and David M. Halperin (New York, London: Routledge, 1993), 239, 242. This essay was first published in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society,* 5 (1980).
[8] Monique Wittig, "The Category of Sex," in *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 6.

the category "sex" on subjects since "presumptions about normative gender and sexuality determine in advance what will qualify as the human and the livable life [and] delimit the very field of description that we have for the human."[9]

Rich, Wittig and Butler have been justified in tackling the hegemony of the heterosexual marriage contract when marriage histories have always included diverse models. However, the social privileging of women's "marriage" in singular terms—as lifelong heterosexual monogamy between a man and a woman—has a long and complex history, and Canada established its own systems to sanction this marriage model in national law and policies on women's health and social welfare.[10]

Historians of marriage and divorce in Canada have explored how the law played a crucial role in naturalizing heterosexual and monogamous marriage. They have illustrated that alternative marriage and divorce practices remained either legally unrecognized, or were at best only partially recognized, in Canada's justice system throughout the later nineteenth and also much of the twentieth centuries. James Snell has explained that civil marriage was possible in only four western Canadian provinces until the Second World War and was very uncommon. Common-law marriage, self-marriage and self-divorce had consistently been part of the plebian marriage system since at least the seventeenth century in Britain, and were also used in Canada, but legal monogamous marriage continued to be seen as "the bulwark of the social

[9] Judith Butler, "Preface (1999)," in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), xxiii.

[10] The British law of coverture in marriage also informed marriage law in Canada. Compare for example analysis of this subject in Constance Backhouse, *Petticoats and Prejudices: Women and Law in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1991) and Joan Perkin, *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1989) Backhouse shows how in Canadian marriage a woman's identity and possessions were subsumed under the husband as his property. Backhouse and Perkin also discuss the double standard of adultery in marriage law whereby women were penalized in law differently than men.

order…uniting both church and state in sanctioning the ideal of the conjugal family."[11] It was also the maintenance of a restrictive divorce regime in law that worked to sanctify marriage as lifelong and as virtually indissoluble, regardless of the will of its subjects.[12]

Sarah Carter has shown in her study of marriage and nation building in western Canada to 1915 that the legal system sometimes recognized Aboriginal marriage practices as valid within a given Aboriginal territory but did not so recognize Aboriginal divorce.[13] Aboriginal marriage models included monogamy, polygamy and same-sex marriage and, as she explains, "no marriage needed to be for life as divorce was easily obtained and remarriage was accepted and expected."[14] Carter points out that the enforcement of bigamy laws with divorce laws made marriage virtually indissoluble in law and thus heterosexual monogamy could be upheld as "a sacred institution, enforced by politicians, judges and reformers."[15] She justly concludes that Canada's marriage landscape had never been "a blank slate."[16] Yet, the institution of marriage in law was recalcitrant to change until after 1967 when the Divorce Act was finally amended to national consistency.[17] Until then, adultery was perceived to be the only just cause for divorce even when both partners agreed that the relationship had dissolved. State-sanctioned marriage can hardly be described as a "just institution" notes Wendy Brown, and studies continue the critique of its role as a social site of "male and heterosexual superordination."[18]

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[11] James Snell, *In the Shadow of the Law: Divorce in Canada, 1900-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 22.
[12] Ibid., 226-229.
[13] Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada to 1915*, 11.
[14] Ibid., 5.
[15] Ibid., 4, 8.
[16] Ibid., 283-284.
[17] James Snell, *In the Shadow of the Law: Divorce in Canada, 1900-1939*, 145.
[18] Wendy Brown, "After Marriage," in *Just Marriage*, edited by Mary Lyndon Shanley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 87. Canada's Bill C-38, "Civil Marriage Act" legally recognized same-sex marriage in 2005 as documented on the website "Civil Marriage Act," at www.justice.gc.ca.

Feminist scholarship on women's roles in family life, maternity and motherhood has demonstrated that heterosexual and monogamous marriage was also buttressed through policies on the healthcare and social welfare of women, even in the face of desertion, domestic violence and other obvious forms of marriage breakdown. Magda Fahrni, Cynthia R. Comacchio and Kathryn Arnup have underscored the copious efforts made through provincial and national agencies of health and medicine surrounding women's maternity and motherhood that encouraged women's time be spent in the home as unpaid domestic workers and mothers.[19] Psychological discourse played another role in installing these rigid sex-gender divisions in marriage. As Mona Gleason has revealed, the field of psychology defined the idea of a "normal family" to be comprised of "full-time mothers, well-adjusted, bright, industrious children, and attentive fathers. Those working outside the ideal, such as working-class, immigrant, or Native families were not only excluded but pathologized, labeled as 'abnormal' and 'poorly adjusted.'"[20]

The role of the welfare state was another key vehicle to sanction breadwinner-homemaker ideology and its place in heterosexual and monogamous marriage. In her study of single mothers in Ontario, Margaret Little has argued that paltry levels of assistance to unmarried and single mothers left women so impoverished that they were forced to return to abusive relationships and or to remarry. Little concludes that such welfare policies reinforced women's oppression and played a contradictory role in the women's liberation movement.[21] Jennifer A. Stephen has further demonstrated in her study of women's wartime and postwar work

[19] Magda Farhni, *Houshold Politics: Montreal Families and Postwar Reconstruction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), Cynthia R. Comacchio, *Nations Are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children, 1900-1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), and Kathryn Arnup, *Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1994).
[20] Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 5.
[21] Margaret June Hillyard Little, *No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit: The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-1997* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), xxi.

experiences that women's wartime mobilization was only followed by their postwar demobilization from paid employment back to the home.[22] This corpus of feminist scholarship on marriage, welfare, work and motherhood in Canada also reveals how marriage and nation-building were inter-twinned and complicit enterprises and this political strategy was by no means exclusive to Canada.

American marriage historian Nancy F. Cott has argued that marriage has been an important apparatus of the nation-state in shaping the gender order: "No modern nation-state can ignore marriage forms because of their direct impact on reproducing and composing the population" because marriage formations "sculpt the body politic."[23] Cott explains that "legal monogamy was understood to benefit the social order by harnessing the vagaries of sexual desire and by supplying predictable care and support for the young and dependent."[24] Despite sweeping technological and social citizenship changes which came with the twentieth century, including women's right to vote, Cott argues that the public framework of marriage in the United States remained, "pre-eminently economic, preserving the husband's role as primary provider and the wife as his dependent—despite the growing presence of women in the labour force."[25]

At the outset of their heterosexual marriage contracts, Marion Nicoll, Mary Pratt and Joyce Wieland understood the basic terms of this marriage model but for none of them was it sustainable as concerns of economic need and self-realization became increasing realities. Breadwinner-homemaker ideology perpetuated a long history of structural inequality between married subjects.[26] These three women continued in their twentieth-century lives to reconfigure

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[22] Jennifer A. Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl: Employability, Domesticity and the Gendering of Canada's Welfare State, 1939-1947* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2007).
[23] Nancy Cott, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation*, 5.
[24] Ibid., 10.
[25] Ibid., 157.
[26] Feminists have interrogated and reformed this marriage model since the 18th century as argued in the three primary writings by Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London: J. Johnson, 1792),

sex-gender strictures to accommodate their real lives as women, wives and artists. Nicoll, Pratt and Wieland had choices in their partners when they entered their marriage contracts since the breadwinner-homemaker model had included the concept of "companionate" marriage in the mid-to-late nineteenth century.[27] However, the larger social insistence on women's heterosexual marriage left both Wieland and Pratt wondering if they had any choice to accept or reject the institution of marriage at all. Wieland explained: "I don't know whether I'm coming or going. Whether 'tis noble to marry or weave a web of insecurity or stay single and lonely and grasping."[28] Likewise, Pratt succinctly explained that "my parents expected someone to take care of me."[29] In this marriage landscape, to aspire to professionalism as an artist was largely seen to be contradictory to the goals of state-sanctioned heterosexual marriage.

Given the structural disparities of breadwinner-homemaker ideology, it was small wonder that subjects reworked, by-passed and self-determined options to contest the hegemony of this marriage norm. Feminist historians of marriage and companionship have explored that subjects have resisted singular definitions of marriage to include those contracts determined by the participants themselves, not those resulting from the colluding forces of religion and the nation-state's legal marriage and divorce regimes.[30] These five artist-couple marriages reflect that some subjects self-determined their own models and some used multiple ones. Joyce Wieland legally married Snow but also used the common-law option before marrying him: she legally married

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Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (New York: Fountain Press, 1929), and Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Knopf, 1952).

[27] The "companionate marriage" movement succeeded arranged marriages to grant couples the choice of partners. It was popularized by such writings as Ben B. Lindsey and Wainwright Evans, *The Companionate Marriage* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927).

[28] Wieland, *Diary for 1951-52* (Entry circa May 1952), unpaginated.

[29] Mary Pratt as quoted in Cathy Shaw, "Women Honored for Achievements at Dal Convocation," *Halifax Mail Star*, May 11, 1985.

[30] Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), and Anna Clark, "Part One-Women and Men in Plebian Culture," *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1995), 11-87.

only once but had two other common-law relationships before and after her marriage to Snow.[31] Kenojuak and Johnniebo's marriage in Inuit and Anglican customs combined two marriage models. Frances Loring and Florence Wyle persisted against the will of Loring's parents to self-determine their same-sex and life-long commitment of nearly six decades.

Breadwinner-homemaker ideology was rewritten by all the women in this study. In Kenojuak's marriage to Johnniebo, which lasted until his untimely death in 1972, it was she who emerged as the pre-eminent artist and breadwinner in her family following the colonial introduction of a cash-based economy to their community. Johnniebo made sculptures and drawings but he continued to work as provider in a hunter-gatherer economy. His efforts, when combined with Kenojuak's in a cash-based economy, yielded two "breadwinners" in their marriage. Kenojuak continued to see her role as a cash breadwinner in her two subsequent unions with Etyguyakjuak Pee and Iguik Joanassiee.[32] She explained:

> Now when I create things, what I am doing is trying to support the different members of my family; I want them to continue to live in good style, not be poor relations or anything like that. Even though there isn't a man working, hunting, and everything to support the whole family—in spite of that—I want the family to carry on in the same way it lived before—when Johnniebo was alive.[33]

Loring and Wyle were also a double breadwinner family and they maintained their household on sporadic sculpture sales and commissions of their two practices. Wieland and Pratt also used their art as sources of income and contributed significantly to the economic stability of their marriages and selves. Marion Mackay and James McLaren Nicoll both worked in waged employment. They began, though, with him as the dominant family breadwinner and, as he

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[31] These three common-law relationships included writer Bryan Barney, Michael Snow, and filmmaker George Gingras. They are addressed in some detail by Wieland's two biographers, Jane Lind, and Iris Nowell in *Joyce Wieland: A Life in Art*. (Toronto: ECW Press, 2001).

[32] Kenojuak outlived all three men, losing Johnniebo first to an intestinal blockage, followed by Etyguyakjua Pee who died from tuberculosis in 1977 and Joanassiee Igui who died in 1981 of a brain haemorrhage as documented in Ansgar Walk, *Kenojuak* (Manotick: Penumbra Press, 1999), 171, 221-225.

[33] As quoted in interview with Jean Blodgett (May 1980) in Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak* (Toronto: Firefly, 1986), 74.

moved into retirement, she became the dominant income earner: in short, they switched roles mid-way through marriage.

Two of these artist-couple marriages were not life-long—those of Wieland and Pratt. Their marriages, respectively to Michael Snow and Christopher Pratt, came to a close following the widened access to separation and divorce and the no-fault terms of parting company that opened to couples after legal amendments of the Divorce Act in 1968.[34] However, in embracing the ideal of life-long marriage at the outset, both women worked diligently to keep their marriages together and they withstood long periods of separation before finally agreeing to their divorces.[35] James Snell explains that the most difficult aspect of divorce for women has often been the stigmatization that came with it. Women were often considered the reasons for marriage breakdown and the legacy of divorce being perceived as a social cancer persisted well beyond postwar.[36] Biographer Jane Lind recalled of Wieland's procrastination over her divorce proceedings that, "it seemed she deliberately avoided working on the divorce because she did not like making the end of her marriage official."[37]

The marriage and companionship histories and laws preceding the lives of these six women deeply informed the configurations of their five artist-couple marriages. Family life, education and work were also important, and women's autobiographical histories are significant

[34] The link "Divorce Law in Canada," prepared by Kristin Douglas at the website www.divorceincanada.ca explains that: "The *Divorce Act* of 1968 introduced the concept of permanent marriage breakdown as a ground for divorce….The move away from purely fault-based grounds…recognized that marriages often end without a matrimonial offence being the cause of the breakdown." Site accessed, 20 August 2010.
[35] Consistent with the "Privacy Act, Consolidated Status of Canada," the details of these two divorces beyond those basic facts offered in the public record are not explored in this dissertation but, in brief, their divorce proceedings took more than a decade to complete. Wieland permanently moved out of her joint home with Snow in May 1979 and her divorce was finalized around 1989. Wieland's fonds on this matter are closed to public access until the year 2050. Mary and Christopher Pratt separated in 1992 and finally divorced in 2004. As cited in Josée Drouin Brisebois, *Christopher Pratt: All My Own Work* (Ottawa, Vancouver and Toronto: National Gallery of Canada, and Douglas and McIntyre, 2005), 121.
[36] James Snell, *In the Shadow of the Law: Divorce in Canada, 1900-1939,* 43, 59.
[37] Jane Lind, *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire,* 275.

sources for grasping these aspects of female experience.[38] As Joan Scott has argued, though, the subject's account alone is not "uncontestable evidence of experience."[39] Additionally, she suggests, "it is not individuals who have experience but subjects who are constituted through experience."[40] Indeed, these women's formative histories in familial and cultural life, and education and work, constituted them as subjects in experience and informed their companionships: they were both socially shaped in experience and had experiences in that process of being socially shaped. What follows then, is both autobiographical and biographical but with a focused lens on how these five "marriages" were structured and linked to the artists' artwork and exhibitions analyzed in the subsequent four chapters. The junctions formed of these four intersections—biography and autobiography, and art production and exhibitions—demonstrate just how significant women's companionship status in public and private life was and how many factors were at work in the constitution of subjects in experience.

In their marriages, Marion Nicoll and Mary Pratt conceded to the husband's privileged role in determining the couple's residential place of settlement. The Nicoll marriage was initially developed in Calgary and remained there permanently despite her wishes to the contrary. Mary and Christopher Pratt met in Sackville, New Brunswick during their post-secondary student years but, when it came to settlement in marriage, she relocated from Fredericton, New Brunswick to St. John's, Newfoundland. Joyce Wieland was more strategic about forming an artist-couple companionship than others in this study, and despite the structural disparities of her marriage to Snow, she nonetheless saw this as offering an environment of mutual creative

[38] The two biographical studies Maxine Berg, *A Woman in History, Eileen Power, 1889-1940* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) and Deborah Gorham, *Vera Brittain: A Feminist Life* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), and also the broader-scope study by Carol Dyhouse, *Feminism and the Family in England, 1880-1939* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989) explore these ideas.
[39] Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (Summer 1991): 777.
[40] Ibid., 779.

exchange not easily found in a non-artist partner. For her, the artist-couple marriage was a considered and deliberate move for the female artist in the gendered landscapes of art and marriage. Loring and Wyle were also strategic about the artist-couple marriage. For them too it was a means of survival and intellectual exchange but, alternatively, to support two women's professional lives in a self-determined union. The two-custom marriage of Kenojuak and Johnniebo in Inuit and Christian traditions intersected two cultures during colonization of the Arctic world and demonstrated their persistence in retaining both their cultural marriage practices in a changing world. For them, there had not been a separate identity category to describe the subject as "Artist" prior to James Houston's establishment of printmaking in Cape Dorset in the late 1950s, but on his introduction of this means of economic survival, Kenojuak and Johnniebo began to make "Art" for sale. As these five distinct artist-couple marriages illuminate, there were always six female breadwinners and many factors constituting subjects in and of experience. Their stories demonstrate that to be female, to be companion, and to be artist, were ongoing identity concerns for women, and that the concept of "marriage" required reworking to meet their needs.

Part II: The Five Artist-Couples

Marion and Jim Nicoll: A Calgary Marriage and the Gendering of Breadwinners

When Marion Mackay and James McLaren Nicoll were married in 1940 their union solidified a nine-year courtship that had centred on Calgary as their base of operations. They had met at the Calgary Sketch Club in 1931. "Jim," as he preferred to be addressed, was an engineer in mid-career who travelled often for his work and was then also a part-time painter. Marion was in post-secondary study and teaching part-time at the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art (PITA) in Calgary. Calgary offered them many benefits: subject matter for their landscape

painting, work and educational opportunities, group-artist exhibitions, and a community in which to build an art practice. Ultimately, though, Jim made the call on staying in Calgary. The decision would not be to Marion's pleasure but she would live with it, in marriage. She recalled of the prospect of moving elsewhere, namely New York, that, "I'd have stayed…if I'd been alone."[41] The experience was an important one to reflect her challenges in juggling the identities "artist" and "wife."

Marion Mackay was the daughter of Calgarians Florence Gingras and Robert Mackay.[42] In early adulthood Marion Mackay knew that she wanted to be an artist and to have a post-secondary education in the visual arts. Her mother encouraged her post-secondary education but only if Marion would study domestic science and household economics.[43] That path was one that Marion would not entertain since during study at Central High School she had already met painter and educator Reginald L. Harvey (1888-1973), the Calgary school board's itinerant instructor who encouraged her to consider an artist's life. At seventeen years of age in 1926, she departed for Toronto to attend the Ontario College of Art (OCA), where she studied painting, design and batik arts, and landscape with members of the city's Group of Seven.[44] After her second year of study, however, Marion returned home ill with anemia and her mother did not support her return to Toronto.

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[41] As quoted in "Marion Nicoll in Conversation with Duck Ventures," in *Marion Nicoll: A Retrospective* (Edmonton: Edmonton Art Gallery, 1975), unpaginated.
[42] Robert Mackay was the first superintendent of the City of Calgary's electric light and power and an Associate Director of the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, as documented in "Abstract Art with Cigarello," *Calgary Albertan*, July 14, 1967.
[43] Marion Nicoll as quoted in interview with Joan Murray (24 May 1979), 3, unpublished typescript, Robert McLaughlin Gallery Archives, Oshawa, Ontario. Marion Nicoll looked to her mother as a mentor though for her work in crafts noting once that, "I took after my devoted mother who embroidered pillowslips." Marion Nicoll as quoted in *Environment '70* (Edmonton: Arts and Crafts Division, Cultural Development Branch, Province of Alberta and Edmonton Art Gallery), unpaginated, File 132, Marion and Jim Nicoll Fonds, Glenbow Library and Archives (hereafter Nicoll Fonds).
[44] For a full study on the Group of Seven movement is offered in Charles C. Hill, *The Group of Seven: Art for a Nation* (Ottawa and Toronto: National Gallery of Canada and McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1995).

Florence and Robert Mackay had already lost two of their three children leaving Marion as their only offspring and Florence's fears over her daughter's health were no doubt fueled by these deaths. Marion's older brother had died just before her birth in 1909 and her sister in 1929 from pneumonia, just around the time of Marion's return home from OCA.[45] Marion's studies were afterwards completed piecemeal, as finances and time permitted, and in Calgary where Florence could monitor her daughter's health. Marion transferred as a third year student to Calgary's PITA to finish those studies begun at OCA. There she worked predominantly with the school's Director, British-trained landscape painter Alfred Crocker Leighton (1901-1965) who insisted on his students' command of colour theory. On Marion's entrance to the program he promptly sent her back into her first year of study but she moved expeditiously through this aesthetic hurdle and by 1931 Leighton was sufficiently impressed with her work that he hired her as a part-time student instructor. She graduated in 1933 and worked under his leadership through the mid-1930s, taking his summer courses in plein-air painting at Seebe and Turner Valley, Alberta, and she became a regular part-time instructor.

Marion Mackay had determined in early adulthood that a creative life would be a priority but then she met Jim. The Fort MacLeod-born bachelor was immensely appealing to her at that time and Marion began to consider the marriage question. As her correspondence reveals, she found him remarkably attractive and his professional record had earned her respect. Jim had served in the First World War and had studied at the University of Alberta where he had earned his Bachelor of Arts (1922) and a Bachelor of Science, Civil Engineering (1924) degrees and, as one of the University's distinguished alumni, he later joined its Senate. For two years before war service he was employed with Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and he returned to work in its engineering department between 1924 and 1930. For the next two years he worked for the

[45] The death date for Marion Nicoll's brother is not known.

Province of Alberta highways and then shifted to surveying, mapping and road construction for various oil companies through 1939. His work with the oil sector and the Commonwealth Air Training program during wartime took him across Canada.[46]

During the 1930s Jim Nicoll's commitment to painting the Alberta landscape and to the establishment of a provincial infrastructure for the visual arts was steadily increasing. He and Marion were elected members of the Alberta Society of Artists (ASA), respectively in 1935 and 1936, and each contributed works to ASA annual exhibitions. In 1942, Jim became founding editor of the ASA's *Highlights* magazine and was elected society president in 1943. His interests in poetry and writing earned him a creative reputation in two media. It was not, however, with the frequency enjoyed by Marion that acclaim for his creative work in painting was seen as substantial enough to warrant considered attention.[47] Paintings such as *On the Bow* (c. 1955: PC) [Figure 1] demonstrate that Jim Nicoll's engineering training had fostered a representational and precisionist aesthetic which was received as conservative by critics and curators. Jim was less concerned than Marion about critical responses to his work, favoring instead the potential sales to be garnered from it. He noted that the importance of line in composing structure and form and recognized that, "I have a predictably limited future…I just paint what I like."[48] His commitment to representation was a territory on which he and Marion eventually became divided as she moved on to become the first serious painter committed to abstraction in the Province of Alberta.

[46] Postage markings from his letters to Marion in these years indicate that he traveled to Ottawa and North Bay, Ontario, and throughout Alberta.
[47] There has been only marginal posthumous critical interest in his work but there were two later life solo exhibitions in the non-profit sector during his lifetime: Bruce Ferguson's *Jim Nicoll*, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Banff, 7 January – 2 February, 1971; and Andrew Oko's, *Paintings and Poetry: Jim Nicoll* (Calgary: Glenbow Alberta Institute, 1977), exhibit dates, 18 March-10 April, 1977.
[48] As quoted in interview with Andrew Oko, *Paintings and Poetry: Jim Nicoll*, 1977, 4.

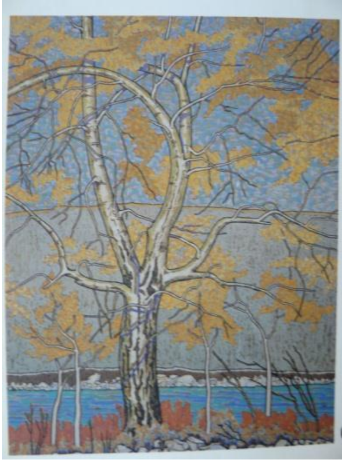

Figure 1: James McLaren Nicoll, *On the Bow,* c. 1955, oil on canvas, 45.7 x 56.7 cm, Private Collection

Marion Mackay's self-confidence as artist and teacher was established during the 1930s. However, her letters from these years illuminate that her self-confidence was by no means equally assured. Her letters were marked by periods of both strength and uncertainty regarding how she felt about issues such as her height and weight. "I've slipped back lamentably" she wrote to Jim. "A woman is a poor weak thing—even a six foot one… I've just eaten a stupendous meal with the greatest of ease. You'll probably fall out of love with me when you see my so-called figure."[49] Much later, though, her remarkable physical presence, when combined with her creative accomplishments in abstraction, would prompt students, peers and admirers to describe her as nothing less than "a force."[50] It would take the years ahead for Marion Mackay to be at ease with her body and its place in relation to Euro-Canadian norms of "femininity."

In the context of the Depression years, Marion took the lead on the marriage question and expressed to Jim how she saw him as the dominant family breadwinner, urging him to "hurry up and make your fortune I want to be married to you."[51] She also envisioned their marriage to accord with state-determined and lifelong monogamy. She observed: "Just being with you—

[49] Marion Mackay to Jim Nicoll, 10 and 7 June 1935, respectively pages 3 and 8, Nicoll Fonds.
[50] Ron Moppett, Interview with Catharine Mastin, Calgary, 3 April 2009.
[51] Marion Mackay to Jim Nicoll, 7 April 1937, Nicoll Fonds

that's my demand and I'll always want you. All my life."[52] So far as is known, Marion's relationship with Jim was her only serious one, and almost nothing is known of Jim's histories of intimacy including why he remained a bachelor for so long. There were moments in her correspondence that illustrated her strength of character, however, something with which Jim would soon enough be forced to reconcile in their marriage. In 1935 she warned, "I'm still resenting your remarks about …general female helplessness—you'll pay for that."[53] Two years hence she would remind him: "If I'm not careful I'll be a militant woman when I grow up. I'm too bossy altogether."[54]

By 1937 Marion was on another path—the pursuit of further studies in England in 1937-1938 at the London County Council School of Arts and Crafts. This interest which so soon followed completion of her studies in Calgary demonstrated her life-long interest in post-secondary education. These studies increased her teaching portfolio, employment prospects and furthered her knowledge of women's work in crafts. Marion conceded that she would miss Jim in the year ahead but the opportunity would not be lost since there lay the credentials she felt essential to her future work and private art practice. Recognition in London followed quickly and there she earned six teaching certificates from the Royal Drawing Society.[55] This experience contrasted with her years studying in Toronto and Calgary which had privileged painting: they also offered her opportunities to travel elsewhere in England and Scotland, and to Norway, Sweden and Denmark.[56] Her travels gave her opportunity to study the arts of north-western

[52] Marion Mackay to Jim Nicoll, 18 July 1936, Nicoll Fonds.
[53] Marion Mackay to Jim Nicoll, 20 June 1935, Nicoll Fonds.
[54] Marion Mackay to Jim Nicoll, 29 June 1937, Nicoll Fonds.
[55] As cited in Colin S. Macdonald, Entry for "Marion Florence (Mackay) Nicoll," in *A Dictionary of Canadian Artists*, volume 5 (Ottawa: Canadian Paperbacks, 1977), 1383-84.
[56] The sketchbook, "England, Central School of Arts and Crafts, 1937-38," (accession 81.28.8), Glenbow Museum and Art Gallery Collection (hereafter GMAG), indicates that she studied bookbinding, publishing, architectural decorations, mosaic, weaving, and pottery and her travels to museums and galleries in London included the British Museum, the Tate Gallery and the National Gallery.

Europe which she did not undertake again until 1960.[57] Marion's investment positioned her well for teaching the arts and crafts but the financial benefits were deferred until 1946 when she became a permanent and full-time instructor at PITA.

Gender disparities in women's employment had persisted during the Depression, making self-sustenance and continuous employment for women like Marion Nicoll challenging. Throughout her tenure at PITA (1933 -1965), she was either the only female instructor or one of the very few on staff, but after her marriage to Jim she was suddenly absent from the PITA employment roster (1940-1946).[58] During wartime she taught intermittently at a local sanitarium and followed Jim's wartime work, but she had never before or afterwards allowed Jim's work and travel itinerary be the reason for her to cease ongoing waged employment of any kind. Much later in life, Marion Nicoll offered only this brief explanation of the gap in her work history during wartime: "the writer married in 1940 and left the school."[59] Her sudden departure was unlikely to have been wholly voluntary since the marriage bar had been widely used to reduce women's waged employment and Marion had always worked; it was argued that women were taking jobs away from qualified men who were expected to be family breadwinners.[60] When the sculptors Elizabeth Wyn Wood (1903-1966) and Emmanuel Hahn (1881-1957) were married in

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[57] Nicoll's travels in 1937-38 are documented in the sketchbook (accession 81.28.7, GMAG Collection) and include references to Kinbrace, Inverness, Forsinard , Wick, Cambridge and Oslo.

[58] Margaret P. Hess and Edna McManus were also teaching alongside Marion Nicoll at PITA. Respectively, thery were responsible for "art appreciation and art history" and "commercial art and advertising" and Nicoll taught "ceramics." *Art Institute: Provincial Institute of Technology and Art, 1947-48* (Calgary: Provincial Institute of Technology and Art, 1947), File 59, Nicoll Fonds.

[59] Marion Nicoll, "Crafts in Alberta," unpublished manuscript (November 1965), 4, Nicoll Fonds.

[60] Claudia Goldin, "Marriage Bars: Discrimination against Married Women Workers from the 1920s-1950s," in *Favorites of Fortune: Technology, Growth and Economic Development since the Industrial Revolution*, edited by Patrice Higonnet, David S. Landes and Henry Rosovsky (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1991), 511-538.

1930, Wood contested the marriage bar and was successful in retaining her post as artist-teacher at Central Technical School (Toronto) but other women did not enjoy this same outcome.[61]

Women's participation in waged employment had widened considerably during wartime, but in the postwar period this again changed. Jennifer A. Stephen has argued regarding the cycle of wartime mobilization and postwar demobilization that "most policy staff … proceeded on the view that women would not be inclined to pursue what were clearly understood to be men's occupations once the war was finally over."[62] Adding the marriage question to women's postwar employment, Mary Kinnear has further argued that "marriage no longer disqualified a professional woman from paid work but a cultural expectation that a woman would retire on marriage or a least at maternity persisted."[63] Marion Nicoll's return to PITA in 1946 was likely entangled in the difficulties of these interwar, wartime and postwar policies on women's waged employment. Her re-entry to salaried teaching had clearly not been supported by Leighton's successor, Henry George Glyde, but was endorsed by the appointment of automatic abstractionist, J.W.G. (Jock) Macdonald to the Director's position at PITA in 1946.[64] Just as women were expected to "return to the cult of domesticity" in postwar, Marion Nicoll became the Nicoll family breadwinner following Jim's retirement. Her return to work at PITA was the antithesis of postwar trends to demobilize women from waged employment.[65]

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[61] Victoria Baker, *Emanuel Hahn and Elizabeth Wyn Wood: Tradition and Innovation in Canadian Sculpture* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1997), 66.
[62] Jennifer A. Stephen, "Introduction," in *Pick One Intelligent Girl: Employability, Domesticity and the Gendering of Canada's Welfare State, 1939-1947* , 3.
[63] Mary Kinnear, *In Subordination: Professional Women, 1870-1970* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill Queen University Press, 1995), 18, 115.
[64] H.G. Glyde was PITA Director from 1935 to 1946 as documented in Helen Collinson, *H.G. Glyde in Canada: A Retrospective Exhibition Organized by The Edmonton Art Gallery* (Edmonton: The Edmonton Art Gallery, 1974), unpaginated.
[65] Jennifer A. Stephen, "The Return to Domesticity: Canada's Womanhood in Training," in *Pick One Intelligent Girl: Employability, Domesticity and the Gendering of Canada's Welfare State, 1939-1947*, 163-204.

Marion Nicoll's rehiring under Jock Macdonald made for many changes in her professional life and marriage. Macdonald spent only one-year at PITA[66] but, in that short time, friendships were formed between the Nicolls and Barbara and Jock Macdonald and the two couples enjoyed abundant discussions on art, sketching trips and they supported each other in their respective exhibitions afterwards.[67] By the 1940s, Macdonald had become a respected painter in abstraction and teacher. Following his time in Calgary he was seconded to the Ontario College of Art where he spent most of his remaining years teaching.

Macdonald had recommended Marion Nicoll as an instructor for the Banff School of Fine Arts summer session in 1947. The program was then being run through the University of Alberta's extension program in partnership with the PITA.[68] Since its inception in the 1930s under Leighton, there had been a long and gendered history of all-male instructors and with Macdonald's support in the summer of 1947 Marion became the School's first female instructor.[69] Macdonald strongly endorsed her abilities, describing her as "a very capable teacher in both oil and water colour."[70] It was the only occasion that she was granted the opportunity to teach painting.

Macdonald and Nicoll also shared ideas on painting, including automatism. In tapping the unconscious to emphasize free thought Macdonald had initiated Nicoll's path to abstraction in

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[66] Jock Macdonald obtained a teaching post at OCA precipitating his early departure from Calgary as documented in Joan Murray, *Jock Macdonald's Students* (Oshawa: Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 1981), 12.

[67] Barbara Macdonald was not an artist but was a close friend of Marion Nicoll's. Nicoll gave Macdonald one of her batiks (accession 42515, NGC collection) and Macdonald wrote supportive letters to Marion on her exhibitions in Toronto after the Macdonalds moved there. Macdonald-Nicoll Correspondence, File 12, Nicoll Fonds.

[68] *Banff School of Fine Arts Syllabus* (Banff: Banff School of Fine Arts, 28 July-28 August, 1943). Fleck Library and Archives, Banff Centre. From 1936-1966 Glyde was head of the Painting Division at the Banff School of Fine Arts. See Helen Collinson, *H.G. Glyde in Canada*, unpaginated.

[69] Female artist-teachers with more experience than Marion Nicoll, including Hamilton painter Hortense Gordon, had earlier been turned down, as documented in Hortense Gordon to Donald Cameron, 6 June 1945, Box 38, File 60, "Rejected Applications," accession 78.17, Banff School of Fine Arts Fonds (hereafter BSFA), University of Alberta Archives.

[70] J.W.G. Macdonald to Donald Cameron, 7 July 1947, Files 21 and 25 (accession 78.17), Box 33, BSFA Fonds.

the 1940s as works like the *Untitled Automatic* (1948: AGA), [Figure 2] demonstrate. She continued working with this method through the 1970s as those works including *Automatic* (1978: AAF) from her later-career sketchbooks confirm. The 1940s automatics ended a long cycle of disappointment she had felt about her art practice. In these early years of marriage she nonetheless kept her interests inside the private world of her sketchbooks and continued building her reputation at the Art Institute teaching in the craft and design fields. In these areas she was at least partially able to build critical acclaim in deeply gendered academic environs and would not face head-on her husband's disdain for abstraction.

Figure 2: Marion Nicoll, *Untitled Automatic*, 1948, watercolour on paper, 30 x 22.5 cm, Art Gallery of Alberta

During the 1930s and 1940s it had made much sense to both Marion Mackay and Jim Nicoll that Calgary remain their home base and Jim is not known to have considered alternatives without Marion's prodding. Marion, though, was restless for more. There was a sizable age difference between them: at the time of their marriage in 1940 she was thirty one and he was nearly fifty. By 1946, Jim was approaching retirement but Marion was in mid-career and their age differences played a key role in her becoming the principal income earner in marriage.[71] The

[71] The chronology of Jim's retirement is not precisely known but his employment record appears to have come to an end after the Second World War when he was entering his sixties.

changes in her art practice after meeting Macdonald and being re-hired were remarkable as she transitioned into abstraction. At war's end though, she and Jim had also purchased their Bowness home and this acquisition was one sign that the Nicolls were in Calgary to stay.[72] To be a family breadwinner was not a role she had forecast but the position was now hers and Marion Nicoll carried it with ease and confidence until her retirement in January 1966. After Macdonald's departure for Toronto in 1946, she remained virtually the only artist in Calgary interested in abstraction until the mid-1960s and it would take her these next two decades to find a dedicated community interested in this genre.[73] Support for her abstractions did not initially come from Calgary, from her place of employment, or from her marriage: she needed to look elsewhere on all counts.

In 1957 she had set her sights on the Emma Lake Artists' Workshops and then New York for private study with Will Barnet in 1959. On her return to Calgary at Jim's behest in September 1960, Calgary was the first city to take on the challenge of exhibiting her work but, as explored in Chapter Three, to mixed results personally and professionally. Throughout the 1960s, Marion Nicoll struggled with her return, developing abstractions reflective of her feelings for the place—namely the Calgary series which included the abstraction, *Calgary II: The Ugly City* (1964: PC), [Figure 3] and also the painting *Hostile Place* (1965: LU).[74] She remembered that to work through her feelings of disenchantment about returning to Calgary had required a process of her

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[72] The Nicolls' home in Bowness (now west Calgary) occupied two acres (lots 35 and 36 in Block 35), and they purchased it in 1945 for $2,300.00. As documented in these three sources: J. Brooks Joyner, *Marion Nicoll* (Calgary: Masters Gallery, 1979), 147; Dushan Bresky, "Teacher Favors Experimental Art; Husband Doesn't Share Opinions," *Calgary Herald*, January 26, 1953; and "Home Renovations," File 75, Nicoll Fonds.

[73] Calgary had no history of interest in abstraction and when the painters Maxwell Bates and William Leroy Stevenson submitted modernist works in this genre to an exhibition in 1928 at the Calgary Art Club their works were met with much controversy and rejected from exhibition. See Kathy Zimon, *Alberta Society of Artists: The First Seventy Years* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000), 14.

[74] The present location of *Hostile Place* is not known but Nicoll exhibited this major oil painting (40 x 45"/ 101.8 x 114.4 cm) with her Toronto dealer Henry Bonli in 1967 and in Edmonton with Framecraft Gallery in 1976 where it was finally sold.

Figures 3: Marion Nicoll, *Calgary II: The Ugly City*, 1964, oil on canvas, 118.2 x 141 cm, Private Collection

"elimination," her suppression of those "hostilities which I had... I've gone away from cities and I've gone away from everything but landscape."[75] In this childless marriage and union of aesthetic differences, Marion Nicoll would look to her painting as a family she never had. She explained: "For me painting has literally taken the place of child bearing as a means of expression."[76] She remained restless as an artist in marriage, but resolved that her life would henceforth remain in Calgary. As she conceded, "I'm afraid I'm stuck with it."[77]

Mary and Christopher Pratt's "Canada-Newfoundland" Marriage:

When Fredericton-born Mary West and St. John's-born Christopher Pratt married on September 12, 1957 at Fredericton's Wilmot United Church, their union marked the beginnings of what Mary later described as her "Canada-Newfoundland marriage."[78] The ceremony had been a very public event orchestrated by her parents who had long supported the activities of that parish and

[75] As quoted in "Marion Nicoll in Conversation with Duck Ventures," unpaginated.
[76] Marion Nicoll as quoted in, *Environment '70,* unpaginated.
[77] Marion Nicoll as quoted in, "Marion Nicoll in Conversation with Duck Ventures," unpaginated.
[78] Mary Pratt, Interview with Catharine Mastin, St. John's, Newfoundland, 17 October 2009.

she recalled that "nearly everyone who mattered was there."[79] The West-Pratt wedding made official their two-year courtship begun at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, where they had met as students—Christopher in pre-medicine, and Mary in the art department. From the beginnings of her education at Charlotte Street School through her studies at Fredericton High, Mary had been an exceptional student and had won the unfaltering confidence of her teachers. She was so sufficiently in command of both her academic standing and social place in academic life that she was also President of the Student Council.[80] She was more than well-positioned for a university life and had the capacity to pursue virtually any profession for further study. As her peers described her, "we may be sure she will be a success in whatever field she chooses."[81]

Mary West had been groomed in a well-heeled family thanks to her parents, Katherine Eleanor McMurray and William J. West. She valued both parents but her father commanded a special place in her life for he was a highly visible professional in his role as Attorney General for the province of New Brunswick.[82] Mary recalled of this Harvard Law School graduate that, "I thought Dad knew God …In fact I was sure that he did…He seemed to almost laugh his way through life."[83] From her father's example, Mary West learned the importance of professional respect and acclaim and this legacy would be among those family histories that enabled her to

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[79] Ibid. Mary Pratt's "Wedding Autograph Book" indicates that most guests were those of her parents and few artists were in attendance. Alex Colville's signature is included. See File 2008.31/2/1-2, Mary Pratt Fonds, Mount Allison University Archives, Sackville, New Brunswick (hereafter Mary Pratt Fonds).
[80] "Educational Records, 1942-1947," File-2003.35/1/7, Mary Pratt Fonds.
[81] School Yearbook, *The Graduate, 1953,"* "Educational Records, 1942-1947," File-2003.35/1/7, Mary Pratt Fonds.
[82] William J. West practiced law and politics in New Brunswick and was appointed a judge of the Divorce Court, Chancery Court and of the Appeal Division of the Supreme Court. In late-life he also authored the family history, *The Wests of Coles Island: The Story of a Family* (1982). For further information the website by genealogist Ruby Cusack, "The Wests of Coles Island" at www.rubycusack.com also documents some of this history.
[83] Sandra Gwyn and Gerta Moray, *Mary Pratt* (Toronto: Montreal: McGraw Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1989), 6, and Mary Pratt, Interview with Catharine Mastin, 17 October 2009.

develop strong identity ties to her home town and province: Fredericton and New Brunswick would be her Canada.

Christopher Pratt held equally strong ties to his family history as a Newfoundlander. On his mother's side of the family, the Dawes were among the first European settlers to arrive on the shores of Newfoundland in 1595, and on his father's side, his great-grandmother's lineage to Newfoundland dated back to the 1700s. Christopher was mentored as a young boy by his paternal grandfather, James C. Pratt, in both business and painting. In St. John's, Christopher attended Holloway School and Prince of Wales College through Grade 11. His uncle, E.J. Pratt, was the noted Canadian poet, and his father was a prominent Newfoundland businessman. The family sustained a long legacy of commitment to Newfoundland's history, culture and business. For the Pratt family, Newfoundland was a separate nation and they had been anti-Confederates in the years leading to its late-day union to Canada in 1949. When asked by one of his instructors at Mount Allison the question, "what is you?" Christopher replied, "I is a Newfoundlander."[84] From the beginnings of their relationship, Mary and Christopher each held strong allegiances to their respective places of birth and family histories, and these differences became serious considerations in how their future together unfolded in marriage. As Mary recalled, "Christopher's dedication to his country came first in those days."[85]

When Mary and Christopher settled in St. John's soon after marriage the decision to be in Newfoundland was permanent and clearly privileged his family history over hers. It had not been the first time she had lived there to support their continued relations. Much to the chagrin of her parents, at twenty-one years of age, Mary went to St. John's to work as an occupational therapist

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[84] As quoted by Sandra Gwyn in "Introduction" in Sandra Gwyn and Gerta Moray, *Mary Pratt*, 8.
[85] Mary Pratt in *Diary of 1977-1979* (Entry for December 19, 1977), File 2008.1/2/3, Mary Pratt Fonds.

and teacher during which time she and Christopher maintained separate living spaces.[86] This first experience in St. John's underlined sharp contrasts between her preceding years in Fredericton and how life was and would later be in Newfoundland. She remembered: "The harsh abrupt opinions of Newfoundland astonished me…I had been raised in an order I accepted and admired…I loved and wanted to be like my relatives."[87] At the time of her 1981 mid-career solo exhibition nearly twenty years later, she again described her experiences living in Newfoundland. This time she reflected on their move to Salmonier in 1963. Of economic necessity, after Christopher resigned for health reasons from his job as Director-Curator of the Memorial University Art Gallery, they moved to his father's summer cottage where they did not have to pay rent, and where Christopher could concentrate on painting full-time and have his own studio.[88] Of this move Mary remembered that it was "like moving from one country to another [and to] a strange land" where she was asked to "make a home in someone else's house" and where she felt like "a foreigner."[89]

Mary's parents had expected her to marry and so she also recalled, "they didn't mind my art because I was a girl."[90] In these years, Mary Pratt learned quickly some of the challenges involved in straddling the double identities of artist and wife knowing that, "life as a creative person is not always comfortable [and] no one expected to make a living out of art in 1961."[91] Her commitment to being an artist though had long preceded meeting Christopher and his

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[86] Tom Smart, *The Art of Mary Pratt: The Substance of Light* (Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions and Beaverbrook Art Gallery, 1995), 39 and Mary Pratt, *Diary of 1977-1979*, unpaginated.
[87] Mary Pratt, *Diary of 1977-1979*, unpaginated.
[88] Christopher worked at Memorial University in this position for two years after their marriage.
[89] As quoted by Joan Murray in "The Skin of Things," in Paddy O'Brien et al., *Mary Pratt* (London: London Regional Art Gallery, 1981), unpaginated.
[90] Mary Pratt as quoted in Cathy Shaw, "Women honored for achievements at Dal convocation."
[91] Ibid.

ascension to the podium of prominent High Realist male painters in Canada exemplified by paintings like *Cottage* (1973: PC).[92]

During her teenage years, Mary had taken numerous art classes with various instructors at the Art Centre, University of New Brunswick between 1947 and 1952.[93] The decision to pursue post-secondary study in the fall of 1953 was deliberate and guided by her father's lead as she headed for her father's Alma Mater—Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick.[94] With Lawren P. Harris (1910-1994), Ted Pulford (1914-1994) and Alex Colville (b. 1920) teaching there, Mary was ensured excellent schooling in realism and painting.[95] When Colville asked her if she wanted to become a professional painter she uttered the response, "I hope so, but I'm terrified I might turn out to be just a Sunday painter."[96] Encouragingly, he replied: "You won't be."[97] Her experience at Mount Allison, however, was deeply gendered. These student years tested the limits of how Mary straddled the identities "artist," "wife" and now also "mother" in postwar Atlantic Canada, where, as elsewhere, breadwinner-homemaker ideology persisted in shaping men's and women's gender roles in heterosexual marriage.

Four years later, mid-way through her studies and after her marriage in 1957 and the arrival of two children, her encounter with Lawren P. Harris yielded a very different conversation than that she'd had with Colville: "You know that if two artists are married, only

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[92] An overview of this genre of art in Canada is Paul Duval's *High Realism in Canada* (Toronto and Vancouver: Clark, Irwin and Company Limited, 1974) in which Christopher Pratt occupies a chapter. The only other female painter included in this book was Christiane Pflug. Pratt's *Cottage* is dust jacket cover and frontispiece illustration in David P. Silcox and Meriké Weiler, *Christopher Pratt* (Toronto: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc. and Key Porter Books, 1982).
[93] Her instructors included Lucy Jarvis, Fritz Brandtner, John Todd, Alfred Pinsky and Ghitta Caiserman.
[94] Christina Sabat, "The Delectable Art of Mary Pratt," *Atlantic Advocate* 73, no. 3 (November 1982): 13.
[95] W.J. West had facilitated Alex Colville's involvement in re-designing the Wilmot Church sanctuary in red, blue and brown colour schemes to emphasize the Gothic architecture. It is no surprise then that Colville attended the wedding (as witnessed by his signature in the "Wedding Guest Book" cited above) and that he supported Mary's study with him at Mount Allison. See the website, Wilmot United Church and "A Tour of the Church Building" and "A Brief History," at the website www.wilmotuc.nb.ca.
[96] Mary Pratt as quoted by Sandra Gwyn in "Introduction" in Sandra Gwyn and Gerta Moray, *Mary Pratt,* 7.
[97] Ibid.

one is going to be successful. And in your family, it's going to be Christopher. So why don't you just understand that and look after the house and the children?"[98] Pratt is said to have retreated home that day in tears but not to have held personal ill will towards Harris. She recalled the discussion to have been "a wonderful thing for him to say to me because I realized absolutely my position at that point….I've always felt that of all the things I learned at art school, that moment was probably the most important."[99] From this experience, biographer-curator Tom Smart has offered that Pratt then "took hold of her life and chose to continue painting and arrange her responsibilities as a parent around her needs as an artist."[100] Henceforth though, Mary yielded decisions regarding their place of residence in marriage first to Christopher's needs as artist and person. It was not until all four children were in school that she could find consistent periods of concentration to shape the directions of her practice. She did not, however, sacrifice her art, her role as parent, or her marriage: she worked to address the demands of all three commitments and identities.

In these years, when access to birth control remained difficult, and risks to health in new technologies such as the postwar "Pill" also remained significant,[101] the Pratt children arrived in quick succession and by 1964 there were four.[102] Isolated from the urban and public life she knew well in Fredericton, Mary was now living forms of geographical, political and social isolation she had not experienced before. She longed for the world she knew and worked hard

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[98] As cited in Robin Laurence, "The Radiant Way: although Mary Pratt's world has grown darker, her paintings continue to burn with startling incandescence." *Canadian Art,* 11, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 26-35.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Tom Smart, *The Art of Mary Pratt: The Substance of Light* (Fredericton: Goose Lane and the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, 1995), 45.
[101] For a social history of the health risks of the birth control pill in these years see Elizabeth Siegel Watkins, "Debating the Safety of the Pill," in *On the Pill: A Social History of Oral Contraception, 1950-1970* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 73-102.
[102] The four Pratt children were John (b. 1958), Anne (b. 1961), Barby (b. 1963) and Ned (b. 1964).

through ongoing correspondence to maintain contact with her family.[103] Her isolation was further compounded in Salmonier by the fact that she did not learn to drive until well into mid-life. For more than two decades then, she was dependent on Christopher and the generosity of others if she was to have any contact with artists other than Christopher beyond Salmonier and that isolation included her seclusion from other women and female artists.

Her identity as artist in the early 1960s persisted privately more than it did publicly as she worked on her painting in those few moments offered to her. There had been reasons though for her initial attraction to Christopher which were durative and which she continued to cherish for a significant time while they remained married. She explained:

> The fascination with Christopher lay almost entirely with his mind. Not the part of his mind that concerned itself with people and events, but that part of his thinking that concerned images and ideas….What I could not dismiss was his interest in the process of image making. Nor could I dismiss his ideas about such abstract notions as realism vs. abstraction. He knew almost nothing about the history of art. He didn't care about it. He knew nothing about the current thinking in the art world. He dismissed any discussion about it. ART simply didn't interest him. I loved him for that. I felt that ART was somehow perverse and that only in the real world could real truths, real beauty, be found.[104]

Mary remembered that "Christopher was totally committed to success" and that she could have married "a more ordinary person."[105] She had enjoyed a key role at Mount Allison in consolidating Christopher's interests in the world of art over medicine and Christopher acknowledged this on two separate occasions:

> Mary rescued me from my indecision, from my lack of self-esteem and worth. She is an extraordinary person: intelligent, compassionate and incredibly moral. …It may sound excessively romantic but the minute I saw her, I had a premonition. I felt there was something there. Some of us are blessed I think. Some of us walk in the right door at the right time…Mary has encouraged me and expressed her belief in me at every turn, and that has made it possible. She has

[103] Mary Pratt's papers house an extensive collection of her correspondence to family in both Fredericton and St. John's in these years.
[104] Mary Pratt, *A Personal Calligraphy* (Fredericton: Goose Lane, 2000), 21.
[105] Tom Smart, *The Art of Mary Pratt: The Substance of Light,* 41, 43.

> often placed my interests above her own: she is the only truly Christian person I know.[106]

Outstanding student that Mary Pratt was, and raised as she was in a learned domestic environment, she has long-recognized the importance of her being surrounded by "clever men."[107] For her, as for Joyce Wieland, the artist-couple marriage was one means to straddle the identities, artist and wife, and in her case, also mother. But as their Canada-Newfoundland artist-couple marriage unfolded, a deeply etched gender order of male and female sociality in marriage persisted. Indeed, Christopher's thoughts on the female artist in those formative years of their marriage mirrored those that had given shape to a masculine canon of postwar modernist art production. He observed: "I remember seeing a girl walking with a handful of watercolour brushes…and having the distinct feeling that she hadn't any right to them since painting was my legitimate trade.[108] For Christopher, the sex-gender privileges attached to art production virtually transcended the experiences of even being human:

> I think that the creative act—what painters and poets do and engineers and scientists—is at the forefront of human experience, the apex, the apogee of this basic stuff. Because, however pretentious it may sound, to be creative is to be God like. You are at the heat shield of this thrust of energy, en route to the evolution of God.[109]

As Mary's early marriage years exposed, Christopher and Newfoundland prevailed for a time over Mary's Canada—her Fredericton and her New Brunswick. As her art developed over the next decade, however, her geographical and domestic circumstances increasingly became enabling tools of self-definition and the source of her eventual economic independence in and

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[106] Christopher Pratt as quoted in Harry Thurston, "Pratt and Pratt," *Equinox,* 1, no. 2 (March-April 1982), 75; and Christopher Pratt as quoted in David Silcox, *Christopher Pratt: Personal Reflections on a Life in Art* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1995), 208.
[107] Mary Pratt, Interview with Catharine Mastin, 17 October, 2009.
[108] As quoted in David Silcox and Meriké Weiler, *Christopher Pratt* (Toronto and Scarborough: Key Porter and Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1982), 178-9.
[109] Ibid., 187.

beyond this first marriage.[110] Through her art, she too would rewrite breadwinner-homemaker ideology and contribute significantly to family income. For only two years in their marriage had Christopher engaged in regular waged employment and for the remainder of their marriage, their two art productions were their primary sources of income.

During the 1950s and 1960s Mary Pratt found herself often in the double shadows of her father and Christopher's respective reputations but these would not be long-term scenarios in which she would find self-fulfillment. Despite her isolation in Salmonier, she proved resourceful and imaginative as she constructed an art practice of her environs. As paintings like *The Back Porch* (1966: The Rooms), [Figure 4] and *Cakes, Apples and Potatoes* (1969: The Rooms), [Figure 5] demonstrate, the Salmonier kitchen and domestic life was now her subject matter. Her experiences there exposed both the crumbled foundations of breadwinner-homemaker ideology and illuminated important complications for the female artist of the husband's privileged role in controlling residential place of settlement in heterosexual marriage.

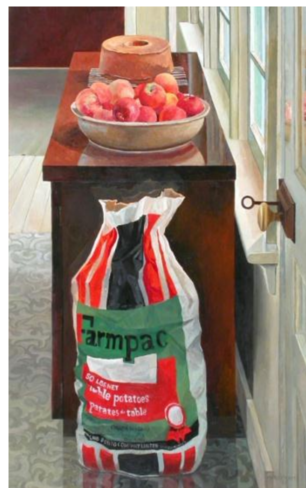

Figure 4: Mary Pratt, *The Back Porch*, 1966, oil on canvas,50 x 40 cm, The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador (left)

Figure 5: Mary Pratt, *Cakes, Apples and Potatoes,* 1969, oil on Masonite board, 82.5 x 52 cm, The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador (right)

[110] Mary Pratt remarried in 2005 to the American artist and retired professor, James Rosen.

Joyce Wieland and Michael Snow: Strategizing the Artist-Couple Marriage

Joyce Wieland was keenly aware of the social circumstances of her female life during the 1950s and it was with acumen that she critiqued the institution of marriage, its implications for the female artist and women's self-fulfillment. There was no easy solution as she explained in these two passages of her diary:

> Why for God's sake cannot we girls be brought up to be humans instead of dependent wretches? We cannot find happiness this way. It's not like in the movies. We don't always grow up and get married and live happily. And this is the truth which kills me more each day and disables me little by little...God forbid I'm a threat.[111]
>
> Two things thrill me more than anything, one is painting and the other is living with someone I love. Which is the stronger I don't know. I am too much of an egotist about my career and my work to give it up. It seems to me it lasts longer than love unless it's with someone who feels the way you do and then career and love can blend together… Is it so wrong that a person should desire to travel and paint? Can't these things blend with marriage?[112]

As Joyce Wieland's biographers have discussed, Wieland enjoyed several important relationships with men, but she also strategized ways for her life as an artist to be combined with the social insistence on women's heterosexual marriage in postwar Canada. Her companionship history included no less than three sustained artist-couple relationships—first with writer Bryan Barney, second with Michael Snow, and third with filmmaker, George Gingras.[113] She lived common-law with all three but married only one of them—Michael Snow. There was a fourth artist-couple relationship early in her companionship history that she also considered with Toronto sculptor, Gerald Gladstone

[111] Joyce Wieland, *Diary for 1951-52*, undated entry.
[112] Ibid., Entry for March 8, 1951.
[113] Wieland lived with Barney from 1952-1953 and with Gingras for a short time in the early 1980s. Some details on these relations can be found in the writings of Wieland's two biographers, Jane Lind and Iris Nowell.

(1929-2005), but she quickly foreclosed that one for personal reasons.[114] As these histories illustrate, her engagement with the idea of the artist-couple was a recurring theme with and without legal marriage implications. It was not men in other learned professions that interested Wieland but rather artists. In her heterosexual life, these examples demonstrate that she pursued artist-couple companionship and marriage with more partners and purpose than other female subjects in this study. In her longest-running relationship with Snow, this companionship structure was a means of simultaneously juggling the identities "artist" and "wife." But, while formation of the artist-couple marriage was strategic for Wieland, she nonetheless concerned herself far more with being "artist" than with being "wife."

Wieland's self-identification as artist began in early adulthood, thanks to the support of her elder sister, Joan. Following the premature deaths of her British-born parents, father Sydney Wieland in 1937 and her mother Rosetta Amelia Watson in 1941, the three Wieland offspring were left to fend for themselves. Wieland had witnessed first-hand the fault lines to be found in the breadwinner-homemaker ideology as her parents struggled in their marriage continually to make ends meet in low-paying and unsteady employment.[115] Joyce's older brother (also Sydney) had been granted legal responsibility as family head following the father's passing but he signed up for military service in 1942 leaving Joan and Joyce on their own. Economically, Joan supported Joyce in finishing her schooling in the visual arts at Toronto's Central Technical School (CTS). In later years, Joan also assisted Joyce in the production of some of her most

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[114] Joyce Wieland, *Diary for 1951-52*, Entry for 10 March 1951, unpaginated.
[115] These details are outlined in both biographies by Lind and Nowell and so are not recounted here.

important quilted assemblages, including her important commissioned work, *Barren Ground Cariboo* (1975), [Figure 6] realized for the Toronto Transit Commission.[116]

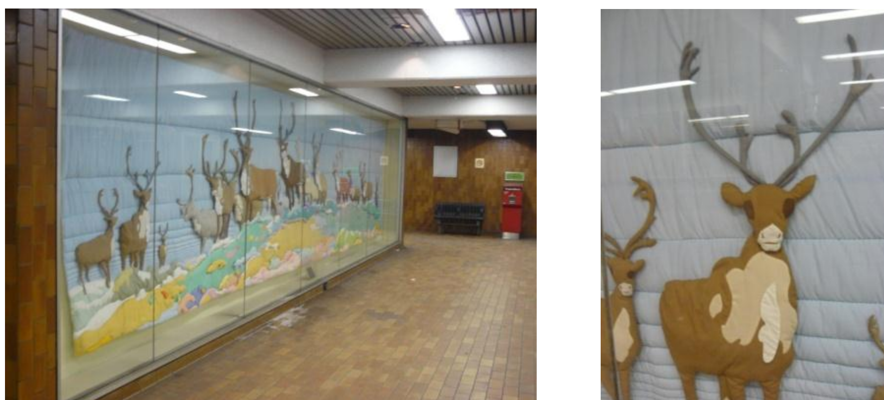

Figure 6: Joyce Wieland, *Barren Ground Cariboo,* 1975, quilted assemblage, dimensions unavailable, Toronto Transit Commission, Spadina Subway Station, Kendal Street Entrance (left, general view; right, detail)

Joyce Wieland had aspired to post-secondary study at Toronto's Ontario College of Art (OCA) but was never able to find means enough to pursue this goal on her own. Thus, her crucial high school years at CTS between 1944 and 1948 were her only formal study of the visual arts. These courses, though, gave her experiences in lettering, drawing, design, sculpture, still life, and museum studies and art history.[117] At CTS she was not a distinguished student with grades dipping as low as 40% in English and peaking at 68% in General Science.[118] Her art class grades fell in between this range offering almost no indication of the potential she would begin to realize as a forward-thinking multi-media artist in the 1960s. During formal study at CTS, however, she was blessed with one gift enjoyed by no other women in this study—a female mentor-teacher. That person was the painter Doris McCarthy (1910-2010) who had been

[116] *Barren Ground Caribou* is installed at the Spadina Subway Station in Toronto. Wieland worked with sister Joan Stewart and her three daughters and also Louisa Leighton to complete the piece over eight months and Wieland paid her for her work. Tom Slater, "TTC wants to know what you think," *Toronto Star*, January 31, 1976.
[117] Joyce Wieland never used a completed degree statement on her curriculum vitae and thus it is not clear if she graduated from Central Technical School. Her elementary and secondary school report cards held in three separate files appear to be incomplete, as documented in: File 25, Box 1988-003/002; File 51, Box 1990-014/004; and File 78, Box 1993-009/007, Wieland Fonds.
[118] School Report Cards, File 25, Box 1988-003/002, Wieland Fonds.

instrumental in redirecting Wieland from a domestic arts and design program to fine arts courses, including drawing.

Decades later McCarthy laid claim to having "rescued" Wieland from a path where the arts would only form a backdrop in her life.[119] Wieland admired McCarthy's single life as an artist outside marriage noting that, "I had never met anyone like her…She wore boots, she drove a jeep and smoked cigarettes. I wanted to be just like her."[120] Wieland granted that McCarthy had been "a powerful role model…She was [a] funny, kind, marvelous human being. She gave me hope, joy."[121] Her mentorship under McCarthy included establishing her interest in wider communities of support between creative women. Wieland observed: "When I went out into the world I could see there were no women in art history. So I looked to women writers as models. I chose Katherine Mansfield, George Sand."[122] Wieland built lasting friendships and worked in collaboration with many women throughout her life as an artist, especially when she later turned her attention to quilted assemblages and embroidered work in the 1960s.[123] McCarthy's example also gave Wieland the idea that she could be an artist on her own. Nonetheless, when it came time to consider companionship, Wieland pursued the possibilities of a heterosexual artist-couple marriage.

For the five years following study at CTS, Wieland learned the importance of economic self-sustenance and lived some of the single life McCarthy had shown possible. Between 1948 and 1955 she held three waged employment positions: first as a switchboard operator at the

[119] Doris McCarthy, *The Good Wine: An Artist Comes of Age, Doris McCarthy* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter and Ross, 1991), 37.
[120] Susan Crean, "Notes from the Language of Emotion: A Conversation with Joyce Wieland," *Canadian Art,* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 64.
[121] Joyce Wieland, "Notebooks Including Manuscripts--Untitled Manuscript," Box 1990-014/002, File 24, Wieland Fonds.
[122] Susan Crean, "Notes from the Language of Emotion," 64.
[123] Jane Lind in *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire* addresses many of these friendships and among them were Donna Lawson, Donna Montague, Sara Bowser, Wendy Michener and also National Gallery of Canada Director, Jean Sutherland Boggs.

plastics company, Percy Henman; second as designer for the firm E.S. and A Robinson; and finally, as graphic animator for Graphic Films. From 1953-1955, while at Graphic Films, she moved from part-time to full-time but was laid-off in mid-1955. In these working years she experienced a succession of different living and studio arrangements, some on her own and some with friends, and these included her one-year common-law relationship with Bryan Barney.[124] On leaving that relationship, she then made one more move back to an artist's studio arrangement with friends Donna Lawson and George Gingras, colleagues at Graphic Films, in the unlikely setting of a former funeral home at 525 Sherbourne Street where she would once again have her own studio.

Wieland and Michael Snow had met on his arrival as an employee at Graphic Films around 1954. Snow's appointment followed completion of his post-secondary studies at Toronto's Ontario College of Art in 1952 and he was then living at home with his parents, Gerald Bradley Snow and Marie-Antoinette Françoise Carmen Levesque. Snow's father was a civil engineer and had been a lieutenant with Toronto 48th Highlanders in the First World War; his mother was the daughter of Elzear Levesque, a lawyer and mayor of Chicoutimi, Quebec. Snow's family history of higher education and success in learned and political professions contrasted sharply with Wieland's family. Snow had also attended the prestigious private boys' school, Upper Canada College, near his family's home in Rosedale, Toronto.

Snow never fit the mold of a steady income earner. Even when working full-time at Graphic Films, "Michael had trouble getting to work on time" and that pattern was not changed even by a huge salary increase.[125] After Graphic Films folded, Snow made a living from his art

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[124] She took room-and-board with the family of a high school friend, Mary Karch, followed afterwards by a place across the street from CTS at 700 Bathurst Street in a complex of artist's studio where she was the only female artist.
[125] As recounted in Jane Lind, *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire*, 94.

and music, garnering sporadic sales and commissions, and performing as a musician in night clubs. He and Wieland both worked to make ends meet in these formative years of their partnership. At the moment of their co-residence together before and in marriage, however, she was expected to manage household affairs with the critical exception of finances which remained Snow's purview.[126]

For Wieland, there were clearly other reasons that drew her to Snow but they were layered and complicated and she knew well before her marriage what those complications would be. Despite Snow's various infidelities, which he has conceded "caused a lot of trouble," Wieland found considerable physical pleasure in their relationship.[127] Far more important, however, was their interaction as two artists. Wieland had shared much in intellectual exchange in her first artist-couple relationship with Bryan Barney, but she wanted more—in her words, a person she considered "a brilliant genius."[128] Wieland recalled of her rapport with Snow that "we used to have these dialogues…we made each other as artists."[129] Being with Snow was for Wieland to be in a dynamic artist-couple relationship, one that she likened to that of Bavarian pianist Lily Stumpf and painter Paul Klee.[130] With Snow, she remarked, "He has brought me to the greatest heights of my being… had taught me love and the joys of painting," and she also cherished the "earnest way he spoke on modern art."[131] Snow was also a more complex thinker than she had experienced before and someone with whom mutual creative inspiration could be generated. Given Wieland's already astute mind, she saw their intellectual exchanges as a two-way dynamic and did not underestimate her contributions: "There's no one I can talk with the

[126] Ibid., 105.
[127] Snow as quoted in Jane Lind, *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire,* 241. The details of Snow's infidelities are addressed by Wieland's biographers and so are not rehearsed here.
[128] Joyce Wieland, *Diary of 1951-52,* Entry of post 1954, unpaginated.
[129] As quoted in Jane Lind, *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire*, 243.
[130] Joyce Wieland, *Diary for 1951-52.* The entry date is unspecified but is after 1954.
[131] Jane Lind, *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire*, 95.

way he and I do….I never small talk with him, I am nearly always full of life—I stimulate him, I know."[132] These formative years, however, also clarified the fact of Snow's art being prioritized over all other matters. He was then developing his much acclaimed *Walking Woman* series which led to his high-profile Expo 67 commission in Montreal, including the sculpture *Expo Walking Woman, Cut-Out Figure* (1967: AGO). He was also committed to the interdisciplinary Artists' Jazz Band, and had begun his important work in experimental film. Amidst the flurry of his interdisciplinary production, it was Wieland, not Snow, who pursued the marriage question. As a friend recalled of her determined pursuit of this goal at the time, "All I want out of life is to marry Michael Snow."[133]

Wieland and Snow lived together before they were married in September 1956 at Toronto City Hall in the presence of friends, Bob Hackborn and Marcia Spiegel.[134] Unlike the Pratt ceremony, theirs was informal, followed afterwards by a drink with their witnesses at a nearby pub and a small party at the Snow's Rosedale home which Snow claims not to remember.[135] During the years they spent in Toronto, Wieland and Snow rented apartments which combined home and studio for both. Whatever domestic space and finances were available for studios was privileged to him and that practice continued throughout their relationship. Soon following their marriage, Snow procured his own off-site studio at Yonge and Dundas Streets. Wieland, however, did not have her own non-domestic studio until the tail end of their marriage, when her feature-length feminist melodrama, *The Far Shore* (1976), produced largely out of their Toronto home, had so stressed domestic relations that Snow procured a second house where her film

[132] Joyce Wieland, *Diary for 1951-52*, Entry for 11-12 July.
[133] As recounted in Jane Lind, *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire*, 95.
[134] Ibid., 193.
[135] Ibid., 103.

enterprises could be realized without inconveniencing him.[136] As Wieland's biographer explains, structural disparities in domestic relations like these were in evidence early in their artist-couple relations and marriage and he had been granted freedom from most day-to-day chores.[137] Their artist-couple marriage perpetuated these disparities and, as Wieland understood, her being an artist, wife and casual freelancer to meet economic reality in their early marriage years entailed a triple-time workload.

Figure 7: Joyce Wieland, *Myself,* 1958, oil on canvas, 56 x 71 cm, Private Collection (left)

Figure 8: Joyce Wieland, *Untitled,* c. 1956-59, oil on canvas, dimensions unavailable, Private Collection, Loan to the National Gallery of Canada (right)

During the 1950s, the figure, eroticism and self-reflection became subjects in Wieland's art, including the painting *Myself* (1958: LU), [Figure 7] and the untitled painting (c. 1956-59: NGC), [Figure 8], believed to be of Wieland and Snow nude together.[138] There was also the drawing *Woman is Parasite* (n.d.: LU), [Figure 9] where Wieland reflected on the structural difficulties of companionship and marriage for women. In this image, she posed a troubled

[136] Ibid., 225-236, where Lind provides a chronology of Snow purchasing their second house at 497 Queen Street so that Wieland's home studio on Summerhill Avenue, then also the headquarters for *The Far Shore*, could be moved to another location. As one critic observed of household politics during Wieland's production of *The Far Shore*, Michael "has had to assume many of the mundane household chores" which included laundry. See Kathleen Walker, "The Artist as Patriot," *The Ottawa Citizen*, October 23, 1976.
[137] Jane Lind, *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire,* 105.
[138] This work is on loan to the NGC from a private collector. The owner was a friend of Wieland's who confirmed this subject matter. Interview, Catharine Mastin with NGC Curator, Denise Leclerc, 20 October 2008.

portrait of heavy and sad eyes dripping with tears, brows weighing heavily over the eyelids, and with an arm and fist raised high to suggest resistance.

Figure 9: Joyce Wieland, *Woman is Parasite*, n.d., ink on tissue, 28 x 44 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario

Life in Toronto temporarily came to a close in 1962 when Snow made the call that the Wieland-Snow marriage would move to New York for the furtherance of his art practice. They remained there for nearly a decade and the structural challenges of their marriage persisted there as they had in Toronto—her concession of studio space to his needs, her ongoing domestic support to their daily life, her lack of employment in waged work while living in another country without a work permit, and the secondary place her work had when weighed against his. By 1971, Wieland had finally determined her need to return to Canada because of the central place being "Canadian" had grown to occupy in her emerging artwork.[139] Her exclusion from P. Adams Sitney's film culture anthology only consolidated her determination to return to Canada given that she had been so central to the Structuralist movement's genesis.[140] The move to New York in 1962 was Wieland's final concession to the privileged role of the male marriage partner

[139] A thorough analysis of this topic is offered by Johanne Sloan in "Joyce Wieland at the Border: Nationalism, the New Left and the Question of Political Art in Canada," *Journal of Canadian Art History* XXVI (2005): 80-104.
[140] This point is discussed further in Chapter Four and refers to P. Adams Sitney, ed. *Film Culture Reader* (New York: Praeger, 1970).

in determining residential place of settlement: she made the next call and they returned to Toronto. A few years following that move, however, was also the beginning of the end of their marriage. Despite the couple's desire to have children their marriage had been additionally strained by Wieland's infertility for many years prior.[141] Strategizing the artist-couple marriage had brought Wieland many joys and anxieties as these two creative forces fueled each other's separate enterprises for nearly two decades, but it came undone when she asserted the necessity of no less than two fully parallel art practices.

A "Marriage" of Two Sculptors: Florence Wyle and Frances Loring

In 1960, in the joint Toronto home-studio of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle, Loring was asked in interview, "Have you yourself ever thought seriously of marriage?" At age seventy-three, Loring may well have found this to be a tiresome question given her long and quite public history of cohabitation with sculptor Florence Wyle. During the momentary pause she took to reply, the reviewer eased his own anxiety by observing that "her eyes had lit for a moment" but then "turned grave again." Loring then followed: "Of course I have. More than once. But you must remember. I lived through two world wars."[142] Loring called on contexts of wartime and the interwar economic Depression to explain her different marriage and companionship choice—that somehow suitable men were either not available or able. Her reply, though, hardly explained her decision. This statement was virtually the only time Loring would ever be caught commenting on heterosexual marriage in the public record. Indeed, her sparse record of intimate

[141] As outlined by Jane Lind, *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire,* 241-243, the Wieland-Snow relationship was additionally strained when Snow pursued his relationship with video curator and writer Peggy Gale with whom he had a son. The Snow-Gale relationship has since continued.
[142] John R. Lewis, "Why would a woman want to be a sculptor?" *Toronto Star Weekly*, January 2, 1960.

attachments to men was already testimony of her knowledge that a heterosexual relationship would not be forthcoming in her companionship and marriage future.

To be sure though, both Loring and Wyle had each faced the marriage question persistently throughout their lives for they made no secret of their co-residence and, by association, their disaffections with the institution of state-sanctioned heterosexual marriage. They had both arrived at their artist-couple relationship together as self-determined artists, sculptor-students to be specific. As with the other subjects in this study, however, their family lives, education and work experiences were important factors in constituting their sex-gender identities as female subjects and shaped their understandings of marriage. From the outset, though, theirs was a partnership that prioritized the professional lives of two women sculptors. In the oscillating economic shifts they endured during the first half of the twentieth century, Loring and Wyle were each other's breadwinners, structuring differently than in heterosexual marriage a relationship of economic and professional parity that supported both women's art practices. Neither artist ever had full-time waged employment for any significant duration, and their intermittent successes in gaining sculpture commissions in a deeply gendered art world yielded no consistent income for either subject, but they would manage, albeit unevenly, as two co-habiting women.[143]

Florence Wyle had learned early how a rigid division of the sexes within family life yielded disparities for its female members. She was the American-born daughter of Benjamin Solomon Wyle and Libbie A. Sandford. Born in 1881, Florence and her twin brother Frank were the only Wyle offspring. Wyle's family life had been strongly shaped by Victorian culture and her father is thought to have taken a puritanical and ascetic approach to the rearing of his

[143] Wyle replaced Elizabeth Wyn Wood in her position at Central Technical School while the latter was on maternity leave in 1937.

family.[144] Benjamin Wyle was a small-town chemist whose ancestors were agriculturalists. In his marriage to Libbie Sandford, he aspired to a breadwinner-homemaker ideology as a middle-class professional with his wife at home caring for their children. Florence Wyle remembered how her status as a female twin only underscored binary sex-gender differences. After all, household responsibility based on sibling age could not explain why she was assigned all household chores and why her brother also took credit for work which she did for him in the family garden. Of these domestic politics and her willingness to do her brother's outdoor chores, Wyle recalled, "If I'd told on him, Father would have relegated me back to the house, 'where I belonged.'"[145] Wyle was a life-long avid gardener and she was determined to resist traditional female roles from her early adult life. As biographers have explained, she excelled in the traditionally male sport of boxing and was captain of the basketball team. As artist, it was the French painter, sculptor and cross-dresser, Rosa Bonheur (1822-1899), who served as her role model.[146]

Wyle completed high school in 1900 with outstanding grades but her father did not anticipate her will to continue in post-secondary study. However, "with his stern sense of just obligation," notes biographer Rebecca Sisler, Benjamin Wyle gave Florence $500.00 "to establish herself in life."[147] She aimed first for medicine, setting her sights on the University of Illinois which had opened its doors to women the year before she graduated from high school in 1899. Her studies required a three-year pre-medicine program and included drawing and sculpture classes, and it was through this experience that the possibility of becoming an artist emerged for her. Her professor, Newton A. Wells, encouraged her to continue once Wyle

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[144] Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle* (Toronto and Vancouver: Clark, Irwin and Company Ltd., 1972), 15.
[145] Ibid., 16.
[146] As cited in Elspeth Cameron, *And Beauty Answers: The Life of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle* (Toronto: Cormorant, 2007), 42.
[147] Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle,* 17.

reached the sculpture course in her third year, and on his advice she transferred to the Art Institute of Chicago in 1903 where she studied with sculptors Lorado Taft and Charles Mulligan.

Taft was a prominent sculptor whose commissions graced many public sites in the United States. He had also overseen the sculpture exhibitions at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and gained repute for his book, *The History of American Sculpture* (1903). Wyle began working for Taft by modelling hands and feet for his various works-in-progress and taught this sculpting process in a part-time capacity at the Art Institute between 1906 and 1909. These sources of income were crucial after her father's endowment to her had been exhausted. Wyle did not, however, endorse Taft's master-apprentice teaching style which, as his sculpture tome bore witness to, drew on the findings of his female students without their due credit. With Charles Mulligan, Wyle studied marble carving and she preferred his social realist approach and concentration on working class subjects. Classroom dynamics were also different with Mulligan since his evening classes attracted mostly men pursuing interests outside their daytime work. Wyle joined Mulligan's class in 1903. By 1908, her success as student, artist and part-time teacher was increasingly apparent, and that year her *Marble Fountain*: *Boy and Grapes* (P.C.:1907-08) was purchased by the Art Institute of Chicago.[148]

Wyle's experiences in post-secondary study had exposed her to the possibilities of heterosexual artist-couple companionship. Taft had expressed interest in Wyle as a student but she disliked his physical advances on his students and her discontent with him was complete when she found that a head she had carved had disappeared and then reappeared some time later

[148] The provenance on this work is first recorded in Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle*, 18. Christine Boyanoski included this work in the exhibition, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1987), 71, cat. 1, and cited the *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago* (July 1908) to confirm this point. By then, however, the work belonged to the private collector Donald F. Scalzo. The Art Institute of Chicago no longer lists this work in its on-line collection holdings in "Museum Collections" on the Art Institute's website, www.artic.edu/com.

in one of Taft's monuments.[149] There was also her relationship with Mulligan. Wyle remembered this experience to have been of "depth and duration" but with a limited future since Mulligan was already married with three sons.[150] A sustainable heterosexual artist-couple marriage remained elusive for Wyle, but these experiences significantly increased her awareness of the economic and structural disparities in women's lives, in family, study and work: she had also lost a commission when admirers of her work found out she was a woman.[151]

Following completion of her education, Wyle did not entertain the possibility of a return to her family. Effectively, she had been paid-out by her father for her non-compliance with women's heterosexual married lot, and the historical record regarding her relations with her mother and other family members remains almost completely silent. Her mother had apparently helped Florence purchase a house in Oak Park, Illinois, but otherwise Wyle appears to have severed relations with her family. Little more is known about Wyle's history of intimacy and partnership with men. In these years she met Frances Loring in Taft's class and they became close friends over that academic year. For the next few years, their friendship was maintained over distances and in 1911 they became each other's life-long companions.

Frances Loring was born into a family that placed a high value on cultural and business achievements. Despite Wyle's rejection from her father's world, the two women shared these middle-class family histories of their fathers' visibility in professional life. Frank C. Loring and Charlotte Moore had two children, their son Ernest Loring who became an engineer, and Frances Norma Loring. Frank Loring was a prominent man in business and politics, having owned his own shipping business and serving as United States Consul in Valparaiso, Chile. The family moved and traveled extensively through his work during the years when Frances was young.

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[149] As recorded in Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle,* 18.
[150] Elspeth Cameron, *And Beauty Answers: The Life of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle,* 57.
[151] Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle,* 18.

Frank Loring had been active in various American and Canadian mining operations including sites in Indiana, Idaho and British Columbia. The family had also settled for a short time in Spokane, Washington where Frank Loring made considerable money. His success prompted a family holiday in Geneva, Switzerland in 1900 but when Frank set himself up in Washington to play the stock market he promptly lost everything in a crash leaving his family effectively stranded in Europe for several years.[152] In the interim, Frank Loring worked on rebuilding his finances and took up a salaried job. The family arrived in Chicago in 1905 after he opened a short-lived business office. But, by February 1906, he was onto another project and opened a mine in Cobalt, Ontario which proved lucrative for its silver. Following reunion in Chicago, the Loring family next moved to Toronto and then finally settled permanently in Cobalt, Ontario around 1907. Frances did not find the prospect of relocation to either setting appealing in these years.

The five years Frances Loring had enjoyed in Europe exposed her to formal study in sculpture in Geneva at L'Ēcole des Beaux Arts (Geneva), and in Paris at L'Ēcole des Beaux Arts and Académie Colarossi. On her return to the United States in 1906 she completed but one year of study (1906-07) at the Art Institute of Chicago. Visits to see her family in Cobalt were intermittent in these years— the spring of 1907 and again in the summer of 1908, Wyle joining her both times. Loring's parents then regarded Wyle as "a steadying influence on their willful artist-daughter" not quite knowing the depth of their friendship.[153] For the fall semester of 1908, Loring studied at the Fine Arts Academy in Boston and Frank Loring proceeded afterwards to establish two studios for her, first one in New York (1908) and a year later, a second one in Toronto (1909). Wyle joined Loring in New York for short durations for most of 1909, but

[152] Elspeth Cameron, *And Beauty Answers: The Life of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle,* 18.
[153] Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle,* 20.

towards year-end the two women agreed that Florence would leave Chicago permanently and join Frances in New York.

Figure 10: Frances Loring, *Portrait of Florence Wyle,* 1911, plaster with paint, 53 x 25.5 x 21 cm, National Gallery of Canada (left)

Figure 11: Florence Wyle, *Portrait of Frances Loring*, 1911, plaster with paint, 55.5 x 35.5 x 24 cm, National Gallery of Canada (right)

Frank Loring had agreed to sponsor a studio for his daughter in New York's Greenwich Village but without, it seems, him knowing of Loring and Wyle's intent to cohabit. Loring and Wyle remained there until early 1913 and it was in that combined studio-residence space that they made their two well-known plaster portrait busts of each other (detailed in Chapter Five), [Figures 10 and 11]. Employment in New York proved limited for both sculptors, however, and when they applied to be studio assistants to a local sculptor, Daniel Chester French, the reference given by their former teacher, Lorado Taft, noted that, "Florence and Frances were not only inconsequential sculptors but a couple of lesbians to boot."[154] When Frances appealed to her father for financial help, the matter of their studio co-residence was now seen to have crossed the

[154] As quoted in Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle,* 21.

line by both parents. "It was to their horror that the two young women—now 29 and 23—took their living space and studio together in the heart of New York's Bohemian enclave," notes biographer Elspeth Cameron. "Frances' mother wept when she learned of their plans."[155] Frank Loring then proceeded to exert duplicitous and patriarchal force over their cohabitation arrangement by persuading Frances to visit his sister in Denver while Florence was temporarily elsewhere during which time Frank Loring placed their works in storage and permanently closed down their studio.[156] The father's demand that Frances return to Canada, "ostensibly to care for her mother" and his attempt to maintain authority over their relationship were clearly among those reasons behind the re-location to Toronto.[157] However, Frank and Charlotte Loring's efforts to separate Frances and Florence were not successful. In 1913, Frances was joined again by Florence in Toronto and they were not again separated until their move to a retirement home in old age.

As they had done in New York, Loring and Wyle would make their art studio also their home in Toronto, first at 24 Adelaide Street East from 1912 to 1913, followed by 114 ½ Church Street from 1914 to 1920.[158] In 1920, with proceeds with a down payment from their war commissions, they purchased their church-studio at 110 Glenrose Avenue.[159] As had been the case in all of their studio-residences, their sculptural projects loomed everywhere and furnishings were sparse: the key message to visitors was two professional women's work and their creative independence. For all intents and purposes their same-sex artist-couple marriage paralleled those ideals of heterosexual monogamous marriage in its lifelong commitment but their "marriage"

[155]As quoted in Elspeth Cameron, *And Beauty Answers: The Life of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle,* 65.
[156] Ibid., 73.
[157] As quoted in Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle,* 22.
[158] Photographs of their New York and Toronto studios are published in Christine Boyanoski, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptor's Legacy,* pages including frontispiece, 9, and 14, and figures 8, 15 and 26 respectively.
[159] I explore the importance of this building in Chapter Five.

was not, of course, recognized in law. As had been the case for generations of women before them, they self-determined their artist-couple marriage and the terms of its contract as two cohabiting women by drawing on those durative models formed in women's histories of friendship and marriage that had always existed outside heterosexual marriage.

The Two-Custom Marriage of Kenojuak and Johnniebo

In 1946 and 1949 the two wedding ceremonies of Kenojuak and Johnniebo took place in Kinngait (Cape Dorset), respectively in Inuit and Anglican customs. Their unions in two customs revealed much about the complex marriage landscape of this cultural contact zone in the Arctic world during the 1940s.[160] As anthropologists have discovered regarding Inuit marriage history, there were various models in place from at least the seventeenth century including monogamy and polygamy.[161] However, the Christian mission movement had also been asserting its presence across Canada's northern populaces with Anglican and Catholic missionaries working alternatively to sanction its singular model of life-long heterosexual and monogamous marriage. In Cape Dorset specifically, Anglicans had been the first to arrive in 1909 followed by Catholics in 1938.[162] By 1960, Catholics had ceded to Anglicans since, as Kenojuak's biographer has explained, those Inuit who embraced Christianity were "mostly adherents of Anglican theology"

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[160] Mary Louise Pratt constructed the concept of the "contact zone" as a signifier of cultural interchange in colonial expansionist history. See her study *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

[161] The work of social anthropologists and ethnologists exploring the significance of marriage and gender roles in Inuit culture offers valuable field research relevant to this study, notably Rolf Kjellstrom's *Eskimo Marriage: An Account of Traditional Eskimo Courtship and Marriage* (Lund: Berlingska Boktryckeriet, 1973), and Lee Guemple's two works, *Inuit Spouse-Exchange* (Chicago: University of Chicago 1961) and *Alliance in Eskimo Society* (Seattle: American Ethnological Society, 1972). These writings do, however, side-step both same-sex companionship and gender as a category of analysis beyond normative sex-gender roles. Kjellstrom's study was concerned with marriage practices between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries and so does not discuss marriage history prior to this date but clearly these and other traditions were of longer duration than the scope of his study could accommodate.

[162] The two sources, Ansgar Walk, *Kenojuak* (Manotik: Penumbra Press, 1999), 17, and the link "Town History," at the website, www.capedorset.ca, offer partial accounts of the presence of these two religious groups.

and the Inuit community leader Pootoogook had played an instrumental role in helping build an Anglican Church in 1953.[163] Both constituencies, though, shared the goal of sanctifying those marriages already made in Inuit custom. As Kenojuak explained regarding the roles of priests arriving on the annual supply ship, *The Nascopie*, duties included "wedding couples who had been married the customary way."[164] There was not much more that Kenojuak and Johnniebo would say about Christian marriage, including their own.[165] Rather, it was their first marriage in Inuit custom which Kenojuak recounted through interviews with scholars and researchers. Their union followed established sex-gender roles in Inuit marriage.

In his work on sex-gender roles Inuit marriage, Lee Guemple concludes that unions like that of Kenojauk and Johnniebo signified a cooperative partnership grounded in the labour essential to survival in the Arctic environment.[166] "Both partners," he observes, "must be accomplished at the work allocated to their respective genders" and the marriage relationship between husband and wife is "primarily a union of skills and not [necessarily] a sexual or even procreative union."[167] As Minnie Freeman has explained, training for these sex-gender roles began in early life:

> Initially both boys and girls are brought up to follow the same household rules, [but] after a time the expected chores begin to change. Boys are next expected to assist their fathers and learn all about hunting and providing for the household's food and material needs and girls remain at home and learn from their mothers.[168]

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[163] Ansgar Walk describes Pootoogook as the great hunter and head of the Anglican Church at Cape Dorset in *Kenojuak*, 10.
[164] As quoted in Ansgar Walk, *Kenojuak,* 114.
[165] There is almost no autobiographical testimony by Johnniebo and very little writing available on him beyond his presence in Cape Dorset annual catalogues. His nine-page exhibition history is included in the NGC Artist's File. Thus I work from the much richer documentation offered by Kenojuak on this topic.
[166] Lee Guemple, "Men and Women, Husbands and Wives: The Role of Gender in Traditional Inuit Society," *Inuit Studies,* 10, no. 1-2 (1986), 16.
[167] Ibid., 15, 22.
[168] Minnie Aodla Freeman, "Traditional and Contemporary Roles of Inuit Women," in *Inuit Women Artists,* edited by Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson and Minnie Aodla Freeman (Vancouver, Toronto, Berkeley, Gatineau: Douglas and McIntyre and Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1994), 248-250.

Girls were also responsible for babysitting to free up their mothers' time in other important responsibilities, including the preparation of skins for clothing. This binary sex-gender division of labour was sustained in marriage. As Guemple summarized, while men managed the hunt, construction of dwellings and manufacture of basic technology for his work and that of his wife (snow knife kayak, sled, ulu, cutting and cooking utensils, stone lamp), women managed household, food preparation and preservation, child care, maintenance of the dog harnesses and production of all clothing.[169]

Guemple's work reveals that the gendering of subject identity in Inuit culture fused into a "single domain the relations between spouses with those of gender."[170] This fusion, Guemple continues, was also explicit in the Inuktitut language because "the generic terms for gender, *angutik* and *arnaq*, mean male and female [and] in their marked forms they denote husband and wife."[171] Guemple does not address same-sex unions in his discussion of marriage. However, in its formation of a continuous line of subject development, the fusion of sex-gender-marriage remains an important signifier of the high social value placed on the act of heterosexual marriage in Inuit culture. So too, Rolf Kjellstrom's study also reveals that marriage was expected of both sexes when he observes that "A man without a wife" was both "worth pitying" and considered "a comic figure…It was everywhere regarded as the natural condition to be married [and] the unmarried adult individual was often looked down upon."[172] Kjellstrom concludes that "the commonest form of marriage was monogamy and showed everywhere a higher frequency than polygamy."[173] As both he and Guemple have discussed, however, marriages were not always

[169] Lee Guemple, "Men and Women, Husbands and Wives: The Role of Gender in Traditional Inuit Society," 12.
[170] Ibid., 11.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Rolf Kjellstrom, *Eskimo Marriage: An Account of Traditional Eskimo Courtship and Marriage*, 34.
[173] Ibid., 109.

sexual and monogamy was not specific to sexual or procreative exclusivity; indeed practices of spouse exchange and child adoption into and out of families were also common.[174]

Inuit marriages were also arranged by families and, in keeping with this custom, Kenojuak's 1946 marriage was negotiated by hers and Johnniebo's families. She did not have a choice in either her marriage partner or the decision to marry. She has recalled that, "Approaching womanhood, I realized that soon a suitable marriage arrangement would be made for me. I was frightened at this prospect. Inuit childhood was brief, and females traditionally did not have a choice in selecting their mates."[175] She also remembered the negotiations:

> I was asleep in our haumuq (tent) one summer's day when Towkie and his wife Elisapee arrived at our camp. They were acting as emissaries for Towkie's brother, Johnniebo, who wanted me for his wife. I feigned sleep as they discussed the question with my mother and my uncles. They agreed that it would be a good marriage arrangement. Johnniebo was not present, for in those days a prospective suitor never came along during the first conversations. I remembered Johnniebo, having seen him in Cape Dorset. I recalled his good-natured teasing and his tall stature."[176]

Kenojuak's marriage to Johnniebo extended the strength of both families. Hers had been weakened by the death of her father, Usuaqjuk, when she was a young child. Usuaqjuk was believed to have upset community harmony and when that matter was addressed in accordance with Inuit justice he was shot by three men outside the family's snow hut, taken out to sea, and left in the ocean along with his earthly possessions.[177] His death left his pregnant wife, Silaqqi, and their three children behind. Kenojuak remembered that "for the rest of the winter conditions

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[174] Lee Guemple's *Inuit Spouse-Exchange,* and Kjellstrom's "XI: Extra-Marital Sexual Relations," in *An Account of Traditional Eskimo Courtship and Marriage*, 149-179. As Kjellstrom discusses such exchanges could be sexual or non-sexual and often involved a work-based spouse-exchange in times of need, such as an expectant wife close to term who was unable to participate in travel needed for the hunt.
[175] As quoted by Patricia Ryan, "The Autobiography of Kenojuak," in Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak* (Toronto: Firefly, 1986), 11.
[176] As quoted by Patricia Ryan in Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak*,, 12.
[177] As recounted in Ansgar Walk, *Kenojuak,* 28-29.

were incredibly severe for our family."[178] Usuaqjuk had been a respected, powerful and generous man, but he was also feared for his Shamanic roots since his father Alareak had been a shaman. Following Inuit customs of remarriage after spousal death or divorce, Kenojuak's mother married Tapaungai in 1935, the brother of Johnniebo's father who was also recently widowed. It was around the time of Tapungai's death in 1946 that Kenojuak was promised to Johnniebo.

Initially, Kenojuak is said to have found Johnniebo repulsive, noting that, "during the first few weeks of our union, I was truly a reluctant young woman in Johnniebo's company. I threw rocks at him whenever he approached me. He laughed good-naturedly, and continued his pursuit. Eventually I grew very fond of this kind, gentle man."[179] A woman's reluctance at marriage was also a sign of her strength and "the girl who put up a heroic and stubborn resistance to her future husband was really respected."[180] Later, Kenojuak considered Johnniebo "a faithful man of which there is only one in many thousands."[181]

Kenojuak and Johnniebo were both well-prepared for marriage by their families and they embraced their sex-gender roles. Johnniebo had been well-trained as a hunter and likewise, Kenojuak had been well-trained to oversee "the smooth operation of the household," planning and preparing all food and clothing provisions and childcare.[182] Kenojuak's skills in sewing, developed under her maternal grandmother Koweesa's leadership, made her a valuable marriage partner.[183] Women's work in sealskin included not only clothing and boots for all family

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[178] As quoted by Patricia Ryan in Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak*, 8.
[179] As quoted by Ansgar Walk, *Kenojuak*, 61, and Patricia Ryan in Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak,* 12.
[180] See Rolf Kjellstrom, *Eskimo Marriage: An Account of Traditional Eskimo Courtship and Marriage* , 90, and also James Houston, "Getting Married," in *Confession of An Igloo Dweller* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995), 176-186.
[181] As quoted in Ansgar Walk, *Kenojuak,* 63.
[182] As quoted by Patricia Ryan in Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak*, 12, 14.
[183] Ibid., 10, 13.

members but also the construction of boats and lodging tents.[184] As explored in Chapter Six, Kenojuak's sealskin works also included decorated handbags such as untitled assemblage (c 1955-60: PC), [Figures 12a and b] in which she demonstrated her skills with alacrity. Because Kenojuak was left-handed she took longer to master sealskin cutting with the *ulu* (woman's knife) than right-handed women, and she was well into marriage before she was able to scrape seal fat from skin using this tool. Nonetheless, her long apprenticeship with Koweesa enabled her to harness this important skill. Cutting was but one part of working with sealskin; sewing it together was another. Kenojuak recalled: "sewing with caribou sinew to make watertight seams was not an easy task for inexperienced hands. At first I was allowed to repair small tears in sealskins being readied for trade at the Hudson's Bay Company. As I gained expertise and confidence, I practiced sewing remnants of sealskin together."[185]

Figures 12a and b: Kenojuak Ashevak *Untitled Assemblage*, c. 1955-60, sealskin, approximately 20 x 30 cm, Private Collection (left, recto; right, verso)

Procreation between marriage partners was not critical to Inuit marriage, yet children were seen as crucial insurance for survival, and families both produced children and adopted them in and out of families in times of need. As Kjellstrom has explained, children often played

[184] Peter Pitseolak in *People from the Other Side: A Life Story with Photographs and Oral Biography* with Dorothy Harley Eber and translation by Ann Hanson (Montreal and Kingston, London, Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 20.
[185] As quoted by Patricia Ryan in Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak*, 10.

an essential role in the stability of marriages: “childless unions and sterility…could lead to divorce” and boys were especially valued because of their “potential qualifications as providers.”[186] Between 1947 and 1970, Kenojuak gave birth to ten children and adopted another four into hers and Johnniebo’s family. Following Inuit adoption practices, she also gave three of her biological children to others. The birth of her first three children (Jamasie, Mary and Qiqituk) arrived quickly within five years following their 1946 marriage. Her first pregnancy brought her much happiness: “Carrying the baby everywhere in my *amautik*, I established a loving and close bond with my son. It was a happy time for us.”[187] Kenojuak’s experiences in motherhood included several tragedies, however. In 1952, she and Johnniebo gave their newborn boy, Qiqituk, for adoption to Kenojuak’s cousin when Kenojuak discovered that she had contracted tuberculosis and would be hospitalized for an indeterminate period at Parc Savard Hospital in northern Quebec. The adoption was made knowing that Kenojuak would be gone indefinitely, perhaps never to return.[188] Qiqituk died within his first year of life soon after his adoption. While still separated from Johnniebo in hospital in 1953, Kenojuak then learned that Jamasie and Mary had died, respectively from trichonosis and influenza.[189] Of these years, Kenojuak recalled that she “did not care whether she lived or died… Suffering unbearable pain over this loss, I wanted never to bear children again.”[190]

The shock of this news hastened a physical relapse when Kenojuak contracted pneumonia in addition to the tuberculosis. During this time she remembers being close to death, but, following a dream about her father, she spent another two years in hospital recovering and was

[186] Rolf Kjellstrom, *Eskimo Marriage: An Account of Traditional Eskimo Courtship and Marriage,* 214-215.
[187] As quoted by Patricia Ryan in Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak*, 17. The *amautik* is back-style child carrier.
[188] Ibid., 17-18.
[189] As documented in Ansgar Walk, *Kenojuak*, 112-113, and Kenojuak Memories” in Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson and Minnie Aodla Freeman, *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset* (Ottawa and Vancouver: Canadian Museum of Civilization and Douglas and McIntye, 1994), 94.
[190] “Kenojuak Memories” in Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson and Minnie Aodla Freeman, *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset,* 98, and as quoted by Patricia Ryan in Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak*, 18, 22.

brought back to Cape Dorset in May 1955. The hospital experience had isolated Kenojuak from most members of her family and she had also witnessed there the death of Nuvilian, her mother's third husband, who had joined her in the tuberculosis ward. Kenojuak was the bearer of his minimal possessions on her return to Kinngait. Kenojuak's reunion with Johnniebo led to more children but it was not until 1959 with the birth of her son Adamie that one of her children lived beyond infancy. She faced still more loss in the early deaths of infants Aggeok, Ashevak, and Elisapee Qiqituk between 1961 and 1963. By 1963, seven of her children had died, most within their first year of life.[191]

The decade following Kenojuak's recovery from tuberculosis and her return to Kinngait were crucial years as she took on an identity as artist when the West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative (WBEC) was established in 1958 and Kenojuak and Johnniebo were encouraged to participate in making drawings for print translation and sculptures. The graphite drawings, including Johnniebo's untitled hunting scene (c. 1960s: MCAC, 41.13), [Figure 13] and Kenojuak's *Enchanted Owl* (1960: NGC), [Figure 14], were characteristic of the work produced by these image makers in the formative years of the WBEC.

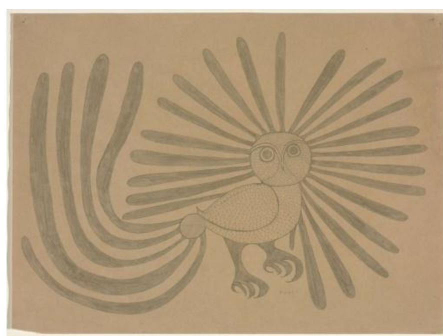

Figure 13: Johnniebo Ashevak, *Untitled Hunting Scene,* c. 1960s, graphite on paper, dimensions unavailable, Cape Dorset Art Collection, Cape Dorset Art Collection, on loan to McMichael Canadian Art Collection, accession CD41.13. (left, detail)

Figure 14: Kenojuak Ashevak, *The Enchanted Owl*, 1960, graphite on paper, 45.5 x 61.4 cm, National Gallery of Canada (right)

[191] As outlined in the family tree in Ansgar Walk, *Kenojuak,* 218.

The movement had introduced the concept "Artist" to Inuit culture but to self-identify with this identity was anachronous for Kenojuak and Johnniebo since their creative lives had been integrated into daily existence and activity. She explained: "It was common practice for young girls in the camps to do handicrafts and to dream up new designs all the time…The making of prints, what you call art, is simply to transfer the real to the unreal."[192] Her subsequent comment—"though I was highly motivated, my role as mother and wife was even more important than this new work"—made clear that she self-identified first as mother and wife, and only second with the new identity called "Artist."[193]

By their Inuit marriage, Kenojuak and Johnniebo embraced customs specific to their cultural lineage and their second Anglican ceremony does not appear to have significantly altered these practices. She recalled that her family had long been exposed to the teachings of Christianity and that her mother had been given a Bible by a missionary.[194] She has not, however, offered specific evidence during the decades leading to their move to settlement life in 1966 that she embraced much of the Christian faith. Well into the 1960s, Kenojuak and Johnniebo continued to hunt, camp, and maintain normative sex-gender divisions of labour in accordance with Inuit marriage customs.[195] Their Anglican ceremony, however, indicates much about the cultural and marital landscape of Cape Dorset at mid-century and how the Inuit were responding to northern colonization and the presence of missionaries in the Arctic world.

As Myra Rutherdale has argued, while missionaries continued to see the north as "ripe for conversion," so too, "Aboriginal peoples were active agents in their choice to adopt

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[192] Angar Walk, *Kenojuak,* 50, 156.
[193] Ibid., 152.
[194] As referenced in Ansgar Walk, *Kenojuak*, 113.
[195] They finally moved into settlement life in 1966.

Christianity."[196] The Inuit, she contends, took a "syncretic" approach to Christianity taking from it only what they chose and interfacing and incorporating traditional practices and beliefs with Inuit customs."[197] She explains, "Aboriginal people had coped with various environmental and human stresses and change before the arrival of the Europeans and so to adopt a syncretic approach to Christianity was to respond to the reality of that change.[198]

Peter Pitseolak (1902-1973), who facilitated Kenojuak and Johnniebo's Anglican ceremony with a visiting priest in his home, was an example of an Inuit's syncretism at work.[199] He observed: "There's big change today. Now there are more white missionaries in the North there are more problems."[200] He remembered that "it would be the beginning of difficult times. I knew that some would sink down and fall away from their own people. I knew that life would be changed." But he concluded this: "If there are no teachers in Cape Dorset and there are teachers in other places then Cape Dorset will be behind."[201] Teachers came in 1950, government in 1956 and wooden housing in 1965. There were also the social ties that bound the two families of Pitseolak and Johnniebo and Kenojuak and Johnniebo had camped with him at Keako many times between 1947 and 1957. In community standing Johnniebo ranked as a subordinate to Pitseolak and, according to Kenojuak, Pitseolak "delegated many hard duties to him."[202] It remains unclear in the historical record, however, if Pitseolak would have exerted any demands on Kenojuak and Johnniebo to participate in an Anglican ceremony.

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[196] Myra Rutherdale, *Women and the White Man's God: Gender and Race in the Canadian Mission Field* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), xxix.
[197] Ibid., xxx.
[198] Ibid., xxix.
[199] Ansgar Walk in *Kenojuak*, 78, records that an itinerant Anglican missionary had performed the event in Pitseolak's home. Alma Houston explains Pootoogook's role in the church in "Cape Dorset" in Jean Blodgett et al. *Cape Dorset* (Winnipeg: The Winnipeg Art Gallery 1980), 15.
[200] Peter Pitseolak, *People from Our Side: A Life Story with Photographs and Oral Biography*, 147.
[201] Ibid., 143.
[202] As quoted by Patricia Ryan in Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak*, 12, 14, 22.

Kenojuak and Johnniebo's second and state-sanctioned wedding reflected the imposition of registration practices by government officials who struggled to track a populace bearing usually single name identities often repeated in family lineage.[203] Government officials began assigning identity numbers to the Inuit at mid-century in an effort to address confusions resulting from single name identification. Kenojuak was given the designation "E7-1035," a letter-number combination that designated her approximate location East of Gjoa Haven "E", Cape Dorset "7" and the four-digit number designated her person. [204] It was another two decades before this practice would be abandoned and the Inuit people given opportunity to choose their own surnames. In 1970 Kenojuak and Johnniebo chose Ashevak to be added to their named identities.[205]

For some time, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police had looked after general administration of subject records but larger government agendas were also increasingly concerned with registration of marriage specifically.[206] In addition to Inuit syncretism and the bonds between the Pitseolak and Ashevak families, Kenojuak and Johnniebo's Anglican ceremony would have ensured official recognition of their marriage in Euro-Canadian law at a time when Aboriginal marriage practices continued to be unrecognized there. The historic record remains silent regarding whether or not Kenojuak and Johnniebo would have sought out or even desired such recognition. However, their marriage in two customs nonetheless refutes any misconceptions that marriage in the Arctic world was somehow homogenous.

[203] For example, Kenojuak's mother was named Silaqqi and so too Kenojuak's daughter.
[204] No more detailed history on this topic was found during project research for this study.
[205] Ansgar Walk, *Kenojuak*, 224. 78.
[206] Leo Hinz, *The Celebration of Marriage in Canada: A Comparative Study of Civil Law and Canon Law outside of the Province of Quebec* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1957) in which he spends much attention arguing the importance of uniform marriage registration procedures across the nation.

Kenojuak's account of the *Nascopie* priests' roles is testimony to missionary efforts to sanction Inuit custom marriages in Euro-Canadian law and religion. By no means, however, did their second marriage rite annul their first one since they continued to live according to those Inuit marriage customs in which they had been trained to perform their sex-gender identities as married subjects. Missionaries would not likely have conceded to this point, but Kenojuak and Johnniebo's Anglican marriage was *defacto* recognition of their Inuit marriage. Just how the officiating Anglican priest of their 1949 marriage might have imagined this scenario is unknown. Their marriage in two rites was, however, exemplary of their syncretic approach to married life in this cultural contact zone and a testimony to the diverse marriage landscape that was Canada at mid-century.

Conclusion

Women's socialization to marriage in Canada was shaped by complex and interwoven factors, from nation-state laws and policies on women's marriage and divorce, and their health and social welfare, to women's experiences in familial and cultural life, and education and work. These factors necessarily varied in emphasis for each of these female subjects. The nation-state's privileging of marriage and sexuality in singular terms had worked to mask women's awareness of much wider and more plural histories of companionship formation including common-law, civil union, same-sex relations, and marriages in diverse cultural customs. Nonetheless, women explored some of these options and sometimes also combined them. In this marriage landscape where a woman's pursuit of a professional life as artist was largely seen to be contradictory to the goals of state-sanctioned marriage their decisions were anything but straightforward. In the final analysis, none of the women discussed here described their companionships to accord with Reverend Tyrer's "happy home and marriage."

The breadwinner-homemaker ideology persistently confronted these six artists at many turns in an economic world that privileged monetary exchange. However, not one of them found such a model to be sustainable in lived experience since concerns of economic survival predicated their participation in public life and work. In its structuring of sex-gender roles in Inuit custom, Kenojuak's Inuit marriage was arguably the most frank in its recognition of the fundamental labour central to and given by women in marriage. For the Inuit, women's work in marriage was seen to be complementary and public rather than private and subordinate in rank to men's work. Amanda Vickery has argued in her important essay deconstructing the so-called "golden age of separate spheres" that neither had there been clear lines separating public and private in Anglo-Saxon marriage.[207] Vickery's study and this one show that women had always worked. The six women in these artist-couple relationships were all breadwinners and their economic contributions were significant to them and their companions, as well as their children.

Kenojuak's experience demonstrates that women did not always have the freedom or right to choose their marriage path, but for those embracing normative marriage, neither would they necessarily feel that they had a choice in accepting or rejecting the institution of marriage and its heterosexual imperative. Marion Nicoll, Mary Pratt, and Joyce Wieland each worked differently through the challenges posed by the husband's traditionally privileged role in determining where they would live. Wieland, more than others in this study, asserted that the artist-couple marriage was a strategic means of survival in a deeply gendered art economy but it was sustainable only while her art practice remained subordinate, not parallel, to her husband's. Kenojuak, Loring, and Wyle experienced different marriage models, but theirs were not any

[207] Amanda Vickery, "Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of Women's History," *The Historical Journal* 36, no. 2 (June 1993): 383-414.

easier than others given the social casting of their lives in relationship to perceived differences of race and sexual expression.

The unions of Kenojuak and Johnniebo and Loring and Wyle in particular demonstrate that marriage transcended national law and nation-state efforts to harness the institution of marriage into singular terms. Loring and Wyle imported to Canada their same-sex marriage of Greenwich Village and were not concerned about the context of its national setting. In contrast, federal policy, law and practices of subject registration worked to overwrite Kenojuak and Johnniebo's wedding but their cultural marriage practices persisted in their lived reality. For those four women who embraced state-sanctioned forms of marriage in religious and civil forms (Nicoll, Pratt, Wieland, and Kenojuak's second rite) the nation, ironically enough would have little more to do with them once they had been legally endorsed. Minister of Justice, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, made an important statement in 1967 about the nation-state's relationship with companionship when he argued that "the state has no place in the bedrooms of the nation."[208] Nonetheless, the crumbling foundations of breadwinning and homemaking in a singularized economic structure left its married participants on their own to sort out its shortcomings.

Regardless of the extent to which these six women self-identified as "Artists," all put their art practices to work in the years that followed their companionship formations because their art was central to their economic survival and that of their families. For most women, these art practices also played an important role in self-definition and self-realization. In organizing their lives as women, companions and artists, their exhibitions would become increasingly important to their social recognition because their exhibitions were public forms of subject recognition and citizenship. However, as the next four chapters expose, women's companionship

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[208] As documented in the newscast recording, "There's no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation," on the website www.archives.cbc.ca. Trudeau made this statement in public interview, 21 December 1967.

status played an instrumental role in the social configuration of their identities in profound ways, as "artists' wives," "kitchen artists," or "the Girls." These clearly denigrating identities asserted their gender and companionship identities over their creative ones and they were carried forward for years afterwards; and in the case of Loring and Wyle, sometimes for a lifetime and posthumously. There was not much talk of "love" among these women at the junction of their autobiographies, art practices and exhibitions, but their art increasingly fostered personal spaces for the self-construction of their "livable lives."[209]

[209] For Nicoll and Wieland, "love" was expressed in the early stages of their relationships but was limited during marriage. Nonetheless, in those few communications written during marriage, such as when Marion Nicoll traveled without Jim and wrote to him, the tone of "love" that once permeated her early letters was no longer apparent.

Chapter Three

Two Women's "One-Man Exhibitions:" The Experience of Abstract Painting and the Artist-Couple Marriages of Marion Nicoll and Joyce Wieland, 1959-1963

Introduction

In the decades following the Second World War the phrase "one-man exhibition" was ubiquitously used to describe artists' solo exhibits. The media, critics, gallery representatives and curators were slow to recognize the ideological assumptions of this gendered language which later came under feminist scrutiny as the Euro-North American art world gradually acknowledged its contribution to the social structuring of women as a secondary sex.[1] Its binary opposite, the "one-woman exhibit," would perhaps thankfully never find a social equivalency when many preferred to be understood as artist first and woman second.[2] The "one-man exhibit" was thus a charged signifier of sexual difference marked in language by an exhibition system that privileged and named the creative producer as male and insisted on his first right to public visibility.[3] Effectively, this exhibition strategy sustained a binary hold on sex-gender representation and, clearly, the female artist's intervention into this social arena constituted an aberration. Since this ideology also left the categories "woman" and "women" undifferentiated, there were clearly numerous implications for the female artist.

This chapter considers the inaugural solo exhibitions of Marion Nicoll and Joyce Wieland in relationship to their two heterosexual artist-couple marriages to James McLaren Nicoll and

[1] Mary Kelly made this point about the female artist's subordinate status in "Introduction: Remembering, Repeating and Working Through," in *Imaging Desire* (Cambridge MA, and London, UK: The MIT Press, 1996), xix.
[2] Cindy Sherman once wrote, "I am artist first, woman second," as quoted by Mira Schor in *Wet: On Painting, Feminism and Art Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 59. There were only a very few occasions when the phrase "one-woman" exhibition was used by critics, such as, Anonymous, "One-Woman Show For Joyce Wieland," uncited source, 1959, National Gallery of Canada, Artist's File.
[3] The "one-man exhibition" terminology persisted well beyond postwar to describe women's exhibition histories including Mary Pratt's practice in Paul Duval's *Aspects of Realism* (Toronto: Rothmans of Pall Mall Canada, 1977), unpaginated.

Michael Snow.[4] During their formative solo showings in postwar Canada, Nicoll and Wieland experienced first-hand the application of this sexist grammar to their lives and work and they were challenged to assert their visibility as artists beyond this sex-gender paradigm. As their experiences demonstrate, the application of such terms as "the artist's wife" and women's "one-man exhibitions" to their lives and work discloses how the institution of legally-sanctioned heterosexual marriage was interwoven with their creative identities and, furthermore, they expose some of the complex and contradictory subject positions they navigated in their entrance to public life through the solo exhibition. Even amidst these conditions of social and aesthetic constraint, however, the exhibitions of Nicoll and Wieland were critical to their social recognition and self-realization: they were a crucial forum through which some aspects of what Judith Butler has described as "a livable and intelligible life" could be realized.

Since *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler has continued to advance the concept of the livable and intelligible life as holding out possibilities for pluralized identities and legal recognition of citizenship across a sex-gender system that cannot be reduced to such binary structures as those once falsely secured by the "one-man exhibition." For Butler, a livable life is inseparable from the social recognition longed for, sought and desired by the subject: "It is only through the experience of recognition," she argues, "that any of us becomes constituted as socially viable beings."[5] Butler contests the persistent norms defining an historic sex-gender system which have worked to regulate sexuality and gender and thus sanction some and deny others citizenship

[4] I use the term inaugural to describe early exhibitions in major non-profit and commercial venues which were usually staged in artists' home-town cities which rarely traveled beyond originating venues. This analysis is continued in Chapters Five and Six with Frances Loring, Florence Wyle and Kenojuak Ashevak, whose inaugural exhibits in non-profit venues were artist-couple showings.
[5] Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 2.

rights in law. For her, to have "a livable life" is to establish more inclusive conditions of existence that resist modes of assimilation.[6]

Butler's theory of the livable life has developed from her earlier writings on sex-gender performativity.[7] In her more recent texts she has explored the concept that while sex and gender have been understood separately (sex as biological and gender as a performative 'free-floating artifice') both are social constructions. She explains: "What is sex anyway—natural, anatomical, chromosomal, hormonal? …Perhaps this constructed sex is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all."[8] As Butler also contends, given that identities are not fixed but "revisable realities" in lived experience then "gender is what causes gender."[9]

Butler's arguments regarding the performance of gender through bodily experience and the constitution of a livable life carry significant implications with respect to the artist because, if one longs for, seeks and desires recognition then the exhibition is a critical tool through which social recognition can take place. Scholars in museum studies have argued that "exhibitions have become *the* medium through which most art becomes known," playing critical roles in the sanctioning and construction of the artist as social subject.[10] This powerful structure of inclusionary and exclusionary citizenship recognition is not to be overlooked when studying artists, especially female ones, because of how exhibitions recognize subjects and engage in the

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[6] Ibid., 4.
[7] Judith Butler, "Preface, 1999," in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007 edition), xv. As cited in Chapter One she asserts that sex-gender identity is "enacted not singularly but as a result of repetition and ritual, manufactured through sustained sets of acts posited through the gendered stylization of the body."
[8] Judith Butler, "The Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire," in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007 edition), 9-10.
[9] Ibid., xxiv, and Butler, "Preface" to *Gender Trouble* (2007), xiii.
[10] Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and Sandy Nairne, "Introduction," in *Thinking About Exhibitions*, edited by Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and Sandy Nairne (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 2.

social policing of sex and gender.[11] Of those expanded exhibition opportunities made available in postwar, the living-artist solo show was especially significant since it granted singular attention to the subject. But, as Joyce Wieland's 1987 retrospective made clear, the living-artist "one-man exhibit" (including retrospectives) had held a strategic historical function in the social policing and naturalizing of sex and gender.[12]

Following Butler's theory that sex-gender performance is enacted through repetition, the making and exhibiting of artwork are important elements of sex-gender performance in the life of the artist. Carol Duncan has further explained that the art exhibition has demonstrated its own ritualized histories of sex and gender representation. Her analysis of the Museum of Modern Art's 1984 collection exhibition exposed how the male subject was staged to exhibit his transcendence over a world of mundane constraints (representational art) through modernism's path to aesthetic purity (abstraction and conceptual art): it is a narrative from which women have been structurally excluded virtually wholesale.[13] Integral to this exhibition canon the solo exhibit's privileging of the male artist also raised him into the category of "creative genius." With Paris and New York standing as that canon's hegemonic and civic co-determinants of this male identity, women practicing in the modernist art historical periphery of Canada were doubly excluded. Nonetheless, Nicoll, Wieland and the others in this study asserted their rights as creative authors to contest the exhibition's masculine histories of ritual. Precisely what sex-gender identities they would find socially permissible for expression, however, was no simple act of self-determination.

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[11] Butler discusses how various ways in which sex and gender are "socially policed" including forms of companionship recognition. See "Preface" to *Gender Trouble* (2007), xx-xxii.

[12] This exhibition was the first one granted by Toronto's Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) to a living female artist and cast the artist as a "female other." See Kass Banning, "The Mummification of Mummy: Joyce Wieland as the AGO's First Living Other," in Kathryn Elder, *The Films of Joyce Wieland* (Toronto: Toronto Film Festival Group, 1999), 29-43.

[13] Carol Duncan, "The Modern Art Museum: It's a man's world," in *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 102-132, 156-161.

Writings in feminist film theory have mobilized some possibilities for interpreting how it was that one could perform one's sex-gender identities as a cultural producer in postwar North America. For Laura Mulvey and Mary Ann Doane the concept of sexual crossing has enabled analysis of female subjectivity in mid-century Hollywood films. Mulvey has argued that women's representation on screen as object of fetish/desire left the female spectator without effective means to occupy any meaningful place as viewer and to attempt to do so required that temporarily at least she effectively cross a naturalized sex-gender order, despite her "restless place in transvestite clothes."[14] As Mulvey has observed, it was a contradiction for her to be "maker" not "bearer of meaning."[15] Doane has argued that: "The transvestite wears clothes which signify a different sexuality, a sexuality, which, for the woman, allows a mastery over the image and the very possibility of attaching the gaze to desire. …The woman becomes a man in order to attach the necessary distance from the image…"While the male is locked into sexual identity, the female can at least pretend that she is other."[16]

To ensure visibility across the sex-gender divide of visual art production in the late 1950s, Nicoll and Wieland understood well enough that their visibility was contingent to a significant extent on the alteration and revision of their two female identities to cross binary conceptions of sexuality. To be a painter was to engage in using a medium already marked masculine by virtue of its historic place in Euro-North American art production; and, to enter the 'boys club" of abstraction as painter was to step across the sex-gender divides within art production and rework their gendered parameters.

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[14] Laura Mulvey, "Afterthoughts inspired by Duel in the Sun," in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 37.
[15] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 15.
[16] Mary Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade," in *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 24, 25.

Marion Nicoll and Joyce Wieland were both committed to painting for at least some parts of their careers. Nicoll found long-term satisfaction in her commitment to the craft of painting whereas for Wieland painting was but a point of departure in an expansive and multi-media art practice. For both women, however, making abstractions only partially accounted for the expression of their sex-gender identities. After a long search through landscape paintings, Nicoll found personal resolve in that idiom. However, in her parallel lives as teacher and designer of "sculpture for wear" as she called it (her jewelry and batik works) she did not so easily find parallel forms of recognition. For Wieland, abstraction was a beginning from which she rapidly moved on to assert the significance of women's history and her female voice. Her experiences were critical in establishing her creative voice of sexual and aesthetic difference, especially in relation to her artist-couple marriage to Snow.

The "restless place" in which Wieland and Nicoll navigated the masculine clothes of abstraction and gendered history of painting were each distinct: whereas Wieland found herself addressing the shadow effect of her life married to Michael Snow, Marion Nicoll endured her husband's faltering ego as he begrudged her advancing social recognition and strength as postwar family breadwinner and prominent abstractionist in western Canada. To be married, to be an artist, and to exhibit solo presented complex sex-gender identity challenges for these two women and the intersections of art and marriage followed them throughout their exhibition experiences between 1959 and 1963. Of necessity, their sex-gender identities had to be revisable realities as they determined viable subject positions as both artists and women.

Marion Nicoll, Joyce Wieland and the Importance of 1959

It was in 1959 that Marion Nicoll in Calgary and Joyce Wieland in Toronto shifted their art practices to abstract painting: Wieland had been making erotic drawings and Nicoll had been painting landscapes. As the *Biennial Exhibition of Canadian Art* organized that year by the National Gallery of Canada (NGC) demonstrated, to make abstractions was to ensure a certain visibility at this historical moment in Canada. Ten of the thirteen illustrations for the 1959 Biennial catalogue were abstractions, two were realist scenes, and one was a landscape. Then there was the matter of gender: only one of the thirteen catalogue illustrations was by a woman and the statistics in the publication echoed those of the exhibition in which 81% of the artists included were men and 19% were women.[17] Ironically, this already serious disparity represented a record high for women's exhibition representation in the NGC Biennial exhibitions when, in the years before and after, these figures dipped as low as six and seven percent.[18]

In 1959, Marion Nicoll was painting in her one-room house in the Bowness district west of Calgary, and Joyce Wieland had temporarily taken up space at a friend's house in downtown Toronto following her marriage where the enlarged scale of her recent abstractions could be accommodated.[19] Both artists were working towards their first solo exhibitions and did not know of each other's work. Wieland had just finished painting the first of two versions of *Time Machine* (1959: Crown Life), [Figure 15] and Nicoll was fully engaged in a new body of hard-edged abstractions including the paintings *Spring* (1959: GMAG), [Figure 16] and *Thursday's Model* (1959: NGC), [Figure 17].

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[17] Donald W. Buchanan, *Biennial Exhibition of Canadian Art* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1959). The calculations here are developed from the exhibition catalogue listing of artists and artworks.

[18]There were exhibition catalogues produced for these exhibits between 1955 and 1968 and these calculations are tabulated in Appendix 1 below. These exhibitions were effectively painting exhibitions despite the inclusion of 'Art' in the title.

[19] A photograph of this studio is illustrated in Sara Bowser, "Joyce Wieland," *Canadian Architect* (October 1960), 71.

Figure 15: Joyce Wieland, *Time Machine*, 1959, oil on canvas, 114.5 x 114.5 cm, Crown Life Insurance Company

Figure 16: Marion Nicoll, *Spring*, 1959, oil on canvas, 91.8 x 71.7 cm, Glenbow Museum and Art Gallery (left)

Figure 17: Marion Nicoll, *Thursday's Model*, 1959, oil on canvas, 92 x 51.1 cm, National Gallery of Canada (right)

Nicoll carried on with abstraction until 1971 when she became so crippled with arthritis that she could no longer work at all and Wieland quit painting abstractions by year-end 1962. In August, Nicoll had just returned from New York convinced finally that abstraction was the answer to her

aesthetic dilemmas after three decades of dissatisfaction painting landscapes; three years hence in 1962 Wieland would be on her way to New York as an emerging artist. Wieland never considered painting landscapes for she had described the genre one for "idle slouches…who fail to understand the most basic problems which exist in art today."[20]

Nicoll and Wieland both understood the importance of taking up abstract painting since, as the 1959 *Biennial Exhibition* made clear, it was virtually a precondition that one at least be a painter and preferably an abstractionist to have any visibility at all. Their oral testimonies illuminate some of their understandings of the relationship of the self to sex-gender identity in abstract expression. As Marion Nicoll commented, collapsing her female self with the male painter-abstractionist, "No man in his right mind would become a painter by choice today. A painter is one because he must be….I paint because I must…I wouldn't be anything else…I am an abstract painter naturally and through conviction. A painter who grows must move into new expressions.[21] In contrast, Wieland made this observation regarding her reasons for leaving abstraction behind: "I saw only gradually that my husband's artistic concerns were not mine…I had to look into the lives of women who had made independent statements in their lives….Eventually women's concerns and my own femininity became my artist's territory."[22] For Nicoll then, abstraction was her later-career solution to her visibility and purpose whereas for Wieland it was a point of departure that she came to understand as a troubling gender paradigm. Both artists, then, understood differently the implications of gender by engaging in painting abstractions.

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[20] Joyce Wieland, "Notes on Painting," (ca. 1957-62), 5, File 24, 1990-014/002, Wieland Fonds.
[21] These comments appear as follows: Marion Nicoll, *Journal,* unpaginated, File 62, Nicoll Fonds; Marion Nicoll in interview for *Environment '70;* and "Gallery Exhibition Thursday," *Edmonton Journal,* January 26, 1963.
[22] Lucy Lippard, as cited in Marie Fleming, *Joyce Wieland* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1987), 6.

The Solo Exhibitions of Marion Nicoll, 1959 -1963

Figures 18a and b: *Marion Nicoll, Exhibition Listing*, Provincial Institute of Technology and Art, 1959 (left, outside cover showing the image *Thursday's Model*; right, inside exhibition list)

Marion Nicoll was fifty years of age she was granted her first solo exhibition, *Abstract Paintings by Marion Nicoll* in 1959 at the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art (PITA, now Alberta College of Art and Design) in Calgary where she had been teaching since the 1930s.[23] [Figures 18a and b] Prospects of a solo exhibition for her had been elusive in a mid-century exhibition market in which large group-artist and society-based exhibitions were the norm.[24] She had just returned after a self-financed sabbatical year studying and travelling in New York and Europe and the 1959 exhibit included twenty new abstract paintings.[25] The show secured her a prominent place in provincial and national art histories as one of Alberta's few serious artists to dedicate her painting practice solely to abstraction and, assuredly, she was the first female artist

[23] There was no 'art gallery' at the Institute at the time and the show was held in the Institute's "East Block." Typed hand sheet, Anonymous [Jim Nicoll], "Exhibition of Paintings by Marion Nicoll," 1959, 1, Artist's File, Glenbow Library and Archives.
[24] Nicoll exhibited such group-artist annual exhibitions as those of the Alberta Society of Artists and the Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour, and the "Calgary Open" survey shows organized by Calgary's Allied Arts Centre, Calgary.
[25] The Nicolls held a yard sale to liquidate paintings before leaving Calgary as documented in Rosemary Wood, "Paintings Cover Bungalow at Unique Art Exhibition," news source unknown, copy in Marion Nicoll, File 245, H.G. Glyde Fonds, Glenbow Library and Archives. There was also Marion Nicoll's Canada Council study grant awarded April 1959.

in the province to do so.[26] These celebrations of form, design and colour harmony confirmed that the visible worlds of figuration and landscape representation had been left behind.[27] Her journey to abstraction had been a prolonged one in the years leading to this exhibition, requiring closure of her previous representational work and a reconfiguration of gender roles in a marriage in which she would not find a shared intellectual interest in abstraction.[28]

Nicoll was one of the few female artists aspiring to professionalism working in Calgary at mid-century. Her exposure to painting had been through a succession of male instructors and mentors in a city where there were few female ones beyond her mother whose embroidery she had long admired. British Columbia painter, Emily Carr, had been among these women but the two never met. When Nicoll first saw Carr's work in the 1930s she remembered that "it shook every one of us because we hadn't seen her real painting. You know, close-up, there it was…it had quite an impact."[29] In landscape R.L. Harvey, Group of Seven painters and A.C. Leighton were her first male instructors.[30] Her entrance to abstraction paralleled these other experiences in male mentorship when Scottish-Canadian J.W.G. (Jock) Macdonald and American Will Barnett respectively counseled her through automatic and geometric strategies.

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[26] The exhibit showed at: PITA (7-19 December); the Bowness Town Hall (13-20 February 1960); and the Allied Arts Centre (13 March-2 April 1960). Max Bates and W.L. Stevenson had shown semi-abstractions in 1928 but there were no other abstract solo shows in Calgary as documented in Kathy Zimon, *Alberta Society of Artists* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000), 14. Illingworth Kerr had made some abstractions by 1955 but is not known to have shown them solo, as documented in Maxwell Bates, "Some Reflections on Art in Alberta," *Canadian Art,* XXXI:1 (Autumn, 1955), 182-187.

[27] The catalogue listing is as follows: cat .1. *East River*; cat. 2. *Street Scene*; cat. 3. *Woman in the Park*; cat. 4. *The Treasure*; cat. 5. *One Person*; cat. 6. *7th Avenue*; cat. 8. *Spring Flowers*; cat. 9. *Model 1*; cat. 10. *Model 2*; cat. 11. *Beautiful City*; cat. 12. *Totem and Taboo*; cat. 13. *Spring*, 1959; cat. 14. *Model 3*; cat. 15. *Model 4*; cat. 16. *Sunlight on the City* (N.F.S.); cat. 17. *Procession* (N.F.S.); cat. 18. *Sicilia 1*; cat. 19. *Sicilia 2*; and cat. 20. *Sicilia 3.*

[28] Marion became family breadwinner after returning to teaching full-time in 1946 and Jim retired after wartime. Income records are incomplete before 1961 but tax returns dating from 1961-1965 indicate a wide gap in their earnings ranging between six and eight times in difference: in 1961 Jim earned $1167.41 and Marion made $6,840.00; by 1964 Jim earned $900.00 and Marion earned $8,410.00. See "Tax Returns," File 48, Nicoll Fonds.

[29] Marion Nicoll as quoted in J. Brooks Joyner, *Marion Nicoll* (Calgary: Masters Gallery, 1977), 57.

[30] Between 1925 and 1935 Nicoll was taught by Harvey during High School, then Group of Seven artists at Ontario College of Art and then Leighton at PITA.

Nicoll and Macdonald had exchanged ideas during the academic year together in 1946 and 1947 at PITA and while both were instructors in the Banff School of Art during summer session. Nicoll considered her automatics "strictly a studio exercise" and private works which were not for exhibition.[31] She valued the meditative potential of automatism in opening creativity and continued this method into the 1970s.[32] The automatics combined drawing and painting and dream-like forms accessed from the subconscious. She regarded these as her most important works of the 1940s and "so satisfactory even when I wasn't showing them to anyone."[33] The automatics had opened Nicoll to abstraction and in the summer of 1957 she attended the third annual Emma Lake Artists' Workshop in Saskatchewan where she studied under Will Barnet who began his summer workshop with figure work; retrospectively, Nicoll claimed the experience to have literally changed her overnight.[34] Emma Lake offered a brief period of renewal and opportunity for professional exchange beyond Calgary's art populace, especially with other women, but Nicoll's focus remained on navigating the art world through a male lens and strengthening her male professional network.[35] The female friendships she developed then followed a pattern established early in marriage with other married couples where her closest

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[31] Marion Nicoll as quoted in "Marion Nicoll in Conversation with Duck Ventures," in *Marion Nicoll: A Retrospective* (Edmonton: Edmonton Art Gallery, 1975), unpaginated, and in Christopher Jackson, *Marion Nicoll: Art and Influences* (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1986), 14. Duck Ventures was an artists' collective comprised of artists Ron Moppett and John Hall.

[32] Marion Nicoll to Janet Mitchell, 25 January 1968, 2, "Janet Mitchell Correspondence," File 15, Nicoll Fonds.

[33] Marion Nicoll as cited in "Gallery Exhibition Thursday," *Edmonton Journal,* January 26, 1963, and in "Marion Nicoll in Conversation with Duck Ventures," unpaginated.

[34] Marion Nicoll as quoted in "Marion Nicoll in Conversation with Duck Ventures," unpaginated.

[35] Other women attending that year included the following: including Wynona Mulcaster, Dorothy Knowles, Gerda Penfold, Helga Palko, Joanna Vanterpool, Lorna Donor, Lilian Clapp and Joyce Dew but Nicoll does not appear to have formed friendships with these painters. It was here that Nicoll met Henri Bonli who showed her work commercially in the later 1960s.

female friends were often the wives of other male artists she respected—Jock Macdonald's wife Barbara Macdonald and Will Barnet's wife Elena Barnet.[36]

Two weeks at Emma Lake underscored Nicoll's desire to realign her aesthetic direction and soon afterwards she announced her goals without further deliberation. She proclaimed to Jim, "We are going to New York next fall, that's it,"[37] and to her employer, "I'm taking the year off next year [and] I'm leaving in the fall."[38] After finances ran short in December 1958 Marion's father granted them a brief fiscal reprieve and news of her successful application to the Canada Council came the following spring.[39] These resources enabled the addition of a spring-summer trip to Italy, Spain and Portugal. The works that followed from these experiences brought Nicoll much critical acclaim and these were her most prolific creative years. In contrast to her *private* world of the automatics these new abstractions were a very *public* experience commencing with their exhibition in 1959.

Four months of study in New York had recharged Nicoll's purpose and time with Barnet initiated a rigorous new work ethic: "I've never in my life worked so hard as I did that year...I'd go to class in the morning, be there at nine, leave at twelve, go home and paint, grab a sandwich, and paint right through to perhaps eleven o'clock. Other nights we'd go to a concert, but it was work, work, work, the whole time I was there. I was so full of ideas I couldn't get them all out."[40] There were, however, repercussions on the domestic front as Marion and Jim negotiated who did what in daily life. In a non-fictional skit he explained tensions elicited by their revised

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[36] Calgary's Janet Mitchell was one of the few unmarried women artists with whom Nicoll developed a close friendship. The details of their friendship are exchanged in their letters to each other in the Nicoll and Janet Mitchell Fonds.
[37] Joan Murray, Interview with Marion Nicoll, May 24, 1979, transcript, 6, Robert McLaughlin Gallery Archives, Oshawa, Ontario.
[38] Marion Nicoll as quoted in "Marion Nicoll in Conversation with Duck Ventures," unpaginated.
[39] Diary entry for 19 January 1960, "Dad phoned, reprieve @ $1,000.00-- I stay," *Marion Nicoll Diary,* File 93, Nicoll Fonds. The Canada Council grant was valued at $2,750.00.
[40] Marion Nicoll as quoted in "Marion Nicoll in Conversation with Duck Ventures," unpaginated

gender roles as he assumed the posts of grocer and domestic manager. Jim noted that "domestic necessities must carve a place for themselves in our aesthetic sphere"[41] and in scene two Marion responded, "I'm sorry that you'll have to make your own dinner. Now let me see, where is that tube of magenta? It's wonderful the way you never complain Jim."[42] In New York Jim painted infrequently and his painting took a background place to his support of Marion's new directions.

Marion Nicoll's New York experience also opened new employment possibilities. To artist-friend Janet Mitchell, she explained the extent of Barnet's support in facilitating paid work and what a new life there could offer—more time for painting, fewer teaching hours, a commercial dealer and "one-man" shows.[43] Nicoll was offered a teaching post at Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art and, in addition to Will Barnet, painter Barnet Newman also encouraged her to stay but in marriage the possibility of remaining in New York was complicated by Jim's disdain for the city and he is said to have "forced her hand" to return to Calgary.[44] For some months already she had expressed her desire to stay and the difficulties of returning to Calgary were only moderated by their Europe trip.[45] She recorded her anguish privately in her diary: "If I had to return to Calgary straight from here instead of having the glow of Italy in front of me I'd cut my throat and bleed messily from here to Times Square."[46]

On 25 April 1959 the Nicolls sailed for Europe heading first to Italy followed by travels in Spain and Portugal. This trip was Marion's one chance to study the arts in museums and galleries of mainland Europe and these experiences offered much subject matter for her

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[41] Jim Nicoll, "Coffee Break," New York, 16 January 1959, 1, File 63, Nicoll Fonds.
[42] Ibid, 2.
[43] Marion Nicoll to Janet Mitchell, 1 March 1959, 3, "Marion Nicoll," File 4, Janet Mitchell Fonds, Glenbow Library and Archives.
[44] Marion Nicoll as cited in Jackson, *Marion Nicoll: Art and Influences*, 22.
[45] Marion Nicoll, *Marion Nicoll Diary,* 1958-1959, in the entry for 6 January 1959 she wrote "feeling ill and cross grained, painted with frustration—don't want to leave New York, Drew all morning,"
[46] Marion Nicoll as cited in Jackson, *Marion Nicoll: Art and Influences*, 22.

abstractions. Mediterranean architecture and design were points of departure for the paintings *Spring* (1959: GMAG) and other later ones including *Ancient Wall* (1962: AGA), [Figure 19].

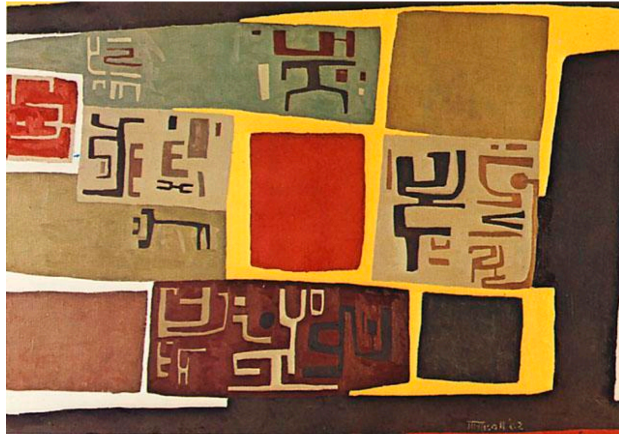

Figure 19: Marion Nicoll, *Ancient Wall,* 1962, oil on canvas, 107.6 x 153.2 cm, Art Gallery of Alberta

She explained her new focus: "Now I am in Giardini (Naxos), Sicily, painting and drawing every day, stimulated by the novelty and colour of this country. The presence of the fisher people of today in conjunction with ancient Greek ruins is provocative and evocative."[47] Concentrated time, financing and Jim's domestic contributions had enabled Nicoll's production for the 1959 exhibition. For Nicoll, the year consolidated her new directions and working methods in abstraction as she began to develop paintings in serial formats such as those of the *Sicilia* series, three of which were included in the 1959 exhibition.

The question "Calgary or New York?" had been a divisive one for the Nicolls and it was one they had not considered earlier in marriage since Calgary seemed to be serving both partners well enough. Despite Jim's flexibility in retirement to move elsewhere, marital norms which privileged the husband's determination over residential place of settlement prevailed in this union. Concerns of distance from their respective families were not cited anywhere as among

[47] Marion Nicoll, "Interim Report to the Canada Council for the Arts," 6 June 1959, 1-2, Nicoll Fonds, File 93. Her report included reference to two more jobs she had been offered, the value of concentrated study time spent in museums and galleries and making work, her exposure her to the other artists, and the new material she would bring to her teaching on return.

their reasons for returning to Calgary. Marion remained discontented with the decision then and afterwards and expressed this to the Barnets: "I'm quite determined to give up the job in Calgary and come to New York. Probably die on city relief."[48] Before leaving for New York she noted to a friend how "Calgary had beaten me down badly lately,"[49] and several years later when describing the painting *Hostile Place* (1965: LU) she explained her unease to Barnet: "This is a feeling about Calgary that has bothered me for some time. It shuts me away from something. New York never made me feel like this."[50] The collegiality forged between Nicoll and Barnet persisted in his writings too as he referred to the vacuum left by her departure.[51] Where Jim considered New York a jungle Marion thrived there[52] but she resigned herself to the couple's return to Calgary late in 1959 and she framed her year away as nonetheless "a vital one in my development as a painter."[53]

In years to come, Nicoll held Barnet in high regard as enabling her directional shift. By 1963 her paintings were recognized by Russell Harper through inclusion in that year's *Biennial Exhibition of Canadian Art* and by American critic Clement Greenberg in his national tour of artists' studios in Canada.[54] In Greenberg's formalist criticism, however, Nicoll was cast in Barnet's shadow when he described her abstractions as reflecting Barnet's "helpful influence."[55] In this gendered culture a price was to be paid for stepping across this sex-gender divide but

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[48] Marion Nicoll to Will and Elena Barnet, 28 May 1959. Will Barnet Fonds, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. (hereafter Barnet Fonds)
[49] Marion Nicoll to Janet Mitchell, 1 March 1959, "Marion Nicoll," File 4, Janet Mitchell Fonds.
[50] Marion Nicoll to Will Barnet, 12 March 1975,Barnet Fonds.
[51] Will Barnet to Marion Nicoll, 8 November 1959, 1, Correspondence Files, Barnet-Nicoll correspondence File 1, Nicoll Fonds.
[52] "Mr and Mrs. Nicoll don't always share the same opinion about art or New York. 'It's a jungle' says Mr. Nicoll. 'I love the city. It would break my heart just to visit. I want to live there,' says Mrs. Nicoll." See the article by Adeline Flaherty, "Life and Painting Synonymous for Calgary Artist-Teacher," *Calgary Herald,* January 27, 1965.
[53] Marion Nicoll to Canada Council, "Interim Report" (6 June 1959), 2, File 93, Nicoll Fonds.
[54] Harper included Nicoll's *Winter Sun* (1963), *5th Biennial of Canadian Painting* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1963), ca. 52, 26.
[55] Clement Greenberg, "Clement Greenberg's View of Art on the Prairies," *Canadian Art* XX, no. 2 (March/April 1963): 96.

Nicoll curtly responded by describing Greenberg's assessment as "a lot of heifer-dust."[56] She was among a spate of Calgary artists to critique the missionary tone underlying Greenberg's conception of these centre-periphery relations in the editorials of *Canadian Art* magazine including Stan Perrott who pointedly told Greenberg to "go home!"[57]

There was additionally the problem of Greenberg's deeply gendered commentary. Nicoll was working on a smaller scale than the likes of Barnet Newman, Jules Olitski, Morris Louis and others already bearing Greenberg's endorsement under the rubric of "big-attack" painters. These abstractionists, he explained, were those artists "of large and obvious ambition with an aggressive and up-to-date style, and with a seriousness about himself [sic] that makes itself known in his work as much as in his demeanour."[58] All five men who became known as the Regina Five abstractionist artist-collective had met his qualifications as big attack painters.[59] Women, however, were excluded from this subjectively-framed category, without consideration of their usually constrained working spaces as among their reasons for painting on less ambitious scales. Greenberg only reluctantly recognized women's work and his analysis skirted image content while matters of place were consistently central to Marion Nicoll's art, including her abstractions.[60]

On Nicoll's return to Alberta it was the landscape, its fusion of prairie and mountain topography and expansive sense of space so often illuminated with cloudless skies, which was inspiration for so many of her abstracts. In 1959 she remarked: "I am inspired to paint because I

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[56] Marion Nicoll in "Letters to the Editor: South of the Borduas—Down Tenth Street Way," *Canadian Art* 85 (May-June 1963): 196.
[57] There were other letters sent by Ron Spickett and Stan Blodgett which took aim at Greenberg's views, Ibid, 196.
[58] Ibid, 91.
[59] Painters associated with Regina Five included Ted Godwin, Ken Lochhead, Ron Bloore, Doug Morton and Arthur F. MacKay. See the exhibition catalogue *Five Painters from Regina* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1957).
[60] Nicoll's *Ancient Wall* (1963) was the only painting by a woman whose work Greenberg illustrated in the "Abstract Painting" section of his essay, 96.

am so much moved by the beauty of Western Canada that I have to translate it on canvas."[61] Barnet and Nicoll shared ways to reduce form, to prioritize single colour fields, and to understand abstraction as a process of extraction from the observable world, but, unlike Barnet, Nicoll's abstractions continually referenced their phenomenal moments of conception. "One day," she observed, "I was driving to work up the hill, it was winter and the sun was just beginning to come up and over on this side down the hill, a lot of little houses with smoke…and there was a green moon sitting there and long streaks of yellow moving across the landscape. I had to stop because I had almost gone off the road."[62]

Nicoll also dedicated considerable study to the interrelationship of colour and shape, concepts reflecting her considerations of inter-relationships between design and painting. It was A.H. Munsell whose theories she advocated as painter and teacher.[63] *A Colour Notation* (1905) was a scientific approach to colour theory that took understandings of colour beyond their primary-secondary foundation (red, yellow, blue—orange, green, purple) to introduce a tripartite system of *hue* (name of colour) to *chroma* (strength of colour) to *value* (lightness/darkness of the colour).[64] Among Munsell's most significant arguments was that colour produced by nature (pigment) differed from that produced by the eye (reception). He further considered colour arrangement for its balance, harmony, path and area: *balance* (movement from centre to edge),

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[61] Robin Neesham, "Art Show Features Boldness Of Nicoll's Abstract Works," *Calgary Herald,* December 10, 1963.
[62] Marion Nicoll "Interview," with Duck Ventures, unpaginated.
[63] Marion Nicoll, "Course Syllabus: Design and Handicrafts-Munsell's *Colour Notation,*" course 341, 3 pages, File 59, Nicoll Fonds. Nicoll also read Wilhelm Ostwald, *Colour Science* (1933), and Jacques Henri Bustanoby, *Principles of Colour Mixing* (1947). She lectured on colour psychology included on two occasions: "Lecture No. 7" to be presented to the Calgary Paint, Oil and Varnish Club at the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art, 7 March 1950, and "Psychology of Colour, Colour in Industry, Outside Colour for Homes, Textures and Broken Colour in Homes," and "Lecture to Paint, Oil and Varnish Salesmen's Association," 24 January 1950, both essays, File 59, Nicoll Fonds.
[64] A.H. Munsell, *A Colour Notation* (Baltimore: Munsell Colour Company, 1961, Eleventh reprint of the 1946, 5th printing,), 14-16. Munsell also argued about the dimensional properties of colour, that one of these three attributes could be *varied* without disturbing the others but the *omission* of one would leave the viewer in doubt as to the character of that colour thus rendering colour as two not three-dimensional.

harmony (variation and proportion), *path* (vertical, lateral and inward movement), and *area* (sizes of colours used in the visual field).[65] Munsell's analysis heightened understandings of colour but it left wide open its application for the abstract painter.

In Nicoll's distillation of Munsell and other colour theories, it was her concern with relationships of colour to shape that made her deployment of colour so distinctive in the abstractions of 1959 and beyond. She explained: "Colour is determined by shape. I cannot see colours. First I have to know what shape they are."[66] Decades before, Leighton had urged Nicoll to probe colour and tonal range through the green-brown British tonalist palette of his training and lineage but this hardly compares to the explorations Nicoll later engaged in displaying her command of complex colour and shape combinations, and there were distinctly different ones for each work. In *Bowness Road* (1963: GMAG), [Figure 20] Nicoll assembled a shape-colour abstraction of blues, greens, greys and blacks and in *Alberta IV, Winter Morning* (1961: PC) a distillation of blue, red, yellow, blacks and grey. With Will Barnet, however, Nicoll did not have a known exchange on colour theory.

Figure 20: Marion Nicoll, *Bowness Road*, 1963, oil on canvas, 136 x 186 cm, Glenbow Museum and Art Gallery

[65] Ibid, 31-41.
[66] Jenni Mortin, "Marion Nicoll, Painter Teaches Craft Classes," *Calgary Herald,* February 6, 1963.

Nicoll's use of colour was significant to the emergence of her distinctive voice within the gendered paradigms of hard-edged abstraction. The abstractions forming the 1959 and 1963 exhibitions were complex fields where several colours were at play with each other in restful yet also dynamic interplays. Never in Nicoll's abstractions did a defined shape contain more than one colour. Distinctly designed forms abutted one another and the visual field was considered as an all-over surface where centre, surround and edge, and vertical and horizontal movement, worked in tandem. Her delineation of shape begun in sketchbook drawings was always precise but never as geometric as was that of Barnet: hers was off right angle just enough to keep the eye moving.[67] Considering the persistence of formalist analyses thus far sustaining virtually all critical dialogue regarding Nicoll's abstractions, it is perplexing that her colour use has not been studied in any depth when it clearly occupied so critical place in these abstractions.[68]

In the years between solo exhibitions, Nicoll struggled with the passing and managing of her time against ailing health. She had returned to fulltime teaching in 1959 to work with some 750 students per year.[69] She lamented to Barnet the years already passed and how "bitterly sorry" she was "for all the time I've wasted."[70] She would not know then just how limited her remaining creative years would be with her rapidly advancing arthritis. By 1966 she found her teaching load so exhausting that "all I do is sleep when I come home."[71] The years leading to her second show at Calgary's Allied Arts Council with director-curator Archibald Key tested her

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[67] Sketchbook numbers 13-17 in the GMAG Collection have sketches for several larger paintings including *January* (1968) and *Red Rock, Black Rock* (1966).
[68] I refer to the monographs by J. Brooks Joyner and Christopher Jackson and Greenberg's essay.
[69] Maria José de Mendonça to Marion Nicoll, 11 December 1959, File 115, Nicoll Fonds.
[70] Marion Nicoll to Will and Elena Barnet, 28 May 1959, 2.
[71] Marion Nicoll to Will and Elena Barnet, 8 March 1964, Barnet Papers.

endurance but among the more positive outcomes was the development of a professional art studio, one more suitable for the larger scale demanded of her abstractions for visual impact.[72]

Marion enjoyed Jim's support as a retired engineer-artist since he designed and oversaw the contracting-construction phases to their Bowness home throughout 1962 and 1963.[73] Their one-room house had previously doubled as shared studio *and* living space but the addition of the 560 square-foot space finally separated the two.[74] Jim's design prioritized Marion's abstractions and her daytime use of it enabled her accurate colour planning but while still teaching her studio time remained limited. Project photographs show a full wall of windows into which light poured, opaque below and transparent above, to allow maximum light while offering privacy from ground view. In finished form it responded powerfully to the region's distinct topography and climate. As Barnet proclaimed, "We shall never forget your beautiful new studio and the curve of the earth as you look out of the studio window and the Chinook clouds. Your work as it were all over the room—was superb."[75] With pride, she had written to Russell Harper that, "I have a beautiful new studio, my life's dream, and I want to show it off."[76] After Harper's visit, he concurred that the Nicoll studio was indeed "quite the most superb I saw on my travels."[77] Although shared with her husband, the new studio was really Marion's and the results immediately benefited the 1963 exhibition. The new studio had enabled production of larger abstractions and with some works almost double in size this exhibition was more physically

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[72] The exhibition *M. Nicoll,* 6-19 December 1963 was organized by the Calgary Allied Arts Centre at Coste House and likely curated by director-curator Archibald Key.
[73] The five elevation drawings dated 9 August 1962 show Jim's communications with Allied Fabricators. See "Studio and Home Renovation Records," Files 75 and oversize, Nicoll Fonds.
[74] Reference to their one-room house is made by Dushan Bresky, "Teacher Favours Experimental Art: Husband Doesn't Share Opinions," *Calgary Herald,* January 26, 1953.
[75] Will Barnet to Marion and Jim Nicoll, 30 December 1963, Nicoll Fonds, 2-3.
[76] Marion Nicoll to J. Russell Harper, 4 March 1963, Box 454, Exhibition Files for #1296 *Biennial of Canadian Art*, 12-4-154, vol. 6, File 2, NGC Library and Archives.
[77] J. Russell Harper to Jim and Marion Nicoll, 7 February 1964, Russell Harper Correspondence, File 8, Nicoll Fonds, and Russell Harper, *5th Biennial Exhibition of Canadian Painting* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 1963), cat. 51.

imposing.[78] There were new works from the *Alberta Series*, (*Prairie* and *Moon in the Morning*) and single works such as *End of Summer* (1963: PC) *Morley Reserve* (1963: PC) and *The House Where I was Born* (1962: PC).[79] This exhibition was also a significant one to move her practice into the civic art gallery arena and this distinction from the former campus venue initiated the beginnings of a steady stream of attention throughout in the mid-1960s.[80]

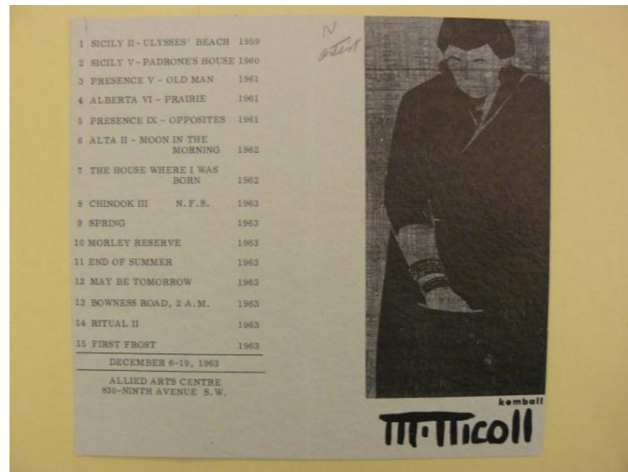

Figure 21: Pat Kemball (a.k.a. ManWoman) *Portrait of Marion Nicoll*, exhibition invitation, Glenbow Library and Archives

In Nicoll's abstract painting exhibitions she asserted an important aspect of her sex-gender identity, one in which she asserted her place in a masculine genre, but the complexity of her plural creative identities as also teacher and design-craft artist were excluded from both exhibitions. The exhibition invitation cover image designed by former student Pat Kemball (a.k.a. ManWoman), [Figure 21] pointed to a more complex Marion Nicoll. In contrast to the

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[78] The *Sicilia* series measured about two by three feet whereas works like *Bowness Road* were upwards of four-and-a-half by six feet. I cite these Imperial measurements to retain consistency with the artist's measurement system.

[79] Shown in 1963 were the following works: cat. 1. *Sicily II-Ulysses' Beach,* 1959; cat.2. *Sicily V-Padrone's House*, 1960; cat. 3. *Presence-Old Man*, 1961; cat. 4. *Alberta VI-Prairie*, 1961; cat. 5. *Presence IX-Opposites*, 1961; cat. 6. *Alberta II-Moon in the Morning*, 1962, cat. 7. *The House Where I was Born*, 1962; cat. 8. *Chinook III*, N.F.S.; cat. 9. *Spring*, 1963; cat.10. *Morley Reserve*, 1963; cat. 11. *End of Summer*; cat. 12. *May Be Tomorrow*, 1963; cat. 13. *Bowness Road, 2 A.M.,* 1963; cat. 14 *Ritual II*, 1963; and cat. 15 *First Frost*, 1963.

[80] Nicoll held two commercial exhibitions but a paucity of information has precluded their analysis here. See the invitation, Gallery 1, 3-14 October 1961 in the NGC Artist's File, and the clipping for her artist's co-op exhibit at Focus Gallery, "Gallery Exhibition Thursday," *Edmonton Journal,* January 26, 1963.

exhibition titles for both solo exhibitions in which Nicoll used the compressed gender-neutral identity "M. Nicoll," Kemball pointed to Nicoll the woman, the designer-artist and the teacher. The image was a three-quarter portrait of Nicoll sporting a short bowl-style hair cut wearing a loose fitting moo-moo-style dress and one of her hand-made bracelets. In its full coverage of the page the illustration fused something of her commanding presence. Affectionately known as 'Mama Nicoll' or 'Big Mama', Kemball recalled, Nicoll's ability to mentor independent artists was admirable: "Marion—you had a mind that cut through bullshit like an axe—and a mind that went straight to the core, the simplicity of a truth.…Many times I reflect on how fortunate this was for me to have studied under you…I am deeply grateful to you for being you."[81]

As Kemball's image shows, Nicoll was a multi-dimensional persona in her commitments to abstract painting, design and teaching. As a student Kemball was witness to how her practice traversed a sex-gender system that had socially spliced her life into masculine/feminine tropes. On retirement Buck Kerr noted, for instance, the value of Nicoll's "feminine mind and temperament" and her "*good* work in support of crafts" versus her "*creative* work as a painter."[82] As one of the most acclaimed painters teaching at the Alberta College of Art, it was a contradiction that she was not ever given opportunity to teach the process of painting.[83] Her male counterparts who did teach painting included artists Stan Blodgett, H.G. Glyde, Illingworth Kerr, Stanford Perrott, Walter J. Phillips and of course J.W.G Macdonald.[84] Instead, she discreetly introduced students to automatic painting and colour theory within the gendered teaching

[81] ManWoman to Marion Nicoll, undated letter, "Correspondence File," File 14, Nicoll Fonds.
[82] Illingworth Kerr to Marion Nicoll, 14 February 1966, File 117, Nicoll Fonds.
[83] Jenni Mortin, "Marion Nicoll, Painter Teaches Craft Classes," *Calgary Herald,* February 6, 1963. Nicoll stated; "she would have preferred to teach painting rather than crafts when she first became an instructor." By retirement on 31 January 1966 she had been included in the 1963 and 1965 NGC Biennials and was one of the few Prairie artists to be included.
[84] See Valerie Greenfield, *Founders of the Alberta College of Art and Design* (Calgary: Alberta College of Art Gallery, 1986), 74-107.

precincts of her design-craft classes.[85] Kemball later proclaimed the artifice such sex-gender identity splits in human subjectivity when he announced his name change to Man/Woman. It is arguably no coincidence that he chose Nicoll as among those to be first notified of his new-found understanding of personhood: “My new single name signifies this state of wholeness. ManWoman. Whatever difficulties this may bring I will stick to it. This is my test. Love to all. ManWoman.”[86]

There were many others appreciative of Nicoll’s efforts to break down the gendered boundaries of medium-based practices and gender roles in art production and teaching. Derek Whyte continued after graduation to produce batiks and weaving as she had taught the processes and he secured employment teaching the process to others in Fredericton.[87] The painter Carol Moppett recalled Nicoll as “a wonderful role model at ACA when there weren’t very many women teaching in art schools. No one really knows what she had to do to maintain her position. There are an awful lot of women my age and older who are glad she was there.”[88]

During Nicoll’s postwar years at ACA she continued to be responsible for what the school had deemed female territory (design and craft arts) and, at retirement, she remained the only fulltime female instructor in this or any other discipline.[89] Her facility teaching a wide range of media was sufficiently rich that she recalled it took four staff (all men) to replace her.[90] As teacher and artist—adored as ‘big mama’ and denigrated as “helpfully influenced”—Nicoll

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[85] ManWoman to Christopher Jackson, “Marion Nicoll Questionnaire,” 2, *Marion Nicoll: Art and Influences* Exhibition Archives, Glenbow Institutional Archives.
[86] ManWoman to Marion Nicoll, undated letter.

[87] Derek Whyte to Marion Nicoll, 15 February and 14 March 1964, File 17, Nicoll Fonds and Marion Nicoll, “Crafts in the Community,” 6.
[88] Nancy Tousley, “Pioneering local artist dies after long illness,” *Calgary Herald,* March 7, 1985.
[89] F.C. Jorgenson to Marion Nicoll, 10 February 1966, File 117, Nicoll Fonds.
[90] Nicoll mentions that Rolf Ungstad replaced her as chief instructor in design, Doug Motter was teaching weaving, Frank Phillips was teaching metals and jewelry, and Walt Drohan was teaching ceramics and pottery in Marion Nicoll, “Crafts in Alberta,” typescript, 6 January 1966, 5, File 62, Nicoll Fonds.

found her life sub-sectioned across the disciplinary and gendered divisions of "Art" practice. In her life as teacher she was a woman working in a man's domain and was relegated to women's traditional art forms, and as abstract painter, she was a woman in a man's domain in insisting on her right to visibility. Is it any wonder, then, that in these socio-aesthetic conditions she had collapsed the self with male artist in her life as painter ("No man would become a painter by choice—I paint because I must")?

Nicoll was vocal about the "necessity" she felt towards painting and abstraction but the *why* of her necessity she never addressed in oral testimony. She had always been restrained in commenting on her work: "If I had my way I wouldn't even talk. Words fall so short of what a person is trying to paint. If you could describe your feelings with words, you would write instead of paint."[91] The shift to abstraction had been a courageous one in her regional context, so rare had it been that not even a single one had been shown in Alberta. But Nicoll's many statements regarding the necessity she felt to paint are reason for pause, particularly considering the hierarchy of the artist's medium which still permeated Canada's postwar art system. In painting she found a constrained social recognition but questions remained about her parallel lives in craft and design as artist and teacher. For her, works made in one medium informed each other and were intersecting practices. Consider for example the painting on silk, *Batik* (1950: NGC), [Figure 22] which harkens the earlier *Untitled* (April 1948: AGA), [Figure 2] automatic watercolour with its curvilinear and expressive flow of line and use of dream-like imagery.[92] She considered her design work with the same purpose as her paintings but these works were not

[91] Adeline Flaherty, "Life and Painting Synonymous for Calgary Artist-Teacher," *Calgary Herald,* January 27, 1965.
[92] This work was given by Nicoll to Jock and Barbara Macdonald who gave it to Joyce Zemans who recently donated it to the NGC. The automatic watercolour paralleling its design is illustrated in Christopher Jackson, *Marion Nicoll: Art and Influences,* cat. 33.

included in the 1959 and 1963 exhibitions. Of necessity in this exhibition system Nicoll maintained separate sex-gendered identities to accommodate the breadth of her art practice.

Figure 22: Marion Nicoll, *Untitled Batik*, aniline dye on silk, c. 1950, 100 x 92.5 cm, National Gallery of Canada (left)

Figure 2: Marion Nicoll, *Untitled Automatic*, 1948, watercolour on paper, 30 x 22.5 cm, Art Gallery of Alberta (right)

Since the 1930s, Nicoll had been producing, exhibiting and selling her work in design.[93] She participated in the National Gallery of Canada's *First National Fine Crafts Exhibition* in June 1957 where she exhibited the sterling silver pin, *Plateau,*[94] also shown in the Canadian Pavilion in the Universal and International Exhibition, Brussels, Belgium in 1958.[95] There were many group-artist design exhibitions in which she exhibited work, including the Canadian

[93] Anonymous article in the *Calgary Albertan,* November 30, 1957, says she made her living selling batik scarves to a city merchant after her return from London, Artist's File, NGC Library and Archives.
[94] *First National Fine Crafts Exhibition* (Ottawa; NGC, 1957), cat. 73.
[95] The exhibit also toured these Canadian venues: Winnipeg Art Gallery; London Public Library and Museum; and Art Gallery of Hamilton. See photograph verso, PA 2435 which lists her work as shown in Belgium for the *First National Fine Crafts Exhibition*, File 19, Nicoll Fonds.

Handicrafts Guild and Alberta Craft exhibitions.[96] In *Alberta Craft '62* she showed thirteen works in jeweled media and for the first time in a design exhibition one of her abstract paintings, *First Snow.* Her recycling of titles parallel to those used for her paintings demonstrated that there were obvious intersections between her work in design and her paintings.[97] In these modestly-scaled bracelets, rings, pendants and earrings, colour, form and shape played important roles and these works were abstractions in themselves.[98] In what was her only known solo exhibition of her non-painting art practice, *M. Nicoll, Sculpture to Wear: Gold, Silver, Bronze* [Figure 23] she identified these objects as "wearable sculpture," and a three-dimensional art practice for the body.[99] As this brief exhibit history reveals, Nicoll exhibited her design work with comparable seriousness to her abstract paintings.[100]

Nicoll made many contributions to the craft-design professions including volunteerism and publishing.[101] Her writings stressed the artist's place in a changing modern world and underscored the importance of craftsmanship,[102] but among her most significant works in the design field were her batik paintings on silk which, by the mid-1960s, had secured her a solid

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[96] "Entry form," *Canadian Handicrafts Guild Exhibition*, *Stratford Shakespearean Festival,* May 1962, Stratford Shakespearean Festival, File 115, Nicoll Fonds. She exhibited earrings and brooch, and two fused silver pins, one on bronze and the other on bronze with green onyx and lapis.

[97] Exhibited works were as follows: cat. 1. *Wintersun,* pin and earrings, gold on silver, moonstone and opals, $50; cat. 2. *Grass and Reflected Sun*, pin, gold on silver, pink tourmaline. $18.00; cat. 3. *The Wall,* silver on bronze pin, $20.00; cat. 4. *The City,* pin pendant, silver on bronze, $20.00; cat. 5. *First finger ring and earrings*, gold on silver, tourmalines, $60.00; cat. 6. *Pedestrian,* pin, silver on bronze, $10.00; cat. 7.*Winter Seed*, pin-pendant, gold on silver, aquamarines, $28.00; cat. 8. *Pine Needles*, silver on bronze pin $10.00; cat. 9, Thumb ring, silver and gold tourmaline, $35.00; cat.10 *Snowfence,* pin-pendant and matched earrings, silver on bronze, pink tourmalines, $45.00; cat.11 *Janus,* silver on bronze pin with tourmalines, $30.00; cat. 12 *The Audience,* pin-pendant, silver on bronze, $30.00; cat. 13, unknown; and cat. 14. *First Snow,* oil, 38 x 48" $300.00.

[98] Nicoll's design work in jeweled media has not been collected by public institutions and thus few works are known by the titles assigned in exhibitions but photographs in Nicoll Fonds indicate the extent of her work as documented in Series XXIV, photographs, PA 2435, File 19.

[99] The only exhibit documentation is the invitation and neither a date nor a location is known. See Files 130-133, Nicoll Fonds.

[100] "Canada's Four Corners," Ottawa, represented Nicoll's design work, Correspondence File 116, Nicoll Fonds.

[101] Nicoll was involved in forming the Old Cabin Crafts Society, Calgary and was juror for the Alberta Crafts exhibitions. Her writings included: *Batik* (Edmonton: Cultural Activities branch, c. 1957) 15 pages; "Crafts in the Community" *Leisure* II, no. 3 (September 1960): 15-18; and "Alberta Craft "1963, 15 pages, File 62, Nicoll Fonds.

[102] Marion Nicoll, "Crafts in the Community," 15-16.

national reputation.[103] Her prize-wining *Procession of Birds* (1956: GMAG), [Figures 24a and b] was chosen to display her command of this complex wax resist painting process on fabric. Just as she had conceived her abstractions she considered these works for public wall display, "wall-hangings" as she would name them. Like the earlier *Batik, Procession of Birds* paralleled the visual imagery of her automatic painting process with her fluid use of line and form. By 1967 the differences in abstract imagery between her batik and oil paintings was hardly discernible but it was only rarely and years later that even one of her batiks was shown with her painted abstractions.[104]

Figure 23: *Exhibition Invitation, M. Nicoll: Sculpture to Wear--Gold, Silver, Bronze*, Glenbow Library and Archives (left)

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[103] The story was covered in "Calgary Woman Masters Ancient Wax-Painting Art," *Montreal Gazette*, 30 December 1957. Mary Biner, "Ancient Wax Painting Form Being Taught at Art College," *Calgary Herald*, "World of Women," 8 January 1965 also noted the importance of these works.

[104] She showed one batik in her solo exhibit at Henri Bonli's Toronto gallery in 1967 and, with his advice, raised asking price to $700.00 for a 4 x 7' tapestry to be on par with prices for her paintings. Henri Bonli to Maron Nicoll, 23 February 1967, File 117, Nicoll Fonds. Another batik painting was included in her 1971 artist-couple exhibition *Jim and Marion Nicoll: Paintings* held at Glenbow Alberta Institute as documented in the photograph, PD 769-9 Marion Nicoll Artist's File, Glenbow Library and Archives.

Figures 24a and b: Marion Nicoll, *Procession of Birds*, 1956, fabric dye on silk, dimensions unavailable, Glenbow Museum and Art Gallery (left, general view; right, upper right corner detail)

Nicoll's experiences in institutional employment and exhibitions had spliced her creative identity to accord with traditionally conceived Euro-Canadian gender norms and these socially-structured experiences were further underscored in marriage as Jim Nicoll wrestled with understanding Marion the abstractionist, Marion the teacher-designer and Marion the marriage companion. She had left teaching temporarily after marriage and his work had meant that they had moved some thirteen times during wartime. In postwar though, as she increasingly explored abstraction and continued as principal breadwinner in marriage, Jim made no secret of his thoughts on the abstraction and these differences did not remain private debates as both artists took their opinions to the public realm through media interviews, his short-term role as her press agent for the 1959 exhibition, and his poetry and prose. In this artist-couple relationship Marion pushed Jim to his conceptual limits and he grasped tightly to a representational aesthetic informed by the precision of his training in engineering, having only once experimented with abstraction in the work *Skyscrapers* (c.1970: GMAG). His unease had been brewing since Marion began her automatics during the 1940s and her 1953 testimony illuminates their contrasting views:

> Sometimes we hotly disagree on painting…He does not think that abstract painting offers as much as realistic art and speaks sneeringly of Picasso. On the other hand I believe in the mission of experimental art. At present I am interested in automatic creation…But it is difficult to discuss it with him. He is a precise thinker and an alert speaker and one has not much chance in an argument with him. Perhaps he should have been a lawyer.[105]

There were many in-home-studio interviews like this one occasioned by interest in Marion's artwork in which Jim appears to have interjected and these further illuminate their aesthetic differences. The 1959 press release had clarified his views that abstract art was troublesome for two reasons, aesthetic focus and audience engagement, but there was also the matter of economics. There were such comments as threatening "to rent her out to Expo '70 for a pagoda in order to raise money for groceries," and in the final stanza of one poem "may your abstracts hang on myriad walls and your encaustics pay the taxes."[106] The difficulties of living with a person who claimed she'd prefer not to talk should not be underestimated and Marion would credit Jim as "the only person she ever could have lived with" but she remained no silent partner in this charade. While working on a gold gilt frame in studio during the interview she retorted: "You know what happens to people who get gold leaf on them? They die. So just watch it."[107]

In 1959 Jim had taken on the unofficial job of short-term press agent for Marion's solo exhibition.[108] While he outlined her exemplary qualifications and formal training in abstraction he spent more time attending to the prospects of viewer bewilderment than on supporting Marion's work. He considered that Stan Perrott's explanatory lecture would "clear away some of

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[105] Dushan Bresky, "Teacher Favours Experimental Art: Husband Doesn't Share Opinions," *Calgary Herald,* January 26, 1953.
[106] Jim Nicoll quoted in *Environment '70* (Edmonton: Cultural Development Branch and Edmonton Art Gallery, 1970), unpaginated, File 30, Nicoll Fonds, and Jim Nicoll in the poem "To Marion," in Andrew Oko and Jim Nicoll, *Paintings and Poetry: Jim Nicoll* (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1977)*,* 10.
[107] Marion Nicoll, as quoted in "Environment '70," unpaginated.
[108] For the 1959 PITA show see "Bowness Goes Modern," and the press release for the two-person exhibition, *Drawings and Paintings; Drohan-M. Nicoll* in 1960, File 115, Nicoll Fonds.

the difficulties in the minds of laymen who want to know what modern art is all about."[109] Here, as elsewhere in his writings, Jim Nicoll refrained from commentary specific to Marion's work but his disdain for abstract expression inevitably carried over to her art practice.

Jim Nicoll's poetry and prose was a third forum through which he advanced his disparaging views on abstraction. For many years these writings circulated only in the privacy of their marriage. They were initially given to Marion as dedications but his later-life release of two volumes offers much evidence of what she endured as his marriage companion.[110] The poem "To My Valentine" (1953) referenced the impact of the gender role reversal on Jim's ego as he noted how "My ego wilts or blows its fuses." Jim found Marion's assertive responses the equivalent of "insect stingers" and he took note of the 'fissions" in domestic life.[111] In another much longer dedication poem written for their twenty-ninth wedding anniversary in 1969 he again made reference to his bruised ego, Marion's differing aesthetic views, and his contradictory feelings for her. Her "sovereignty over the kingdom of opinions" and her "aesthetic furnace as the only truth that matters," he noted, were "bitter to the taste of my male ego." He closed the poem with a bittersweet metaphor: "But you've a pill like Dunhill's Eastern mixture that imparts a subtle charm which soothes, mystifies, and fascinates."[112]

Jim Nicoll was an educated professional well-read in literature, philosophy and art but for him abstraction presented an insurmountable obstacle.[113] His conception of the visual world had

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[109] Jim Nicoll, "Bowness Goes Modern," 2.
[110] The two volumes were: Andrew Oko and Jim Nicoll, *Paintings and Poetry: Jim Nicoll*; and Jim Nicoll, *The Poetry and Prose of Jim Nicoll* (Calgary: Sandstone, 1980). Prior to releasing these volumes he published in the University of Alberta's Alumni magazine, *The New Trail,* and the *Alberta Poetry Yearbook*. Dates and volumes for these previous releases are listed in Jim Nicoll, *The Poetry and Prose of Jim Nicoll,* 108.
[111] Jim Nicoll, "To My Valentine, 1953," in Andrew Oko and Jim Nicoll, *Paintings and Poetry: Jim Nicoll*, 9.
[112] Jim Nicoll, "To Marion, Anniversary," September 21, 1969, in Andrew Oko and Jim Nicoll, *Paintings and Poetry: Jim Nicoll*, 10.
[113] Jim Nicoll read works by and about William Faulkner, Jean-Paul Sartre, Paul Klee, Albrecht Durer, Jean-Dominique Ingres, Clive Bell, Max Beerhohm, Le Corbusier, and Walter Pater. See Jim Nicoll, "primitive revolutionary ardour," File 108, Nicoll Fonds.

long ago been configured by his life as an engineer, qualities apparent in his paintings in their linear precision. For him abstractionists were "deviants from the golden laws" and these painters of "infinite space" he wrote were doomed to "disappear quite without a trace."[114] Frustrated by the spiraling cult of art history's "isms" in the modern world of painting he accused the likes of Paul Klee of deploying "spastic technique and subconscious leaks."[115] Abstract art was for Jim Nicoll "pollution" and an "optic irritant."[116]

A full-time postwar teaching load and Marion's abstractions had meant serious changes in his later life and her mid-life given their age difference. Increasingly, the studio was a social gathering space for discussions among students and friends, critics were coming and going to see her work, and there was her *necessity* of production. Jim reported the Nicoll family kitchen to be a shambles with "grease on dinner plates" and "guck on pots" and critiqued her attention to personal care, and on one occasion described her as "arrogant."[117] In accounting for his own feelings he explained he had been left "conspicuously without escort."[118] Blind in his mind to life's day-to-day realities Jim felt that her "creative abstracts and the Canada Council [had] shield[ed] her from eroded socks, lost buttons and bed-panning the cats."[119]

Despite Jim's disdain for abstraction, however, Marion and her abstractions soon became the centre of his writings. In the two prose sections of his second volume he fictionalized the shift to abstraction in Calgary with Marion as the character "Fuchsia Hogshair" who was the movement's effective leader.[120] The devotion she had granted so generously through their pre-marital courtship was now much changed as Jim longed for her attention: "Thus may the

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[114] Jim, "A Painter of Infinite Space," in Andrew Oko and Jim Nicoll, *Paintings and Poetry: Jim Nicoll*, 24.
[115] Jim Nicoll, "A Painter Once Willed," in Andrew Oko and Jim Nicoll, *Paintings and Poetry: Jim Nicoll*, 25.
[116] Jim Nicoll, "A Masque," and "The President of Flurry Oils Ltd. Shows His Latest Acquisition," in Jim Nicoll, *The Poetry and Prose of Jim Nicoll*, 98, 60.
[117] Jim Nicoll, "To Marion" in Andrew Oko and Jim Nicoll, *Painting and Poetry: Jim Nicoll*, 29
[118] Jim Nicoll, "To Marion: Words to a Solemn Musik," in Jim Nicoll, *The Poetry and Prose of Jim Nicoll*, 16.
[119] Ibid., 16.
[120] Jim Nicoll, "Section Two-Prose, Parts I and Part II," in Jim Nicoll, *The Poetry and Prose of Jim Nicoll*, 70-106.

excesses of your hectic day / In unctuous purgation pass away."[121] "I shiver in a dressing gown and await your melting."[122] Memories of those who knew Jim Nicoll personally recount his humour, wit and irony, his reputation as *raconteur*.[123] Many have remarked on his complete adoration of her, but it is difficult to deny in the face of this evidence that Jim was not unsettled by their much-changed postwar household gender order. By 1969 he named their life together as "the middle Matriarchy of Marion Nicoll."[124] His final critique of Marion's abstractions was founded on economic grounds.

Marion Nicoll took exemplary care to document her painting and printmaking activities. All references to income generation from 1959 onwards were rigorously tracked and her notes confirm active exhibitions, sales and rental records despite his views that sales of her paintings were cause for economic concern to their sustenance.[125] While sales of the larger abstractions were not abundant there were nonetheless several and the lower-priced clay block prints extending from her abstract painting practice also generated a steady income.[126] Following her retirement she continued to supplement income well by actively selling works to public and private collections despite the workload of this administration in the absence of a dedicated art dealer working to advance her practice.[127] In marriage, she was praised by Jim for the sales of

[121] Jim Nicoll, "The Action Painter," in Jim Nicoll, *The Poetry and Prose of Jim Nicoll*, 53.
[122] Jim Nicoll, "Chanson," in Jim Nicoll, *The Poetry and Prose of Jim Nicoll,* 1966, 13.
[123] Andrew Oko, "Introduction," in *Paintings and Poetry: Jim Nicoll* , 3, and also Richard Johnson, "Introduction," in Jim Nicoll, *The Poetry and Prose of Jim Nicoll*, 3.
[124] Jim Nicoll, "To Marion," in Jim Nicoll and Andrew Oko, *Paintings and Poetry: Jim Nicoll*, 11.
[125] Marion Nicoll, "Untitled Painting and Prints Journal," File 121, Nicoll Fonds.
[126] Ibid., unpaginated. The painting and prints journal indicates several private sales which cannot be named here because of Canada's current legislation in the" Privacy Act (2006, chapter P-21), see the website at www.statscanada.gc.ca. Public sales were slower than private ones through the 1960s but the major canvas *Ancient Wall* sold to the Edmonton Art Gallery in 1963 and by the later 1960s and 1970s major works sold to non-profit public art collections including the Alberta College of Art (*Slough,* 1964, sold in 1968), Calgary Allied Arts Foundation (*One Year*, 1971, sold in 1971) and Glenbow Alberta Institute (*Bowness Road, 2 AM*, 1963, sold in 1976).
[127] Between 1961 and 1978 Marion's work was shown at several different commercial and artist-cooperative venues including; Kensington (Calgary), Focus (Edmonton), Jacox (Edmonton), Vincent Price (Chicago), Henry Bonli (Toronto), Yellow Door (Winnipeg) and finally Masters Gallery (Calgary). Several of these were short-lived due to

her craft-design work, of which there are fewer records, and criticized for the sparse sales of her abstractions.

Marion Nicoll's move in aesthetic opposition away from the parallel track she and Jim had once shared as an artist-couple in representational landscape art left Marion with complex identity questions in her marital and professional lives. In provincial and Prairie Canadian contexts her reputation as female abstractionist was solidified by these regionalized geographies, outcomes which may well have been different ones had she stayed in New York. Barnet had seemed certain of her future there but had she stayed her social recognition may well have equated to near oblivion as the tides of abstraction shifted to Conceptualism, Pop and other idioms. As Barnet soon realized, the supremacy of abstraction was unstable and by the mid-1960s his output of such works had ended.[128] In Calgary, however, Nicoll's two painting exhibitions consolidated her reputation as a committed abstractionist in regional and national exhibition markets. Throughout her life as female artist, however, there was one more complication in her self-determination of a public sex-gender identity—her signatures. This history yields further insights into Nicoll's framing of her creative and marital identities as she navigated the sex-gender divides of postwar art production and exhibition: in addition to the concept of sexual crossing, she also engaged in androgyny to suppress public awareness of her female identity.

When Joyce Wieland proclaimed on opening night at the exhibition *Some Canadian Women Artists* that "there is no need for women to hide their work anymore," or to "sign a poem

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financial problems (namely Yellow Door, Jacox, and Bonli). In these two decades no gallery consistently exhibited her work and no one ever handled her public art exhibition loans, and sales of her work. Throughout her commercial exhibitions she appears to have done all this administration herself.

[128] Barnet had been working with the figure for large works in the early 1960s and these subjects remained his focus after the mid-1960s. Robert Doty, Chapters V and VI, "New Images of the Figure" and "The Imaginary World" in *Will Barnet* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1984), 71-143.

anonymously" she may well have found Marion Nicoll in staunch disagreement over this proclamation of change rather than continuity in women's social plight.[129] In the works exhibited in the 1959 and 1963 exhibitions and afterwards, her signatory identities indicate an artist disquieted by the relationship between aesthetics and personal identity, uncertain of the place of her female self in postwar creative practice and its representation in public life. There was the omission of "Marion" from her signature to the contraction "M. Nicoll" and her use of this identity as an exhibit title for both 1959 and 1963 shows.[130] Alternatively she also used the initials "MN" to sign many works. Before marriage in the 1930s she had used her birth name "Marion Mackay" but afterwards used the identities "M. Nicoll" and "MN" for works in all media to the last days she was able to make images.[131] Not once did she make reference to her middle name, Florence or "F" or use "Mrs." Practices of female authorship anonymity in painting and writing were nothing new to the twentieth-century practitioner schooled as Nicoll was in the masculine pasts of art history and literature, but neither had she considered using a pseudonym. Her identities still retained some parts of the self even as they were also suppressions of her sex-gender identity as female subject. With this point in mind, it is relevant to note how rare it was that Nicoll ever participated in women's exhibitions.[132]

As Anne M. Wagner has argued, the use of partial, compressed and altered signatory identities in the context of painter Lee Krasner's work was "a means of keeping the self out of it,

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[129] Joyce Wieland, "Opening," 20 November 1975," 1991-014/002, File 38, Wieland Fonds.
[130] The 1959 hand sheet accompanying the show with the illustration *Thursday's Model* (1959: NGC) used her androgynous signature "M Nicoll" as the title of the exhibition and she used the same title in 1963 but not to the same effect with Kemball's illustration of her.
[131] Some examples of Nicoll's use of 'MN' as identity include: *Barn*, 1943; *Seated Model*, 1957; *Winter Impending*, 1962; *Solstice,* 1963, *End of Summer*, 1963; and *Foothills B*, 1969. Some examples of works using "M. Nicoll" include: *Spring*, *Sicilia III* and *Thursday's Model* (all 1959); *Calgary II,* 1964; *Ancient Wall,* 1962; *Prophet,* 1960; *Winter II: Moon in the Morning,* 1961; *Bowness Road,* 1963; *Birth of a Legend*, 1969; and *Runes B*, 1972. Both identities "MN" and "M. Nicoll" were used on her prints.
[132] She showed only once in a women-only exhibition with her Chicago dealer, Vincent Price in the exhibition *Quatre Femmes.*

a protective device" as part of an effort "to avoid the art being read as that of a woman" for "to paint like a man was to insist that one was not the Other."[133] Krasner used both "Lee Krasner" and "LK" as her signatures and the contraction "Lee" she contracted from her birth names Lena/ Leonore. For Wagner, Krasner's signatory identities were a means of activating an androgynous subject position and engaging in processes of talismanic neutering and anonymity. For Nicoll, however, her first name did not compress to effect the same result as Lee Krasner's—Leonore to "Lee," Marion to "Mar." Nonetheless, Nicoll's signatory identities were, like Krasner's, suppressions of her sex-gender identity in a male-dominated context where control over the image of self and gender in public space were uncertain and often impossible to control. Nicoll, like Krasner, shared the problem of how to frame her identity every time she signed a work.

To invoke an androgynous, compressed or partial signatory identity was not to resolve or stabilize one's sex-gender identity. As Kari Weil has argued, a *denial* of sexual difference is integral to conceptions of androgyny, and arguably also the use of compressed and partial identities. She explains that in Platonic thought the androgyne was a figure of primordial oneness, a totality and union of opposed forces (defined as masculine/feminine), a dialectic synthesis composed of two halves.[134] The concept privileged the male as the first of those two halves with the masculine half as the objectively known one and the feminine half as the unknown "Other." The female half is thus the half to make that knowledge complete in the initiation of a double sexed being.[135] Once again "woman" represents difference through her lack/atrophy, a fall from oneness into division resulting in a search for reunion.[136] As Weil

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[133] These two quotes are drawn from Anne Wagner, "Krasner's Presence, Pollock's Absence," in *Significant Others: Creativity and Intimate Partnership* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 236; and Anne M. Wagner, "Lee Krasner as L.K.," *Representations,* 25 (Winter 1989): 48.
[134] Kari Weil, *Androgyny and the Denial of Difference* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1992), 2.
[135] Ibid., 2.
[136] Ibid., 3.

argues, these histories demonstrate that androgyny has offered women less in the way of role models than men, because, while androgyny relaxes the gender stereotypes for men allowing a stretching of masculinity by appropriating the "best" of women, the opposite does not hold true for women. Thus, while androgyny has attempted to uphold the concept of oneness and wholeness it instead stands as an inscription of difference for the female subject because androgyny framed in these terms was to remain "Other" in a still male paradigm.

Nicoll's multi-media art and signatory practices on her abstract paintings clearly showed some of the challenges she faced in expressing her sex-gender identity through strategies of compressed, partial and androgynous methods. They expose that an androgynous subject position at best enabled the collapse of her female self with the male painter-abstractionist identity: recall her comment that "no man in his right mind would become a painter by choice today. I paint because I must." Marion Nicoll's sex-gender identity was of necessity a revisable reality as she sought recognition as an artist following marriage. During the 1930s she was pressing Jim for marriage, wondering why she was deserving of his attention and appealing to tropes of femininity by fretting over her appearance and weight.[137] Through her signatory practices after marriage, however, her sex-gender representation as artist worked to suppress her sex-gender difference in public life. As a young adult she had taken Jim's name in marriage but afterwards did not want either her gender or marital status to be recognized. In her two inaugural exhibitions of 1959 and 1963, she had settled contently in the clothes of abstract painting and would rest in the critical record as a path-breaking abstractionist in Alberta. The contexts of making art in a marriage that did not support her painting in abstraction and in exhibiting in a "one-man" exhibition culture had pushed her female subjectivity into the background. As Weil has argued then, androgyny was for Nicoll an inscription of difference rather than a statement of

[137] Marion to Jim Nicoll, Correspondence from the 1930s, Files 23-30, Nicoll Fonds.

subject wholeness. Her exhibitions only partially accounted for Marion Nicoll the painter, teacher and designer and she focussed on being understood as artist first and woman second. Nonetheless, it was the only livable life she envisioned possible at this temporal moment.

Joyce Wieland and Showing Solo in the Commercial Exhibition System, 1960-1962

Joyce Wieland held two solo exhibitions which included her abstract paintings, the first one at Dorothy Cameron's Here & Now Gallery in 1960 and the second one at the Avrom Isaacs Gallery in 1962. Her entrance to the exhibition market and her commitment to abstraction differed in significant ways from Nicoll but both artists shared experiences of increased visibility through their engagement with abstraction. It was not until 1966 that Wieland held her first solo exhibition in the public art gallery system and, in contrast, Nicoll never found a stable relationship with a single commercial dealer.[138] After settling with Isaacs Gallery in 1961 Wieland's work was well represented for over two decades with regular in-gallery exhibitions, sales to public and private collections, and ongoing administration supporting her inclusion in important solo and group-artist exhibitions. Wieland also used the partial signatory identities "Wieland" and "J. Wieland" on her abstract paintings.[139] Unlike Nicoll, though, she never carried practices of sex-gender ambiguity to her exhibit titles, using consistently her full name as one form of her identity. In her two formative exhibitions she raised questions of sex-gender subjectivity to contest sexist and erotic female representation in the works of her male peers.

[138] I use the term public art gallery to define those spaces whose mission was not-for-profit as opposed to for-profit commercial art galleries. Nicoll showed commercially with Gallery 1, 3-14 October, 1961 but a paucity of information on this exhibit prevents its analysis here. Her subsequent commercial exhibit history is detailed in Chapter Five. Wieland's first not-for-profit solo was "Joyce Wieland, Retrospective Exhibition," at the artist-run centre 20/20 Gallery, 9-27 November 1966, London, Ontario, Isaacs Gallery Fonds, 1996, 036-026, File 12, Clara Thomas Library and Archives, York University. This was her fourth solo exhibit since 1960.
[139] The works *War Memories* (1960) and *Summer Blues-Do Not* (1961) were signed "Wieland." Some works like the painting *Redgasm* (1960) were not signed on the front.

There was, for example, Dennis Burton's "Garterbeltmania" series depicting women's splayed limbs and genitalia in exotic lingerie,[140] and the still-understudied gendered significations of her husband's seven-year preoccupation with the *Walking Woman* which regularly cast the subject (Carla Bley the musician) as a two-dimensionally shapely silhouette whose individuality was suppressed beneath abstracted form.[141] Wieland's exhibitions were not solely dedicated to abstraction but included works in other media concerned with sexual pleasure and intimacy, topics she had begun exploring in the later 1950s. In her abstractions, Wieland would not leave the self out but rather insist on its presence through her concerns with female embodiment.

Wieland shared with Nicoll the experience of only a few female mentors and artist-friends in the abstract art scene. As discussed in Chapter Two, Doris McCarthy had been important to Wieland, but in abstract painting Wieland appears not to have established significant relationships with those few other women concurrently pursuing the idiom.[142] Like Nicoll, Wieland's engagement with abstraction was shaped through her exposure to male artists, namely those of the Toronto art scene and also some New York artists.[143] Expressionist painting had already been part of her married life for two years since Snow had been painting such works since 1958 and fruitful discussions about expressionist painting were likely to have been among their artist-couple discussions.[144] Wieland was exposed to the abstractions of Graham Coughtry

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[140] Figurative paintings from the series' *Gate View Girl* and *Room-Mates* are among those images I refer to, as reproduced in Joan Murray, *Dennis Burton, A Retrospective* (Oshawa: Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa, 1977), 50-55.

[141] Louise Dompierre's *Walking Woman Works: Michael Snow, 1961-67* (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1983) is the only major critical writing on these works but she doesn't comment on female subjectivity and gender representation.

[142] Other female abstractionists working and showing in Canada included Hortense Gordon, Alexandra Luke, Rita Letendre, Kay Graham and Suzanne Meloche but records suggest Wieland had no relationships with these women.

[143] A line of New York influences on Wieland's abstractions has been traced by Sandra Paikowski and Marie Fleming to include Jim Dine, Jackson Pollock, Wilhelm de Kooning, and Jasper Johns. See Sandra Paikowsky, *Joyce Wieland: A Decade of Painting* (Montreal: Concordia University, 1985), 2-6; Marie Fleming, "Joyce Wieland: A Perspective," in *Joyce Wieland* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario and Key Porter, 1987), 17-70.

[144] Snow's *Petrograd* (1958: AGO); *News* (1959: AEAC), *Notes from the Underground* (1959: PC) and *Arrival* (1960: PC), as illustrated in *Visual Art, 1951-1993: The Michael Snow Project* edited by Dennis Reid, Philip Monk

and Gordon Rayner at the two galleries representing her work, and she studied the Painters Eleven inaugural abstract painting exhibition in 1957.[145] Wieland knew about New York abstraction from the trips she and Snow made before moving there and her acumen on the subject was evident when she critiqued Willem de Kooning's *February* (1957: PC) in 1961. She had admired the painting's structure and presence but concluded it to be an "ultimately tragic" work that he had not critically separated himself from to ensure its visual coherency.[146] Unlike Marion Nicoll, whose move to abstraction had been built from exposure to and confidence gained from her New York experiences, Wieland's contact with and time spent in New York coincided with her strategic exit from abstraction.

Wieland's 1960 exhibition at Here & Now Gallery synchronized with Cameron's program concentrating on experimental contemporary art and abstraction.[147] She had recruited Wieland through Kerneman Gallery where Wieland had shown in a 1957 group-artist exhibition.[148] Cameron was keen to launch this young talent as the gallery's only female artist at the only Toronto gallery owned by a woman.[149] Critic Sara Bowser published a fulsome review granting laudatory praise to Wieland's keen sense of wit and sensuality, tragedy and comedy and she profiled the three recent expressionist abstractions, *Time Machine* (1959: Crown Life),

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and Louise Dompierre (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, The Power Plant and Alfred Knopf, 1994), 220-229, 235, 237.

[145] Wieland's copy of the *Painters Eleven* exhibition, 31 October-16 November 1957 at The Park Gallery, 17 Avenue Road is in File 10, 1999-003/003, Wieland Fonds. So the documentation suggests, her limited travel elsewhere in Canada in these early years meant that she had little exposure to the Montreal organizations dedicated to Automatism and Plasticiens movements.

[146] Joyce Wieland, "de Kooning's *February*," *Evidence* 2 (1961): unpaginated

[147] By then Cameron was representing Max Bates, Gershon Iskowitz, Toni Onley, Jock Macdonald, Josef Drenters, and her husband, Ron Bloore.

[148] Jane Lind, *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire*, 113, and the letter Dorothy Cameron to Joyce Wieland, 4 April 1959, 1994-004/001, Wieland Fonds.

[149] Cameron soon after took on representation of some other women including Shirley Wales in 1962, Rita Letendre in 1963, and Marion Greenstone in 1964 but Wieland appears as the only female artist in 1960. See the website, *Dorothy Cameron Gallery* at www.ccca.ca.

Gammidge and *Accident*.[150] Gestural brushwork, circular forms, textured painting surfaces and inclusion of free-forming drips of paint were expressionist strategies employed in all three paintings. For Cameron, the exhibit had occasioned praise of Wieland's abstract paintings but not her drawings and relief constructions and the Wieland-Cameron relationship soon became strained.

The show had hardly been an economic success but this concern was less significant than disagreements over Wieland's subsequent production.[151] By mid-year 1961 Cameron had grown impatient for more abstract paintings.[152] Wieland had conveyed her difficulties regarding the shared home-studio situation with Snow at their modest one-bedroom apartment on Church Street where a small room extending from the living room was Snow's studio. Wieland took over this space after Snow found another one separate from their home but it was too small to accommodate her abstractions. There was also the problem of Wieland's time. In a postwar marriage culture which aligned women with the domestic realm, household responsibilities had fallen to Wieland. In these early years, both artists were also freelancing, Snow playing jazz at night and Wieland working part-time in graphic design. Time and space then were both factors in what Cameron perceived to be Wieland's inconsistent creative output.

As a solution to her studio difficulties Wieland took up an offer of space (the coach house loft) at the home of friends and patrons Donna Lawson and Georges Montague in 1959 where the

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[150] Sara Bowser, "Joyce Wieland" *The Canadian Architect* (October 1960), 69-71. Bowser was an early enthusiast of Wieland's work and followed her work again in "A Feminine Statement," a 1962 review of her solo show at Isaacs. Collection locations and dates for these works are not known but the latter two works are illustrated in Bowser's article.

[151] Dorothy Cameron to Joyce Wieland, Sales Receipt totalling $104.00 owed to Wieland, 26 September 1960, Wieland Fonds, 1990-014/004. There is no known exhibit listing for this show.

[152] Dorothy Cameron to Joyce Wieland, 6 June 1961, 1993-004/005, File 29, Wieland Fonds.

increased scale of her abstractions could be better accommodated.[153] Meanwhile, however, Cameron admonished Wieland's discipline and seriousness: "I fail to understand how you can expect to be taken seriously as a painter unless you take painting seriously enough to work at it."[154] The possibility for a supportive women's network between artist and dealer was here foreclosed but female communities of strength would afterwards become central to Wieland's emerging feminism and her subsequent production of works made in collaboration with women.[155] Wieland moved to Isaacs Gallery shortly after the confrontational exchange. The dealer switch proved fortuitous for Wieland as Here & Now Gallery closed permanently in 1966 following a censorship trial which Cameron lost.[156] The trial had ensued as a result of the group-artist exhibition she had presented, *Eros '65,* and her effort to support anti-censorship in Canada eventually crippled hers and the gallery's finances.

Wieland had shown previously with Isaacs Gallery under its former appellation, the Greenwich Gallery of Contemporary Art (formed 1956) in 1959.[157] The switch to Isaacs Gallery was supported by Wieland's marriage because Snow, alongside painter Robert Hedrick, endorsed her representation to Isaacs.[158] Snow looked after both his and Wieland's contracts with

[153] The Montagues commissioned the *Michael Montague Quilt* (1966) for their son, and owned *Patriotism* (1967), plates 36, and 56, in Fleming, *Joyce Wieland*, 1987. They also offered her time to paint at their summer home in Gatineau, Quebec.
[154] Dorothy Cameron to Wieland, 6 June 1961.
[155] I refer to Wieland's long-standing friendship with Jean Sutherland Boggs during and after her tenure as director of the National Gallery of Canada and for artwork her collaboration with women on the subway mural *Barren Ground Caribou*, 1977.
[156] Brenda Cossman, *Censorship and the Arts* (Toronto: Ontario Association of Art Galleries, 1995), 13-14. Seven works were seized by the Toronto Police Morality Squad and forcibly removed from the exhibition and Cameron was charged with exhibiting obscene objects. She fought the trial to the Supreme Court of Canada with considerably support from the artists, art critics and dealers.
[157] Wieland showed twenty-six drawings and four oil paintings in the *Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by Gordon Rayner and Joyce Wieland*, held 20 February-March 1959, Greenwich Gallery of Contemporary Art, 763 Bay Street, Toronto.
[158] Reference to the Snow-Hedrick referrals is documented by Jane Lind, *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire*, 124.

Isaacs.[159] Snow had shown only once with Cameron in a group-artist exhibit, but had been represented by Isaacs since 1957. At Isaacs, Wieland's practice was now folded into another important contemporary art gallery but direct comparison of her works with Snow was inevitable given their parallel exhibition presence and Wieland now contended with being directly shadowed by Snow's expanding reputation. As one critic observed; "He was not *A* Toronto artist. He was *THE* Toronto artist. That is a hard road to hoe. You get up every morning and down the hall or on the other side of the bed is *THE* Toronto artist."[160] Cameron had offered Wieland the possibility of a more autonomous commercial exhibition record at arm's length from Snow, but through Wieland's exhibitions at Isaacs the appellation "artist's wife" would be almost endlessly recycled by Toronto media. Witness the 1963 exhibition review in which her marriage to Snow was mentioned in the opening comment and the accompanying photograph depicted her seated near one of his *Walking Woman* floor sculptures.[161] Even in her solo show then, her exhibition was layered by Snow's shadow and she now also found herself in the midst of a formidable "boys club."[162]

In keeping with the artist-dealer contracts stipulating regular exhibitions, Isaacs wasted no time granting Wieland a solo exhibition in January 1962, just six months after the dealer switch.[163] Despite Cameron's criticisms the preceding year had actually been a prolific one and Wieland showed twenty-five new works. *Balling* (1961; NGC), [Figure 25] and *Time Machine # 2* (1961; AGO), [Figure 26] were among her new abstract paintings but her collage-constructions

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[159] Contract Agreement, Isaacs Gallery and Joyce Wieland, Michael Snow Fonds, Art Gallery of Ontario, E.P. Taylor Library, Box 13, File "General Correspondence." Contract stipulations were the same for both artists.
[160] Robert Fulford in interview with Jane Lind, *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire*, 117.
[161] Helen Parmalee, "Joyce is a Zen Cook," *Toronto Telegram,* November 23, 1963.
[162] Anne Kahane was the only other female artist then showing with Isaacs. See Judi Schwartz et al. *Isaacs Seen: 50 Years on the art front, a gallery scrapbook* (Toronto: Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Hart House, University of Toronto Art Centre, Textile Museum of Canada and Art Gallery of Ontario, 2005), 157,
[163] *Joyce Wieland*, 31 January-20 February, 1962. See exhibit listing in *True Patriot Love* exhibition file, NGC, 12-4, 427, 1970-71.

made up much of the exhibition. *Time Machine # 2* and *Balling* were continued explorations in abstract expressionism but using now a canvas-stain technique rather than an expressionist thick-surface build-up of paint as she had done in works such as *Accident* (1960) and the earlier version of *Time Machine* (1959). Both paintings demonstrated her rapid absorption of the options she saw possible for expression in abstraction between her first and second exhibitions.

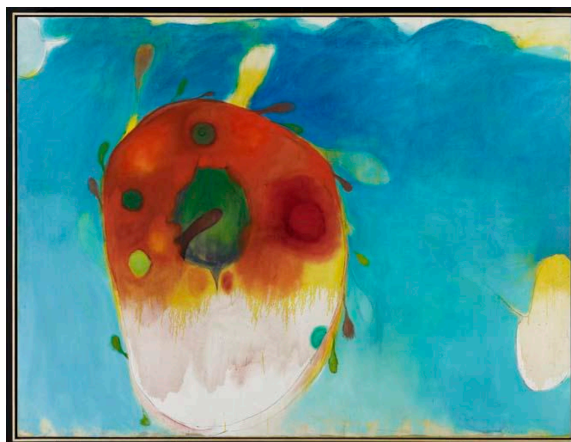

Figure 25: Joyce Wieland, *Balling,* 1961, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Canada (left)

Figure 26: Joyce Wieland, *Time Machine # 2*, 1961, oil on canvas, 203.2 x 269.9 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario (right)

Wieland's critics pursued the significance of sexual content in her work by building on her oral testimony of them as "sex poetry" and her titles frequently alluding to sexual experiences.[164] Wieland shared with Nicoll a desire to say very little about these abstractions and only offered the vague comment that "I had a deep necessity to make them."[165] These abstractions have engendered plural and differing interpretations within contexts of sexual expression set out by Wieland and the painting *Balling* is an excellent example. Lauren Rabinovitz interpreted the work using the title's slang reference to sexual intercourse and saw its

[164] Reference to Wieland's use of "sex poetry" is made by Marie Fleming in "Joyce Wieland: A Perspective," 32 and also the two reviews by Robert Fulford, "Wieland" in "World of Art," *Toronto Daily Star*, February 3, 1962 and Sara Bowser, "A Feminine Statement," 1999-003/007, File 45, Wieland Fonds.

[165] Joyce Wieland as cited in Marie Fleming, "Joyce Wieland: A Perspective," 32.

iconography as phallic while in retrospect Wieland described this same work as a statement of her infertility.[166] Critics of both versions of *Time Machine* have interpreted these as statements on the female biological cycle.[167] It was, however, Wieland's assertion of a voice of difference, one which could mark the specificity of her experience as female subject that was central to the content in these abstractions which were continuations of subjects explored in her late-1950s erotic drawings addressing male and female sexual pleasure. In *The Kiss* (1960: PC) a globular white paint form isolated on a dark colour field mimics the shape of female vulva and in *Redgasm* (1960: PC), [Figure 27] a fusion of exuberant red painting is conjoined with titling related to sexual climax.[168] If these interpretations represent the salient ones thus far to emerge from Wieland's abstractions then it is her insistence on female embodiment that so distinguishes her abstractions from Marion Nicoll's disembodied ones. Wieland did not ultimately leave her female self out of her abstractions and this theme increasingly emerged central to her sex-gender identity.

Figure 27: Joyce Wieland, *Redgasm,* 1960, oil on canvas, 71 x 117 cm, Private Collection

[166] Lauren Rabinovitz, "The Development of Feminist Strategies in the Experimental Films of Joyce Wieland," in *The Films of Joyce Wieland,* 108. Reference to Wieland's infertility in relationship to this work is cited in Marie Fleming, "Joyce Wieland: A Perspective," in *Joyce Wieland*, 32.
[167] Marie Fleming, 32-35.
[168] These works could have been included in Wieland's show at Here & Now but without an exhibition content listing this can't be confirmed.

In making these paintings Joyce Wieland posed important questions of what might constitute a voice of sexual difference and female embodiment in understanding the subject "woman" in the wake of Freudian psychoanalysis. When Lucy Lippard posed the question "is there a female imagery?"[169] she considered such formal possibilities as "circles, domes, eggs, spheres, boxes, biomorphic shapes, striations or layering. But that's too specific. It's more interesting to think about fragments…networks, everything about everything."[170] In the debates about sex-gender essentialism that soon critiqued this line of thinking there would be no consensus since such questions came under scrutiny for their reduction of women's sexual difference to biological determinism and the gridding of sex-gender difference as a binary relationship based on a nature/culture-female/male divide.[171] Nonetheless, the question pointed to the necessity of expanding subjectivity beyond singular masculine terms of reference.

In her critique of Freud's conception of sexual subjectivity as singular and masculine, Luce Irigaray theorized in *The Sex Which Is Not One*, *Speculum of the Other Woman* and other writings that it was fundamental to understand differences in female sexual anatomy and pleasure from female viewpoints if subjectivity was to be pluralized. Irigaray reworked Lacan's privileging of and conceptions of the visible through a critique of his understanding of the mirror as convex, that which would show the outside and privilege the phallus. In her search for "a subjectivity in the feminine" Irigaray asserted the mirror's potential as a concave form, for its possibilities in understanding interiority, that which was not visible—the complexity of female sexual design and her multiple erotic and pleasure zones. Irigaray's recasting of the female subject's interior biological complexity asserted the female subject as active, not passive, in

[169] Lippard, "What is Female Imagery?" in *From the Centre* (New York: Dutton, 1975), 81-83.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking* (New York: Routledge, 1989) was a core text addressing this problem.

sexual expression.[172] In contrast to Freud's line of thinking as outlined in key texts including "On Femininity," Irigaray's interrogation concentrated on *what* woman is rather than on understanding *how* she comes into being.[173]

As Irigaray contributed to the formation of a language of description and experience that could accommodate the female subject differently, so too Wieland initiated such an inquiry in her work as visual artist, posing the question of what a visual iconography through which to write one's sexual difference might look like. As Wieland and Irigaray each came to terms with, such a language had to be written. Wieland sat restlessly in the clothes of abstraction when she first began engaging in this aesthetic form. Through her first two exhibitions she embraced the significance of personal experience and underscored the importance of sexual themes from female perspectives. It was the experience of making these works that prompted her further interest in reading about women, their history and current feminist thought.

Wieland is not known to have read widely in feminist theory but she had read Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex* (1952) and Robin Morgan's anthology *Sisterhood is Powerful* (1970). The latter volume Wieland considered an important one in "dealing with women's problems." "Books like these," she observed, "are the most unifying of all. They just turn your head around overnight. You feel differently, you just aren't the same after those books."[174] While Morgan's anthology opened questions regarding hierarchies of racial and class oppression in the women's movement, the anthology was largely driven by female consciousness-raising and the recovery of women's history; it was concepts like these that Wieland had begun to explore while realizing such paintings as

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[172] Luce Irigaray, in "Any Theory of the "Subject" Has Always Been Appropriated by the "Masculine," in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 133-146.
[173] Luce Irigaray, "On Difference," in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 20-21.
[174] Joyce Wieland as cited in "Kay Armitage Interviews Joyce Wieland," 25, 1999-003/018, File 4, Wieland Fonds.

Laura Secord Saves Upper Canada (1961: CCAB), [Figure 28] shown in the 1962 Isaacs exhibit.

Figure 28: Joyce Wieland, *Laura Secord Saves Upper Canada*, oil on canvas, 111 x 141 cm, Canada Council Art Bank

Wieland first learned about Laura Secord in secondary school and admired her agency, purpose, heroism and bravery for she had travelled alone to inform British troops of a planned invasion of American forces in June 1812, during what came to be known as the War of 1812. Wieland's use of a spiraling concentric circle design traced Secord's route to British troops. As Johanne Sloan argues, Secord would become something of an alter ego for Wieland, and Secord appeared again twice more in major works after this early abstraction.[175] The paintings *Balling, Time Machine* and *Laura Secord Saves Upper*

[175] Johanne Sloan, "Joyce Wieland at the Border: Nationalism, the New Left, and the Question of Political Art in Canada," *JCAH,* XXVI (2005): 82. Wieland staged a performance for her 1971mid-career exhibition at the NGC in which she dressed up as Laura Secord in a bonnet and petticoats and dragged a cow behind her to re-enacted her fabled forerunner's trek during the war of 1812. There is also the quilted assemblage *Laura Secord Quilt* (1975: NGC).

Canada revealed Wieland the abstract painter addressing women's history and female experience but, for her, practices of abstraction were not confined to the act of painting.

Figures 29a and b: Joyce Wieland, *Heart-On*, 1962, red electrical tape, chalk, crayon and ink, with linen and wool on unstretched linen, 177.8 x 51.5 cm, National Gallery of Canada (left, general view; right, detail)

The introduction of Wieland's "cloth hangings" including *Heart-On* (1962: NGC), [Figures 29a and b] to the 1962 Isaacs exhibition demonstrated some of the revisions she had made to her sex-gender identity as woman and artist. *Heart-On* now prioritized the materiality of cloth and of women's work in traditional media, including sewing, and her use of the expressionist stain technique was now subservient to object content and meaning. Word play in the titling ('heart-on'/'hard-on') confounded viewer expectations about the primacy of male sexual expression and anatomy and the heart-shaped cut-outs floating across the fabric surface asserted Wieland's appeal to the emotive. *Heart-On* and other abstractions from the 1962 exhibit were significant contributions to the formation of a visual language of difference, and to the still-ongoing work in feminism of articulating the *differences* within *difference*. The conceptual and technical shifts she had demonstrated in those works shown in the 1962 Isaacs' exhibition

confirmed the salient differences between her work and that of her husband. Those works comprising Wieland's first two solo exhibitions challenged the boundaries of painting, abstraction and male creative subjectivity and they facilitated her re-conceptualization of female subjectivity. Paraphrasing Mulvey, Wieland was indeed "restless in the transvestite clothes" of abstract painting, but in performing this sex-gender identity in her abstractions she also asserted her voice of difference. Additionally, they also offered her conditional visibility in Toronto and in exhibitions representing Canada to other nations such as *19 Canadian Painters '62* where she was one of two female artists in an exhibition dedicated to advancing Canada's contribution to abstract painting.[176]

Wieland's painting supplies went with her to New York when she followed Snow there in late 1962, and there she further explored the place of self in her art practice and continued reflecting on the privileging of the male subject. She remembered one woman asking her, "why don't you paint like them and then maybe you could get a gallery?" Wieland pondered thoughtfully; "Where would I have been as a woman? I felt I had to remain loyal to myself and to my mother and my female line….I decided not to leave my aesthetic behind but to use it, to use my heart to deal with political problems. That was a major step because I could have kept my back turned like everybody else."[177]

For Wieland the move to New York was both stimulating and frightening and this contrast did not make for an easy transition.[178] Relocation had uprooted Wieland from her geographical roots, what limited family she had in Toronto (her sister and

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[176] In *19 Canadian Painters '62* (Louisville: J.B. Speed Art Museum, 1962) Wieland exhibited the three works from the painting-collage series *Summer Blues* cats 53-55, *Rain, Cool* and *Storm* (all 1961). The other female artist was Rita Letendre.
[177] Joyce Wieland as cited in Susan Crean, "Notes from the Language of Emotion: A Conversation with Joyce Wieland," *Canadian Art* (Spring 1987): 64.
[178] Marie Fleming quotes Wieland thus on her contrasting feelings about New York, "I certainly felt that what was going on there was incredible—things were really happening…So I went because I wanted to go…I was excited but scared." As cited in Marie Fleming, "Joyce Wieland: A Perspective," 44.

disenfranchised brother), her network of female friendships and her art dealer.[179] Without an American work permit Wieland's only financial option was working full-time on her art: writing to Av Isaacs she explained "my art is my food."[180] Soon afterwards she and Isaacs worked out a monthly payment schedule to yield her a regular modest income from sporadic sales.[181] It was years more, however, before Isaacs could place Wieland's major works in key collections through sales and her search for a New York dealer yielded no results.[182] Recalling her visit to Elinor Poindexter's gallery where Snow's work met with positive response, Wieland observed, "She's crazy for Mike's stuff—lucky boy—she thinks I'm a pop artist and doesn't like pop art. That wraps me up."[183] Positive critical reception to her paintings in New York was limited to inclusion in Lucy Lippard's acclaimed book, *Pop Art* (1966) where she was framed alongside Snow as one of four artists from Canada working in the Pop idiom.[184] Not one of her paintings is known to have been shown in New York.

It was back to Toronto for her next solo exhibition at Isaacs Gallery in 1963 but, beginning with this exhibit, she ceased showing her abstract paintings in her Isaacs Gallery exhibitions. *Joyce Wieland: New Paintings* was billed as an "all-oil-painting"

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[179] In New York Wieland rebuilt her female network through her work in film by working in co-production with Shirley Clarke on the films on Tom Leary and Andrei Voznesensky, with Mary Mitchell on the film on Norman Mailer, with Betty Ferguson on *Barbara's Blindness*, and with Jane Bryant. See *The Films of Joyce Wieland,* edited by Kathryn Elder, 157-8.

[180] Joyce Wieland to Av Isaacs, undated letter on U.S. Air Corps Stationery 3, 1996-036/026, File 12, Avrom Isaacs Fonds (hereafter Isaacs Fonds).

[181] Av Isaacs to Joyce Wieland, 31 December 1963, 2, 1996-036/026, File 12, Isaacs Fonds.

[182] *Boat Tragedy* sold to the AGO in 1965; *Balling* sold to the NGC in 1968; *Time Machine* sold to McLean foundation and later donated to AGO in 1966; *Heart On* sold to the NGC in 1973; and *Laura Secord Saves Upper* Canada was sold to the Canada Council Art Bank in 1976.

[183] Joyce Wieland to Av Isaacs, 25 September, c. 1965, 1996-036/026, File 12, Isaacs Fonds.

[184] Lucy Lippard, "Europe and Canada," in *Pop Art* (New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), 173-198. See also figure 161 of Wieland's *Young Woman's Blues.* Michael Snow, Dennis Burton and Greg Curnoe were also included in this volume. This book was not accompanied by an exhibition.

show, her last one until 1987 when much later in her career she returned to painting.[185] Included were thirty-nine new works from her first year in New York and these were further reflections on the themes of sex, eroticism, male social privilege and two new topics—disaster and life in a new city. In *Tragedy in the Air or Plane Crash* (1963: VAG) a sequence composition in sixteen frames traces an air plane crashing to the ground from flight. *Stranger in Town* (1963: PC) spoke to Wieland's uncertainty as she settled into New York. In several of these new paintings phallocentric culture was now under new forms of scrutiny. In *Nature Mixes* (1963: PC), [Figure 30], twelve sequenced images traced the morphing of a hand to flower to flaccid penis. In *West 4th* (1963: PC), [Figure 31], two parallel columns of cigarettes morph through various flaccid and semi-erect states with the right column displaying sequencing of lip-cigarette images where the cigarette hangs from bright red women's lips.

Figure 30: Joyce Wieland, *Nature Mixes*, 1963, oil on canvas, 30.5 x 40. 8 cm, Private Collection (left)

Figure 31: Joyce Wieland, *West 4th* 1963, oil on canvas, dimensions unavailable, Private Collection (right)

Wieland's visual critique of the phallic order significantly differentiated her practice from Snow's who was meanwhile developing the much-acclaimed *Walking Woman* project and the

[185] *Joyce Wieland: New Paintings*, Isaacs Gallery, 25 April-15 May, 1987.

film *New York Eye & Ear Control* (1964). Critical reviews of Wieland in Toronto, however, did not concentrate on these points but rather on her secondary status to Snow as "artist's wife," on the difficulties Wieland's subjectivity presented for the male viewer, and on the persistent ideology which worked to relegate women to domesticity. In this exhibition, the identity "kitchen artist" would now also be applied to Wieland when a *Toronto Telegram* reviewer described her as a "dabbler" and "Zen Cook" and made mention of her marriage to Snow on no less than four occasions.[186] David Donnell was disquieted by Wieland's assertion of her female perspective and accused her of "masochistic resentment" and not knowing "any more about the female psyche than the average psychology student." The feel of her paintings he summed up as one of "sentimental self-pity, and self-conscious masquerade."[187]

Wieland did not show solo again at Isaacs for another four years.[188] Between these exhibitions she continued to explore questions of the self and its place in aesthetic expression and she questioned the media in which her object-based art practice had been developing. By 1967 she had left painting behind, enhanced her commitment to fabric assemblages and mixed-media constructions and developed a broad-ranging experimental film production that critiqued the Wieland-Snow family kitchen as site and content for visual expression. In film, Wieland proved herself an important artist who would garner the attention of international film critics and curators over the following decade.

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[186] Helen Parmalee, "Joyce Is A Zen Cook" *Toronto Telegram,* November 23, 1963.
[187] David Donnell, "Joyce Wieland at the Isaacs Gallery, Toronto," *Canadian Art* XXI, no. 2 (March-April 1964): 64.
[188] This exhibit was called "Hangings," 22 March-10 April 1967.

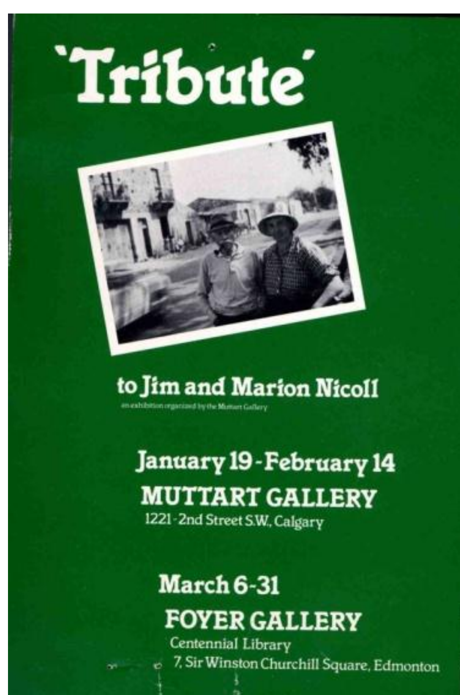
Conclusion

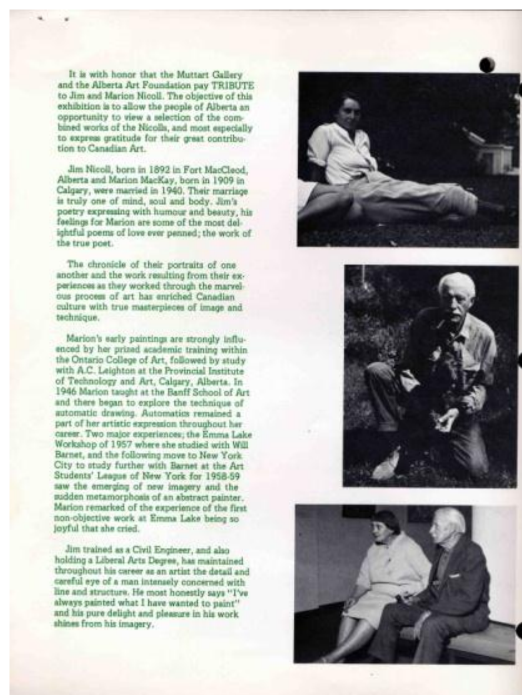
This chapter has considered that the making of abstractions yielded two contrasting experiences for Marion Nicoll and Joyce Wieland and that each artist's experience illustrates the constraining and shadowing effects of marriage on their lives and art practices in the postwar era. Their abstractions had granted both women some visibility in the "one-man - artist's wife" exhibition market but it had been at a price. As exhibiting artists Nicoll and Wieland both navigated subject positions which were socially policed through identity categories specific to the female artist. On the one hand, modernity had enabled their entrance to exhibitions but, on the other hand, it had also called on them to cross the sex-gender divide and inhabit male modes of subjectivity including androgyny to enter into social visibility.

For her 1959 and 1963 exhibitions Marion Nicoll had camouflaged her sex-gender identity in androgynous exhibition titles and signatures on her paintings and she had engaged in a process of sexual crossing by collapsing her female identity as painter under a masculine one—"No man in his right mind would become a painter by choice today. …I paint because I must." However, the media (in which we have seen that Jim Nicoll had a strategic place in 1959) worked to denigrate abstraction and by extension Marion Nicoll's work. The significance of Marion's companionship status challenged her differently than Wieland as she proved herself the prominent artist in this marriage and rewrote Jim's conceptions of domestic and marital order. Throughout the rest of the 1960s Marion Nicoll only exhibited her geometric abstractions and her design and batik work. In 1975, she was honoured with a major retrospective exhibition that concentrated exclusively on her postwar abstract paintings.[189] In seeing her work for the first time after 1959 no one would have known that she had previously made representational

[189] This was the exhibition, *Marion Nicoll: A Retrospective, 1959-1971* (Edmonton: The Edmonton Art Gallery, 1975). The exhibit included some of her abstract clay prints but none of her work in batik and jewellery.

landscape imagery. While still able throughout the 1960s, the identity she advanced into the public record was "M. Nicoll" the androgynous abstractionist painter and the batik and design artist.





It is with honor that the Muttart Gallery and the Alberta Art Foundation pay TRIBUTE to Jim and Marion Nicoll. The objective of this exhibition is to allow the people of Alberta an opportunity to view a selection of the combined works of the Nicolls, and most especially to express gratitude for their great contribution to Canadian Art.

Jim Nicoll, born in 1892 in Fort MacCleod, Alberta and Marion MacKay, born in 1909 in Calgary, were married in 1940. Their marriage is truly one of mind, soul and body. Jim's poetry expressing with humour and beauty, his feelings for Marion are some of the most delightful poems of love ever penned; the work of the true poet.

The chronicle of their portraits of one another and the work resulting from their experiences as they worked through the marvelous process of art has enriched Canadian culture with true masterpieces of image and technique.

Marion's early paintings are strongly influenced by her prized academic training within the Ontario College of Art, followed by study with A.C. Leighton at the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art, Calgary, Alberta. In 1946 Marion taught at the Banff School of Art and there began to explore the technique of automatic drawing. Automatics remained a part of her artistic expression throughout her career. Two major experiences; the Emma Lake Workshop of 1957 where she studied with Will Barnet, and the following move to New York City to study further with Barnet at the Art Students' League of New York for 1958-59 saw the emerging of new imagery and the sudden metamorphosis of an abstract painter. Marion remarked of the experience of the first non-objective work at Emma Lake being so joyful that she cried.

Jim trained as a Civil Engineer, and also holding a Liberal Arts Degree, has maintained throughout his career as an artist the detail and careful eye of a man intensely concerned with line and structure. He most honestly says "I've always painted what I have wanted to paint" and his pure delight and pleasure in his work shines from his imagery.

Figures 32a and b: *Artist-Couple Photographs* from the exhibition brochure, "*Tribute,*" Muttart Art Gallery, 1982

It was an ironic ending in her frail and final years that control over her exhibition representation ultimately moved to a very different track: four of her last exhibitions were artist-couple exhibitions with Jim.[190] In these showings she was rewritten as "Jim and Marion Nicoll" with her artist-couple and marital status underscored. On the occasion of the last of these showings in 1982 no one would quite name her "the artist's wife." Nonetheless, her heterosexuality and companionship status as married subject were foregrounded. The brochure accompanying the last of these two-artist exhibitions was complete with photographs

[190] The specifics of these are cited in Chapter Five and were discussed in a conference paper featuring the artist-couple exhibitions of Marion and Jim Nicoll presented at the Women's Art History Initiative Conference, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, 28 October 2008.

documenting their married creative life together, showing them seated side-by-side, exhibiting together, and sketching and painting together in seeming harmonious concert.[191] [Figures 32a and b] These images posed a sharp contrast to the disdain represented by Jim Nicoll's public and private commentaries on abstraction in marriage.

Wieland's exhibition history and artist-couple marriage represented an opposite development. Her two artist-couple exhibitions with Snow were early in her exhibition history and she did not exhibit again with him during her lifetime.[192] She had become determined to be an artist in early adulthood and was strategic about her artist-couple marriage. Her choice had been speculative when she made her decision to marry Snow but she had not overlooked his creative and intellectual promise.[193] "I long to love a brilliant man," she once noted, and on Snow's creative prospects, "he would do anything to develop his work."[194] The experiences of Wieland and Nicoll show how differently these two women navigated the genre of abstract art in the context of their two marriages. Wieland began her art practice in abstraction where Nicoll had found aesthetic resolution in it. Unlike Nicoll, however, Wieland engaged more deeply in the postwar North American feminist movement and her work contributed significantly to its momentum through her emphasis on the validity of her female experience.

Marion Nicoll and Joyce Wieland were persistent in accessing the solo exhibition. These showings were crucial to their emergence as social subjects and they occasioned enactment of

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[191] See the exhibition brochure, *Tribute: Jim and Marion Nicoll* (Calgary: Muttart Art Gallery, 1982), 6-31 March 1982, Alberta Art Foundation, Artist's File.

[192] The two exhibitions both titled *Drawings by Michael Snow and Joyce Wieland,* were respectively held at the Westdale Gallery, Hamilton, Ontario 1959 (founded in 1958 by Miriam and Julius Lebow) and the Hart House Gallery, Toronto, 9-28 October 1962. As documented in email correspondence between Linda MacRae, 7-13 April 2009, Christopher Regimbal, J.M. Barnicke Gallery, Hart House, University of Toronto and Loryl MacDonald , Records Archivist, University of Toronto, 11 February- 9 April 2009 to Catharine Mastin.

[193] Jane Lind's chapter "Experiment with Life," in *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire*, explores Wieland's relationship with writer Brian Barney and her consideration of a relationship with artist Gerald Gladstone (Toronto: James Lorimer, 2001), 59-90.

[194] Joyce Wieland, *Diary for 1951-52*, entry for 8 March 1951, unpaginated, File 52, Wieland Fonds and Joyce Wieland in *Joyce Wieland, Artist in Many Media*, 1978 (Ottawa: National Film Board of Canada).

their sex-gender rituals to expand conceptions of the self, subjectivity, citizenship, and the writing of modern art. Between 1959 and 1963, the contexts for the production and display of their work framed them continuously in relationship to their socially-sanctioned sex-gender status. For Nicoll and Wieland, to be recognized as a female artist was not to be understood for one's multi-dimensionality or self-determined identity but to be persistently acknowledged in relationship to one's companionship status.

The creation of multi-media exhibitions including Nicoll's works in painting and design media, and Wieland's works in painting, assemblage and film would not necessarily have yielded either of these women's identities as cohesive ones. As Jacques Lacan has argued, there have been complex psychological factors leading to the formation of identities and the ideal of subject wholeness remains speculative in theoretical inquiry. His theory of subject's entrance to language, for example, has considered that subject's identity becomes split at this developmental moment.[195] The subdivision of Wieland's and Nicoll's art practices by medium in exhibitions has, however, occluded the important identity fissures that led these two women to change and revise their self-identities. It remained challenging for both women in a "one-man" exhibition market to assert the importance of their multiple interests and identities as artists. Nonetheless, their exhibitions between 1959 and 1963 caused a certain amount of "gender trouble" because to make art and to exhibit solo was, as Judith Butler contends, "to act out." The sex-gender policing of women's art practices and the underscoring of their companionship identities continued differently in Wieland and Pratt's experiences in being dubbed "kitchen artists" addressed in the next chapter.

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[195] This thesis grids Lacan's writings and the implications of it for the female subject are explored in his writings assembled in the anthology *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the Ēcole Freudienne,* edited by Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose and translated by Jacqueline Rose (London and Basingstoke: MacMillan Press, 1982).

Chapter Four

Two More Women's "One-Man Exhibitions:" Joyce Wieland, Mary Pratt and the Identity "Kitchen Artist," 1963-1973

Introduction

When she was a young woman, Joyce Wieland observed, "Why has it always been one continual struggle all my damn life to have a room to myself for a few hours? Jesus it means planning for a week ahead of time to know I can have an evening just to read by myself."[1] She had learned early the importance of private space for work and study in domestic life and the problem continued to be a long-term one in her marriage to Michael Snow. On the occasion of her 1963 exhibition she had also learned that the proximity of women's studios in household contexts and women's use of domestic subjects in their art practices would fuel the problem of being dubbed a "kitchen artist."[2] As this chapter explores, the studio spaces made available to Wieland and also Mary Pratt in the early years of their two artist-couple marriages played a critical role in the development of their art practices and significantly affected their identities as exhibiting artists in postwar Canada: they were not only cast as "artists' wives" but also "kitchen artists."

The experiences of Joyce Wieland in her New York City loft between 1963 and 1971 and Mary Pratt in her home in the remote community of Salmonier, Newfoundland between 1962 and 1973 expose how the identity "kitchen artist" extended from these two artists' domestic studio settings. Their experiences, however, also demonstrate how Wieland and Pratt navigated the social expectations of Anglo-Canadian marriage to transform their art practices into aesthetic and economic enterprises. In their separate geographical locations and shared experiences as

[1] Joyce Wieland, *Diary, 1951-52*, entry for 18-22 April, unpaginated. Box 1990-014/004, File 53, Wieland Fonds.
[2] As cited in Chapter Three, she was described as "Zen cook and dabbler" at her Isaacs Gallery exhibition. An explicit conflation of women's art studios and kitchens to construct the "kitchen artist" identity was Marie Nagel's "Kitchen Studio," *Saskatoon Star Phoenix,* January 23, 1967, when she reviewed Dorothy Knowles' show at Toronto's Bonli Gallery where Knowles was photographed painting in her kitchen.

subordinated economic and social subjects in marriage, Wieland and Pratt each reconfigured the boundaries of kitchen and studio to blur traditional boundaries of women's sex-gender roles in domestic life to establish two dynamic art practices that garnered them significant recognition.

Kitchens have spawned many important female professions and the networks formed in in these spaces have also built significant communities of strength among women.[3] For some postwar feminists, however—the ones Pratt and Wieland were reading—the kitchen was a troubling architectural space of female oppression and socially-constituted sexual difference, buttressed as it was by the ideology of separate spheres which ideologically assigned women to the home and men to public life. For Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan, household labour threatened female self-realization: their critiques aimed at exploring the political and economic roots of women's oppression and the social structuring of women's marriage and motherhood as profession and career. Of the kitchen, Beauvoir explained, "repetition soon spoils" any pleasures derived from cooking….It [housework] is tiresome, empty, [and] monotonous as a career…The housewife wears herself out marking time: she makes nothing, simply perpetuates the present."[4] In 1963, Friedan critiqued the needless expansion of repetitive housework to simply "fill time." Women's feelings of emptiness were, she argued, the results of an "uneasy denial of the world outside the home," driving ever more frantic housework to "keep the future out of sight."[5] Following Virginia Woolf, Friedan extolled the merits of the woman's separate study but lamented that women "do not shut that door. Perhaps finally they are afraid to be alone in that

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[3] Una A. Robertson, *Coming Out of the Kitchen: Women Beyond the Home* (Sutton and Phoenix Mill: Thurpp, Stround and Gloucestershire, 2000). See also J.C. Goldfarb who considers the kitchen a space where truth can be spoken, in *The Politics of Small Things: The Power of the Powerless in Dark Times* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
[4] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage, 1989, First published Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), 453, 451 respectively.
[5] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company Ltd., 1997 edition, first published 1963), 242-243.

room."[6] For these two authors, the kitchen signified a women's social containment to domestic life and economic dependency in marriage: the concept of a "livable life" was framed principally through motherhood and heterosexual marriage.

In their readings of Beauvoir and Friedan, Wieland and Pratt found contexts to understand their social circumstances as young artists and women and also the challenges of self-fulfillment in marriage. Wieland criticized Beauvoir for not offering solutions to the dilemma "marriage versus career," and Pratt recognized that Friedan's view had made her "terribly upset and yet I knew it was right."[7] As Wieland explained of her double life as artist and wife, "My job is taking care of Michael Snow, our two cats Dwight and Grace and our turtle named Ernie and all the fruit flies that live at our house. After that I work on my art objects and films and try to help save kids from the draft (Vietnam War)."[8] Wieland and Pratt inherited the forms of oppression identified by these postwar feminist writers and the binary terms of sexual difference socially structured by the breadwinner-homemaker marriage model which cast them in early marriage as responsible for domestic affairs, but they did not realize Friedan's concern of allowing their futures to be kept "out of sight."[9]

The social recognition and sales resulting from Wieland and Pratt's formative exhibitions were crucial to the development of their new work and contributed significantly to their personal lives and households. Their relationships to their kitchens and studios emerged as significant to the formation of their sex-gender identities. Wieland began making experimental films using the sink and dining table as aesthetic stage setting and site of political activism and Pratt began

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[6] Ibid., 249.
[7] Mary Pratt as cited by Sandra Gwyn in "Introduction" in Sandra Gwyn and Gerta Moray, *Mary Pratt* (Toronto and Montreal: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1989), 10.
[8] Joyce Wieland, "Me," *Vancouver Sun,* January 22, 1968, Box 1993-009/00, File 30, Wieland Fonds.
[9] In Pratt's letters to her family in Fredericton she describes her daily life in marriage. In Wieland's diaries of the 1950s she contends with the dilemma 'marriage or career.' The details of Wieland's marriage are addressed by her two biographers, Jane Lind, *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Co., 2001) and Iris Nowell *Joyce Wieland: A Life in Art* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2001).

making contemporary paintings of scenes drawn from daily life in the Pratt family kitchen in Salmonier, Newfoundland. With four children under ten in the first decade of her marriage Pratt's time was more constrained than Wieland's and, given this reality, her use of photography to preserve ephemeral lighting integral to her still-life compositions facilitated greater flexibility for her working process. Both artists shared realities of social isolation as newcomers to places unfamiliar to them, ones chosen in both marriages by their husbands. By the time Mary Pratt finally settled in St. Mary's Bay on the Salmonier River in 1963, she had moved six times to support the development of Christopher's art practice.[10] As Pratt recalled, "those first years were so hard it hurts me to think of them… I felt that I'd been cut off from my childhood and from everything I'd known."[11]

When Wieland and Pratt went to their two vastly different geo-political destinations their social lives were largely circumscribed by their husbands. As Lucy Lippard had observed of such forms of female social isolation, it was not surprising that female artists mined their households and kitchens for creative subject matter: "female artists work from such imagery because it's there…they can't escape it."[12] Lippard expressed that to work with domestic subjects was one more site of gender disparity within art production: "Male artists moved into women's domain and pillaged with impunity. The result was Pop Art, the most popular American art movement ever… If the first major Pop artists had been women the movement might never had gotten out of the kitchen."[13] There were also implications in being taken seriously when working with domestic subjects. Some artists, Lippard observed, took care to hide their use of them because

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[10] The Pratt family moves were as follows: first, the trip to Scotland in September 1957; second, their return to Canada for summer of 1958 to give birth to their first child and for Christopher's summer employment; third, back to Scotland in fall 1958 for another year of Christopher's study; fourth, back to Fredericton to finish school for both artists in 1959; fifth the move to St. John's 1961 for his work; and sixth, the move to Salmonier in 1963.
[11] Mary Pratt as cited by Sandra Gwyn in "Introduction" in Sandra Gwyn and Gerta Moray, *Mary Pratt*, 10-11.
[12] Lucy Lippard, "Household Images in Art," *in From the Centre: Feminist Essays on Women's Art* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976), 56.
[13] Ibid.

affiliation with domesticity had a denigrating effect on women and, when working with materials associated with women's history (sewing and textiles), "inferiority was implied by being described 'feminine.'"[14] Wieland and Pratt did not, however, hide their interests in domestic subjects but rather elevated them to visibility and made them central in the formation of their sex-gender identities as artists.

The Table and Sink in Joyce Wieland's New York Loft, 1963-1971

In New York Wieland and Snow lived consecutively with two improvised kitchens, neither of which mimicked the suburban homes of Friedan's upper-middle class Anglo-American female subjects or any standardized conception of postwar urban kitchens.[15] In both residences, power, heat and water were illegally re-routed to enable makeshift living conditions and, in this open-concept space, architectural distinctions were conceptual rather than physical.[16] Wieland had understood the importance of private working space from her youth and she carried this understanding forward in the lean times of her early marriage. Nonetheless, household tables had always offered her space for creation: "The kitchen table has been the core of all my art since I was a child. It was at the table when I drew and I started to make my films on that table [in New York]."[17] In New York the boundaries of kitchen, studio and art practice were collapsed and reconstructed by Wieland's expansive imagination, including even certain culinary-aesthetic inventions of which her *Canadian National Soup* is surely among the finest known examples. This edible concoction conceptualized during the later 1960s included Campbell's-brand tomato

[14] Ibid., 57.
[15] Their first address was 191 Greenwich Street in Lower Manhatten and the second one at 123 Chambers Street west of City Hall and City Park. These residences are outlined in Jane Lind, *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire,* 151.
[16] Ibid., 140, 152.
[17] Joyce Wieland and Hollis Frampton, "I Don't Even Know about the Second Stanza," (1971) in *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, edited by Kathryn Elder (Toronto: Toronto International Film Festival, 1999), 172.

soup with cottage cheese to mimic the red and white colours of the Canadian flag. Wieland situated this work in relationship to others related to her interrogation of Canadian identity: she explained the soup as "so Canadian because its base is American (the canned soup)."[18] It was in her films, though, that the subject "kitchen" figured most prominently.

In the mid-1960s Wieland turned much of her attention to experimental film where she carved out a distinct practice amidst a nascent group of Structuralist filmmakers, so-named by critic P. Adams Sitney. This informal community included Snow and Wieland, alongside Jonas Mekas, Hollis Frampton, Shirley Clarke and others. In this male-dominated community, Adams would name Snow as the movement's effective "dean" and his much-acclaimed *Wavelength* (1967) as occupying "epochal" stature in the definition of structuralism's core principles, those which attended to the materiality of film as a dominantly perceptual experience.[19] The terms of structuralism have been framed to include "fixed frame camera position, loop-printing, rephotography off screen, and the 'flicker effect,'"[20] and its two core investigations to embrace "the physical properties of film as flat material utilizing light, projection, printing procedures, [and] the illusion of movement" and an emphasis on "the tensions amongst physical materials, perceptual processes and the emotional or pictorial realities film has traditionally represented."[21] Wieland saw herself as simultaneously part of and separate from structuralism: "I've become part of the movement…but I have to go on with what I'm about."[22] For Kass Banning,

[18] Documentation of Wieland's culinary-aesthetic inventions is minimal but this work is discussed in *Joyce Wieland, Artist in Many Media* (Ottawa: National Film Board of Canada, 1978) part of its "Creative Canadians Series," (17:52 min)
[19] P. Adams Sitney as quoted in Bart Testa's "An Axiomatic Cinema: Michael Snow's Films," in *Presence/Absence: The Films of Michael Snow* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1994), 29, 35.
[20] Kass Banning, "Textual Excess in Joyce Wieland's *Handtinting,*" in *The Films of Joyce Wieland,* edited by Kathryn Elder (Toronto: Toronto International Film Festival, 1999), 129.
[21] Lauren Rabinovitz, "The Development of Feminist Strategies in the Experimental Films of Joyce Wieland," in *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, 107.
[22] Joyce Wieland in "Kay Armitage Interviews Joyce Wieland," in *The Films of Joyce Wieland,* 159.

Wieland's relationship to this filmic genre as female subject exploring her subjectivity represented an "excess" to its formalist parameters.[23]

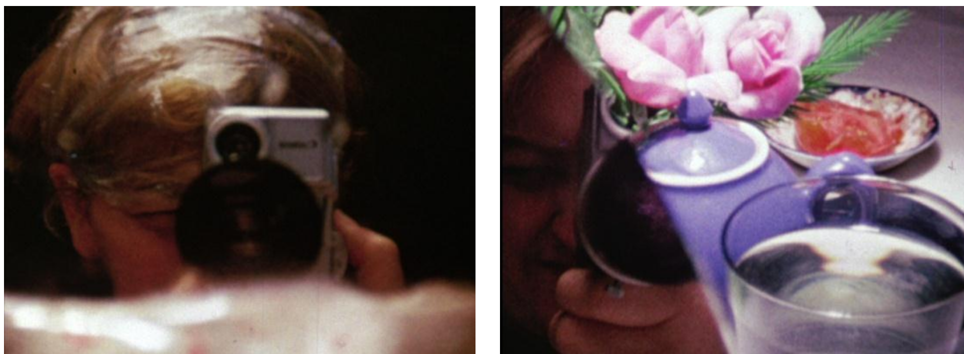
Figure 33: Joyce Wieland and Michael Snow, *Dripping Water,* 1969, 16 mm film still, Canadian Film Makers Distribution Centre

Film had been among Wieland's aesthetic interests in Toronto before meeting Snow and she co-produced one film with him in Toronto.[24] In New York they collaborated again to produce *Dripping Water* (1969: CFMDC), [Figure 33] but her collaboration with Snow ended there. The New York experience instead consolidated her film practice as an autonomous one as director-artist-producer and it was soon into her New York experience that she became sole proprietor and founding president of "Corrective Films, New York." The Wieland-Snow kitchen-loft-studio spaces served as official headquarters for Corrective Films and Wieland used this self-proclaimed identity throughout her New York years. Use of the studio-loft-kitchen for production and business concerns kept expenses minimal although later she used a New York box office address for correspondence to further segregate art and business from domestic

[23]Banning notes, "If structural film is a foundation garment fashioned by men then Wieland is the artist who exceeds its strictures," in "Textual Excess," 130.
[24] The two films she collaborated on are: *Tea in the Garden* (1958) with Warren Collins and *Assault/ A Salt in the Park* (1959) with Snow.

affairs.[25] Wieland left to interpretation how her films were corrective, but assuredly this appellation reflected her commitment not only to a different film genre concerned with formalist visual strategies and disrupted linear narrative particular to experimental Structuralist film but also with her sex-gendered identity in yet another male-dominated genre.[26]

The Wieland-Snow kitchen occupied its most critical place in Wieland's short-length films, those under twenty minutes in duration. In these works, Wieland represented "kitchen" in double synecdoche through reference to the sink and table of their loft-studio.[27] Using these architectonics to establish Wieland's deployment of the concept "kitchen," there are five obvious films for consideration: *Water Sark* (1964-65, 13:30 minutes: CFMDC); *Peggy's Blue Skylight* (1964-66, 11 minutes: CFMDC); *Cat Food* (1968, 13 minutes: CFMDC), *Rat Life and Diet in North America* (1968, 16 minutes: CFMDC); and Wieland's co-production with Snow, *Dripping Water* (1969: 10 minutes). In these films Wieland re-asserted forms of embodiment introduced in the early 1960s abstractions through her bodily representation and subjectivity: such concepts were eschewed by structuralism's core focus on the formalist possibilities of film as a visual experience.



Figures 34a and b: Joyce Wieland, *Water Sark*, 1964-65, 16 mm film still, Canadian Film Makers Distribution Centre

[25] The mailing address for Corrective Films was Box 199, Church Street Station, NY, NY, 10008.
[26] Interview with Kay Armitage and Joyce Wieland, 1999-003/018, File 4, Joyce Wieland Fonds.
[27] Wieland's use of part for whole is well illustrated in the film *Pierre Vallières* where the subject's lips are used close-up for the entire film and in *Solidarity* where Wieland zooms in on the strikers' feet.

Water Sark [Figures 34a and b] was among Wieland's most important films to assert her sex-gender identity as artist, woman, and film-maker while utilizing this "kitchen-table" as socio-architectural site of sex-gender subversion—the "high art of the housewife" and "the housewife on high" as she described her identity as artist-producer and wife.[28] Here, the kitchen table was her filmic location and the sink much, but not all, of the film's subject. For its contribution to structuralism's tenets, the film's opening scene (a cup overflowing with water beyond volumetric capacity) worked brilliantly—eschewal of conventional narrative structure, image repetition and visual play. As Banning contends, however, Wieland's female voice and assertion of narrative pushed the idea of Structuralism as a dominantly visual experience. In the next scene, briefly, the artist looks out the window to the city below but the camera returns quickly to the kitchen in chaos and pots and pans create a cacophonic crashing instrumental. Is someone doing dishes? We find out soon. Sounds and images refract to confound ordered spatial perception and boundaries are blurred between abstraction and representation. Unbeknownst to the viewer until now Wieland has controlled the camera in the contained vision field represented by the sink. Mid-way through the film her face enters the screen through a fog and it becomes clear that, as the camera turns to the viewer, it is she who controls it. The next scene documents the sound of water draining down the sink. Wieland appears again, this time with bare breasts. In these two scenes the artist stages a doubling of self as muse and producer in a confounding of subject and object positions. It is at this junction in *Water Sark* that Wieland moves to representing the specifics of her female body and subject position.

It had been several years since Wieland had last reflected on her self-representation, the traditional portrait bust, *Myself* (1958: PC), [Figure 7] and experiences of sex, sexuality and

[28] Joyce Wieland as quoted in Hugo McPherson, "Wieland: An Epiphany of the North," in *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, edited by Kathryn Elder, 17.

pleasure framed in the abstractions. Wieland described *Water Sark* as "photographing myself—talking, making faces," a means to make the audience aware of the filmmaker, a film "about me making the film."[29] What precisely she saw the film to reveal about herself, however, was a more complex question. In conversation with Hollis Frampton there was the point of feeling "crippled–shut in" and in this context Wieland saw the film as "a desperate self-portrait."[30] She also understood *Water Sark* as part of "all the domestic art that I have done." There was also the role of L.S.D. while reviewing the day's editing, a hallucinatory strategy she used to drive at core content which she explained as "light and an innocent rediscovery of water,[31] "a film sculpture, a drawing being made while you wait."[32] In its material structure there was also the process of "photographing myself in those mirrors on the table with all that water and prisms and glasses and cups."[33] The use of refraction, as Kay Armitage has argued, enabled Wieland's self-exploration of the breast as ecstatic play, opening a path through which she could "recover her own otherness, her difference…to initiate a search for new and heterogeneous languages."[34]

In *Water Sark* Wieland took control of the camera's representation of her on screen to illuminate her embodied presence and authorial voice at this kitchen table and sink: the unwashed dishes remain and creative production prevails and traditional gender roles for women are overturned. Repetition intersects with her embodied presence to produce a self-narrative and autobiographical stance—Joyce Wieland as Corrective Film proprietor and producer in the Snow-Wieland loft-studio-kitchen. This specific table was at the centre of Wieland's filmic output for the duration of her years in New York and figured centrally beyond her film practice

[29] Joyce Wieland in "Kay Armitage Interviews Joyce Wieland," in *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, 157.
[30] Joyce Wieland and Hollis Frampton, "I Don't Even Know about the Second Stanza (1971)," in *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, 171.
[31] Ibid., 172.
[32] Wieland as quoted in Hugo McPherson, "Wieland: An Epiphany of the North," 17.
[33] Joyce Wieland and Hollis Frampton, "I Don't Even Know about the Second Stanza," in *The Films of Joyce Wieland,* 171.
[34] Kay Armitage, "The Feminine Body: Joyce Wieland's *Water Sark*," in *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, 141-144.

to include the production of her artist's book *True Patriot Love*, the so-called "exhibition catalogue" accompanying her mid-career retrospective at the National Gallery of Canada in 1971.[35] For Wieland, the table was "a kind of altar" and "eucharistic center" around which "talking, eating, sitting and thinking" would occur.[36]

In *Water Sark* "sink" was visual synecdoche for "kitchen" and the table was the cloaked location from which the film was shot and edited. But, in *Peggy's Blue Skylight*, *Catfood* and *Rat Life and Diet in North America*, Wieland extended the functions of "table" from filmic shooting-editing location to include its presence as stage setting and partial subject. "There is nothing like knowing my table," she proclaimed.[37] Like *Water Sark*, *Peggy's Blue Skylight* was an important work in asserting Wieland's sex-gender identity as autonomous and embodied female author as she turns the camera on herself in two scenes to reveal her female genitalia and broad-toothed grin. Most of the film's setting is the Snow-Wieland dining table where the viewer is introduced to a portrait of the artist-couple's companionate status in the studio-loft as newly arrived Canadians in New York—an issue of *Canadian Art* magazine (# 90) appears. Reference is made to their work back in Toronto at Isaacs Gallery as they point to the page where they are mentioned. Snow becomes Wieland's muse as he reads, pats the cats and spills coffee. Unsettled as the camera's muse-object of study, however, Snow disappears to shave and Wieland follows with the camera.

[35] Scholars have agreed that the publication was really an artist's book more than an exhibition catalogue because of the artist's defiance of catalogue traditions including interpretive essays and chronological narratives.
[36] Joyce Wieland and Hollis Frampton, "I Don't Even Know about the Second Stanza," in *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, 172.
[37] Joyce Wieland as quoted in Hugo McPherson, "Wieland: An Epiphany of the North," in *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, 17.

Figure 35: Joyce Wieland, *Catfood,* 1968, 16 mm film still, Canadian Film Makers Distribution Centre (left)

Figure 36: Joyce Wieland, *Rat-Life and Diet in North America,* 1968, 16 mm film still, Canadian Film Makers Distribution Centre (right)

In the film *Catfood* [Figure 35] Wieland continued her exploration of domestic and autobiographical themes with the kitchen table as compositional setting, but her control of the camera and embodied subject position (feeding the cat as part of her domestic life) she now considered self-evident. Cats were a regular feature in the Snow-Wieland domestic scene and here a well-groomed one is shown in gastronomic decadence gorging on a fresh fish on a table top adorned with a pristine white cloth. Gradually the cloth becomes a bloody mess in a reversal of expectations associated with the civility of formally-adorned tables. The sound of the ocean in the background audio track reinforces the repetition intrinsic to the film's visual form. The cat lies down, then gets up to eat, then lies down, and a ragged fish carcass remains. Another dead fish soon appears for the cat's second helping. The cat begins playing with the carcass then starts eating again. The filmmaker operating the camera has hardly moved since the beginning of the scene since she has shot the scene at the table—thirteen minutes straight of a cat gorging, being engorged and starting over again in a mundane anti-narrative where pets usurp the place of people.

In *Rat-Life and Diet in North America* (1968), [Figure 36], the Wieland-Snow dining table was once again the compositional stage setting, this time in an even more formalized dining-room diorama. In both *Catfood* and *Water Sark,* formalist concerns such as image repetition maintained a significant role but *Rat Life* documented several shifts in Wieland's practice as she began engaging in themes of Canadian identity, ecology, and political commentary, themes she had been exploring in other media including the mixed-media constructions *Patriotism* (1967: Montague Collection) and *Confedspread* (1967: NGC), [Figure 37]. This film raised narrative to new levels of significance and the Wieland-Snow kitchen was

Figure 37: Joyce Wieland, *Confedspread*, 1967, plastic and cloth, 146.2 x 200.4 cm, National Gallery of Canada

now the base from which a strong political statement about America and Canada was issued. As Johanne Sloan asserts, the film was "a gesture of border crossing," made possible by Wieland's transient position as a Canadian living in America but who also travelled back and forth from New York to Toronto for her exhibitions and to sustain relationships with friends and family.[38]

[38] Johanne Sloan, "Joyce Wieland at the Border: Nationalism, the New Left and the Question of Political Art in Canada," *Journal of Canadian Art History* Volume XXVI (2005): 80-104.

Wieland's double exposure to the politics of both nations gave her a unique vantage point over the two countries and the power relations at stake in the hegemonic position occupied by the United States in the postwar global economy.

Rat Life and Diet in North America was made at the height of the Vietnam War and the protagonists are once again part of the Snow-Wieland domestic animal family, this time gerbils. The gerbils are political prisoners who manage to escape their cat oppressors over the border into Canada where they proceed to take up organic cooperative farming, only to find their dream of a new life shattered when Canada is invaded by Americans. Sequences show the gerbils loose among dirty dishes of a finished supper and Wieland uses extreme close-ups to disrupt depth perception. Later in the film the gerbils nibble on cherries during the cherry festival that is celebrated when they have won their freedom. The gerbil heroes chew an American flag and nibble on various foodstuffs. Canada is cast initially as "an escape route," a location of "healthy fecundity," and ultimately as a political alternative."[39] The film's sound track is dominated mostly by piano music and Wieland narrates the gerbils' story through inter-titling. Opening the film was her broad-ranging political message, "This film is against the corporate military industrial structure of the global village," and throughout the film, "political prison, 1968," "they plead for freedom," "after too much suffering they decide to escape to Canada" and "a full scale rebellion is carried out" so "they go to the Hudson Region and make camp" but "some of the bravest are lost forever" and "they escape to Canada" etc.. At the end the inter-titling informs viewers that Canada is 72% owned by the United States industrial complex. The gerbils return to the spinning wheel, their gilded cage, but in the meantime they had experienced a different life.

Wieland's fourth film where the Wieland-Snow loft-kitchen occupied a prominent place as stage set-subject was the collaboration with Snow, *Dripping Water* (1969). In *Water Sark* she

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[39] Ibid., 87.

had already elevated the domestic sink to a viable film subject. Snow had shown limited interest in domestic subjects save the loft window in their New York studio which had comprised much of the visual imagery in *Wavelength* (1967). Both artists had been interested in water sources as subject matter throughout their film work but, until *Dripping Water,* Snow's water scenes were exterior water sources. There was the nearby Atlantic Ocean in walking distance from their loft featured in Snow's *Wavelength* and also in Wieland's *Sailboat* (1967-8: 3:12 minutes). Wieland would refigure the poetics and significance of water bodies again in two critical scenes in her feature-length production, *The Far Shore* (1975:105 minutes)—the canoe chase where Eulalie and Tom escape from her repressive marriage, and the highly erotic underwater lovemaking scene culminating in the couple's double climax. As for interior water sources, Snow found creative merit in the kitchen sink only following Wieland's interest in it and only this once did he go anywhere near the Chambers Street kitchen sink.[40] It was the sound of the dripping water that most interested him. He recalled: "Sometime in 1968 I started paying attention to a leaking faucet in the sink in our loft …It was fascinating. I'd get stoned and listen. Rhythmically and tonally there was a wonderful and mysterious irregularity for a larger pattern and just to generally enjoy a record of it."[41] For his part in the collaboration then, it was Snow's creative practice in music and sound that drew him to the Chambers Street sink.

Snow recalled that Wieland then suggested we make a film of it, "so we arranged the scene and shot it. ….we used some of my original tape set against the picture so that the sound in the sink is not in sync, although often it seems to be. Irregulars against irregulars sometimes

[40] Other works in which Snow used sinks include the photo sequence slide project work simply titled *Sink*, 1969 in *Michael Snow, Panoramique: Photographic Works and Films, 1962-1999,* Hubert Damisch et al., (Bruselles, Paris and Geneva: Society des Expositions du Palais de Bruexelles et al, 1999), illustrated, 105, which depicts his studio sink. He used this sink again in the film *Rameau's Nephew* (1972-74) in which he taps his hands.
[41] Michael Snow, "Mmusic/Ssound," in *Music/Sound, 1948-1993,* edited by Michael Snow (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, Art Gallery of Ontario and The Power Plant, 1994), 27.

phase together."[42] Visually the film depicts in abstracted form a cup filled with water, dripping, in a sink once again full of unwashed dishes. The mismatched sound track-image track of the dripping water unsettles viewer expectations of synchronized image to sound. Wieland had already done this dripping water scene before in *Water Sark* and so to shoot this subject again was old-hat. For her contribution to *Dripping Water*, Bart Testa observed that "its composition signals the contemplative and fascinated patience that [is] witness to Wieland's collaboration."[43] However, *Dripping Water* was a very different work from Wieland's *Rat Life* and *Catfood* of the year prior since *Dripping Water* prioritized formalist-Structuralist concerns over narrative. More so than in *Catfood,* Wieland's embodied presence was nowhere evident and this dripping sink did not offer much critique of domestic life either. Snow once conceded that "everybody's work is autobiographical in some sense" but throughout his art practice he kept at bay that which he believed "personally expressive."[44] *Dripping Water* instead appealed to Structuralist concerns of repetition and rhythm. It excluded Wieland's emerging interest in narrative and her ongoing interest in embodiment in ways different than other co-productions, such as the original New York location footage for *A and B in Ontario* (shot 1967, completed 1984: 16.05 minutes), [Figures 38a and b] co-produced with Hollis Frampton. In this film about two filmmakers making a film, Wieland and Frampton stage a hide-and-seek film chase of each other that begins in a domestic interior (the cat is our clue) and ends down at the beach after the two filmmakers have filmed each other running away from the loft. *Dripping Water* suppressed Wieland's growing interests in embodiment and narrative. It is perhaps not surprising that either artist reserved commentary about the significance of *Dripping Water* relative to their respective film

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Bart Testa, "An Axiomatic Cinema: Michael Snow's Films," in *Presence and Absence: The Films of Michael Snow, 1956-1991,* edited by Jim Shedden (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1995), 40.

[44] Michael Snow in Interview with Bruce Elder, "On Sound," in *Music/Sound, 1948-1999,* 225-226, 229.

practices, or that this would be Wieland's last co-production with Snow. Despite Snow's account of Wieland's will to realize this film, her collaboration with him on this work meant that she yielded to Snow's aesthetic just as she was going in opposite directions. Wieland's engagement with Structuralist film embraced visual strategies of repetition, rhythm, play and refraction and she also played up the idea of its anti-narrative possibilities.

Figures 38a and b: Joyce Wieland, *A and B in Ontario*, 1967-1984, 16 mm film stills, Canadian Film Makers Distribution Centre

The tables and sinks of Wieland's New York loft life offered her occasion to extend the sex-gender social politics of the kitchen imaginatively and constructively. There were more ways that domestic subject matter figured in Wieland's other films, such as the animated hotdogs in *Patriotism* (1965: 13:32 minutes) where these phallic forms run wild across a man's body lying on a bed. Wieland played with exterior/interior spaces through use of windows in *1933* (1967: 4 minutes), [Figure 39] where her camera traced the boundaries of inside/outside worlds through barred window panes. As works like *Rat Life and Diet in North America* reveal, the genesis of these films in contexts of kitchen politics was occasion for Wieland's exploration of such themes as containment and release, and power and subordination.

Figure 39: Joyce Wieland, *1933,* 1967, 16 mm film still, Canadian Film Makers Distribution Centre

Through public screenings in gallery venues and international film festivals Wieland was able to move her interest in domestic subject matter from the privacy of her kitchen-studio to increasing public visibility. Her participation in such group-artist screenings as the *Canadian Film Survey* at Boston Museum of Contemporary Art, *The Painter as Filmmaker* at the Jewish Museum in New York City, and international festivals such as the Cannes Film Festival in France and the World Experimental Film Festival in Belgium between 1967 and 1968, gave her considerable profile in international experimental film venues. Her visibility and social recognition in film exhibitions and screenings in Canada, however, was withheld from inclusion in her next four solo exhibitions throughout the later 1960s.[45] It was not until her 1968 exhibition in Vancouver that the film *Water Sark* was shown and not until 1969 in Toronto that the film *Rat Life and Diet in North America* was presented in the context of her object-based exhibitions.[46] Recognition of her film practice in Canada waited until Lucy Lippard's group-artist and two-venue exhibition *557,087* held first at the Seattle Art Museum followed by presentation in

[45] Wieland held four important solo exhibitions between 1966 and 1969: *Joyce Wieland Retrospective*, 20/20 Gallery, London, Ontario, 9-27 November 1966; *Joyce Wieland: Hangings*, Isaacs Gallery, 22 March- 10 April 1967; *Joyce Wieland Retrospective 1957-1967*, Vancouver Art Gallery, 9 January-4 February 1968; and *Joyce Wieland*, York University, 26 February -15 March 1969.
[46] As documented in the reviews by Ann Rosenberg, "Wieland Remarkable at Gallery," *Vancouver Sun,* January 19, 1968 and Bernadette Andrews, "Joyce Wieland: A Look Back in Interest," *Toronto Telegram*, March 6, 1969.

Vancouver with the amended title *995,000* at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1970.[47] That year Wieland had also been featured solo in a five-work film retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art.[48] It was only slowly in Canada then that her exhibitions as visual artist included her film works within otherwise object-based and medium-specific exhibitions that featured her paintings, mixed-media constructions and the well-known quilted assemblages also produced in her New York years.

Consonant with Nicoll's experiences then, the "one-man" exhibition throughout the 1960s presented its difficulties in reflecting Wieland's expansive art practice in Canada. There was a four-year gap between her two Isaacs' shows of 1963 and 1967 but she had been making important films since 1964 which were not considered for exhibition until the end of the decade. As Nicoll had experienced with her craft work, Wieland had to carve out a separate exhibition practice for these works to accord with the medium-based terms in which exhibitions had been ideologically framed in Canada's postwar exhibition market.

Following her return to Canada in 1971 Wieland produced no further work addressing domestic kitchens and subjects based on her private life and studio work space. In what would be among the last of her films to address the topic of kitchens, she alternatively moved to a very public and unionized kitchen in the film *Solidarity* (1973: 11 minutes), [Figure 40] which interrogated the social disparities of women's pay and working conditions at the Dare Cookie Company in Kitchener, Ontario. In a vision Wieland framed in contexts of social activism and

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[47] For Lippard's exhibition held at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 13 January-8 February 1970, Wieland's film *Cat Food* was shown and also her collaboration with Snow on *Dripping Water*. As documented in the rare note-card publication, *995,000* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1970), a copy of which is held in the Bruce Peel Library, University of Alberta, Edmonton. Lppard's use of numbers to title this exhibition reflected the populations of the two cities.

[48] As listed in Wieland's "Filmography" on her *Curriculum Vitae,* the exhibition bears the title *Five Films by Joyce Wieland* held at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA). Her CV lists the exhibition as having taken place in 1968 but it was in fact January 1970. As documented in email correspondence Michelle Harvey to Catharine Mastin, 22 January 2010. The MOMA does not have records of what films were shown.

feminism in the early 1970s, she drew once more on synecdoche to make the film's point in a low-to-the ground zoom shot of marching feet which stood to represent the striking workers. Wieland's "excess" here formed a bridge between women's social position in both public and private realms.

Figures 40a and b: Joyce Wieland, *Solidarity,* 1973, 16 mm film still, Canadian Film Makers Distribution Centre

Mary Pratt and the Salmonier Family Kitchen, 1963-1973

It was the Memorial University of Newfoundland Art Gallery (MUNAG) in St. John's (now The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador) that granted Mary Pratt her first two solo exhibitions in 1967 and 1973.[49] Temporally, these were a full decade behind Wieland's shows at Isaacs' Gallery even though just five years separated the two artists in age. For Pratt, regional difference, completion of her post-secondary education, and her hasty entrance into motherhood early in marriage were among the factors to account for these differences. Mary and Christopher Pratt returned to Newfoundland in 1961 after both artists had

[49] Mary Pratt held a small solo exhibition at Mount Allison University in 1962 to coincide with her graduation but her Memorial shows were the first to present her seriously after graduation. "Art Gallery, Memorial University of Newfoundland," Mary Pratt introductory statement, anonymous, 1967. Pratt also held two commercial exhibits at Morrison Gallery in St. John in 1969 and 1971 but scant information about these precludes their analysis in this study.

finished their educations at Mount Allison University, New Brunswick. Initially they settled in St. John's, a move that privileged Christopher's family over Mary's since St. John's was his family's hometown. At Memorial both Mary and Christopher found opportunities for employment and exhibitions and in 1961 both artists taught through the Extension Department. That year, Christopher accepted a full-time position as the gallery's Director-Curator, a post he remained in for two years until he resigned from stress and the constraints on his painting time.[50] Afterwards, the Pratt's mostly relied on his art sales for their survival although eventually for both artists their artwork sales became financial cornerstones. Without a regular income, though, much change was in order for this artist-couple and young family since by then they had three young children and another one born a year later.

The offer of Christopher's father's summer house along the western shores of Newfoundland in the modest community of St. Catherine's on the Salmonier River they considered a fiscal salvation when they first moved there in 1963.[51] The move gave Christopher a separate studio space, full-time attention to his art practice, and fostered a continuum with his family's history in Newfoundland. The experience was a very different one for Mary. In Salmonier she found herself without her family, part-time waged work and access to the social life and urban community she had enjoyed in Fredericton. She and Christopher were now each other's near-exclusive support network and critics. The Pratts came to cherish the solitude offered by this unique geo-physical space but for Mary it meant her ongoing social isolation from her family, female friends, and artists other than Christopher with whom to exchange ideas. The Pratts shared with Snow and Wieland the experience of under-serviced living arrangements:

[50] Jane Lind, *Mary and Christopher Pratt* (Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1989), 8.

[51] The Pratts remained there for nearly three decades and for Christopher it would always be home but Mary left on their official separation in 1992 and moved to St. Johns. The couple divorced in 2005. "Chronology," in *Christopher Pratt; All My Own Work,* edited by Josée Drouin-Brisebois (Ottawa and Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre and the National Gallery of Canada, 2005), 121.

on arrival in Salmonier in their first year, there was no water or insulation and rooms were added as they could afford it.[52] But, in every other respect, the Pratt family kitchen in Salmonier could hardly have marked a sharper contrast to the Snow-Wieland New York loft. It was in the context of these experiences that Pratt's early works were produced leading to her first solo exhibitions.

Mary Pratt at the Memorial University Art Gallery, 1967 and 1973

Pratt's two shows at Memorial were curated by Peter Bell who had taken on the Director-Curator position after Christopher Pratt's resignation. Bell's focus was the advancement of contemporary regional and national art practices and both Pratts occupied an important place in this vision.[53] In 1965 Bell had circulated a solo exhibition of Christopher's work for the Atlantic Provinces Art Circuit and regular contact with the Pratts for this project facilitated his familiarity with Mary's work which Bell first featured in the 1967 exhibition *Paintings by Mary Pratt—Mostly Sketches*.[54]

Mary was ten years into marriage with four children under age ten and thirty-two years of age when she opened her exhibition.[55] The biography accompanying her "first one-man" show framed her sex-gender identity in the double shadows of Christopher and her father—as "married to Christopher Pratt" and "daughter of Hon. W.J. West."[56] Exhibition critics recycled these identities as central to Pratt's identity.[57] Critic Rae Perlin at least commented on Mary's work but

[52] Jane Lind, *Mary and Christopher Pratt*, 9.
[53] Joe Bodelai, "A Visit to NFLD," *artscanada*, 202-203 (Winter 1975-6): 42 where it is explained that Bell left the gallery in the mid-1970s after a difference with the university chancellor over local art exhibitions at the gallery.
[54] Anonymous, *Christopher Pratt: An Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings and Prints* (St. John's and Halifax: Memorial and Dalhousie Universities, 1965), Atlantic Provinces Art Circuit Exhibition, 27 January-February, 1965.
[55] The children's names and birthdates are as follows: John (b. 1958); Katherine (b. 1960); Anne (b. 1961); and Ned (b. 1964).
[56] Anonymous, *Mary Pratt* (St. John's: Art Gallery, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1967), copy in the NGC Artist's File.
[57] Anonymous, "Mary Pratt," St. John's Art Gallery, Memorial University," unsourced news clipping, NGC Artist's File, Ottawa.

there was then the problem of describing the paintings in such feminine tropes as "delicate, fine, and sensitive."[58] Bell offered no curatorial commentary, leaving Pratt's artist's statement to stand as the exhibition interpretation. In contrast to the "wife-daughter" sex-gender identities in the biography and critical reviews, Pratt's artist statement concentrated on the constraints and context of her creative production as artist and mother:

> When one has four small children to look after, it is not easy to paint. This is not an excuse—it is a simple statement of fact.
>
> If one allows one's ambitions as a painter to soar beyond the reality of one's responsibilities as a mother, one must be frustrated with the resulting work. If on the other hand, one surrenders to the housework and the household, there is an emptiness, a frustration which is no less real. As in all things—what is needed is a balance—an equilibrium.
>
> For me, this consists of accepting the fact that the time I have for painting is limited, and allowing the size and scope of my work to reflect the small packages of time into which it must fit. It means accepting the simple things around me as they are and taking from them the maximum pleasure they will provide. That is what I have tried to do in these paintings.[59]

Pratt's concern over finding "an equilibrium" she viewed as hers to bear alone: there was simply no time in motherhood for works of significant scale, yet, if time was not set aside emptiness was surely the consequence. Her statement remained silent about Christopher's role in the family and her artist-couple status. Like Wieland, Pratt shared the social pressures that shaped understandings of art and marriage as an either/or paradigm, with marriage and motherhood being the social expectation, not making art. However, Pratt's exhibition occasioned opportunity for her to "take hold of her life" and re-assess the equilibrium question.[60] The show

[58] Rae Perlin, "Delicate and Sensitive," *St. John's Evening Telegram,* March 25, 1967.
[59] Mary Pratt, "Artist's Statement" for the exhibition, *Mary Pratt-Mostly Sketches,* Memorial University of Newfoundland Art Gallery, 15-28 March 1967. The exhibit was also a commercial sale and prices for works ranged from $35.00-$150.00. Biographer Jane Lind notes that this show and one held two years later at Morrison Gallery in St. John's were both sellout events, 12-13.
[60] Tom Smart, *The Art of Mary Pratt: The Substance of Light* (Fredericton: The Beaverbrook Art Gallery and Goose Lane Editions, 1995), 52.

had been a boon to her family finances with nearly all works selling and Christopher noted this point as part of the exhibition's "great success."[61]

Figure 4: Mary Pratt, *The Back Porch*, 1966, oil on canvas, 50 x 40 cm, The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador (left)

Figure 5: Mary Pratt, *Cakes, Apples and Potatoes,* 1969, oil on Masonite board, 82.5 x 52 cm, The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador (right)

The exhibit surveyed her painting since her student years and included sixty works dating from 1959 to 1966. These were scenes painted in Glasgow and Mount Allison, life in Salmonier (their home and garden, the surrounding lands), portraits of the children, and one self-portrait. [Figures 4 and 5] The Salmonier kitchen only figured marginally in this exhibition as Pratt worked to solidify her creative voice: soon following were her signature realist strategies of bright lighting and meticulous pursuit of verisimilitude. Her production had been consistent since the early 1960s and offered evidence of her ongoing attention to both motherhood and her artwork. In preparing this exhibition the limitations on Pratt's time had meant that the paintings were modest in scale, "sketches" as the exhibition title reinforced. "Taking hold" would be her next project as she explored the equilibrium, self-fulfillment and what would constitute her

[61] Christopher Pratt, *Ordinary Things: A Different Kind of Voyage* (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 2009), 33. An "Exhibition List" in the NGC Artist's File for Mary Pratt's exhibit list some $3,000.00 in sales netted before commissions and several of these works were purchased for the MUNAG art collection.

"livable life" in art, marriage and motherhood. In this artist-couple, where both artists were painters engaged in realism and using photography, it was no simple agenda to identify Pratt's distinct aesthetic territories. In the intervening years between her first and second exhibitions she turned her attention increasingly towards household and kitchen subject matter, subjects in which men weren't much interested, as Wieland and Lippard had each observed. Pratt recalled: "My strength is finding something where most people would find nothing."[62]

Figure 41: Mary Pratt, *Supper Table*, 1969, oil on canvas, 61 x 91.5 cm, Collection of the Artist

The year following Pratt's exhibition she began working on the painting *Supper Table* (1969: AC), [Figure 41], a work she has since cherished for its transitional place in her practice.[63] Long-time friend Sandra Gwyn considered *Supper Table* "the real start" of Pratt's career and justly it has been critically sanctioned in virtually every exhibition and book featuring Pratt's practice.[64] The revelatory moment of Pratt's discovery of light in creating *Supper Table* has been well rehearsed in writings on her work but readings pursuing the painting's image

[62] Sandra Gwyn, "Introduction" in Sandra Gwyn and Gerta Moray, *Mary Pratt* (Toronto: Montreal: McGraw Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1989), 19.
[63] Pratt stated that "she will never sell" *Supper Table* in Jane Lind, *Mary and Christopher Pratt,* 9.
[64] Sandra Gwyn, "Introduction" in Sandra Gwyn and Gerta Moray, *Mary Pratt*, 13.

content and its place in domestic politics and artist-couple marriage relations have been less exhaustive. Of this family supper table Pratt recalled, "I asked Christopher to take the children for a while because I just had to paint it." Gwyn pursued the matter further:

> Christopher thought she was crazy. The light would be gone before she even got her paints out. She persisted and started making drawings. Christopher watched her, said nothing, left the room and came back with his camera. He took quick shots of the now fading light shining onto the remnants of the supper on the table. A month or so later he brought her the slides.[65]

Clearly, *Supper Table* had occasioned a fortuitous exchange between artists regarding the potential of photography to document the ephemeral specificity of that moment's lighting.[66] With this medium, Mary felt less urgency in responding to the immediacy of the scene and this solution alleviated at least some of the difficulties of time in her life: "Now that I no longer had to paint on the run, I could pay each gut reaction its proper homage."[67] There was also the difference that in-depth study of objects would make through photography: "I could see so many things I hadn't seen before, all kinds of lights and shadows, and how a ketchup bottle hasn't just got an outside but an inside too."[68] It was immediately after *Supper Table* that Mary determined to have her own camera.[69]

Pratt's *Supper Table* was rich in references to postwar contemporary popular culture—the hotdogs, condiment bottles, and the proliferation of Staffordshire's "Chef Ware," a remake of the 1920s popular "Cornish" blue-and-white stripe pattern tableware originally produced by T.G. Green then in wide circulation.[70] These were not the only signifiers of the painting's contemporary tone: there was also the ephemeral process of its making in artist-couple and

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[65] Ibid., 12.
[66] The slide image from which she worked is illustrated in Tom Smart, *The Art of Mary Pratt: The Substance of Light*, 57.
[67] Mary Pratt as cited by Sandra Gwyn in "Introduction" in Sandra Gwyn and Gerta Moray, *Mary Pratt*, 13.
[68] Ibid., 12.
[69] Jane Lind, *Mary and Christopher Pratt,* 22.
[70] T.G. Green website, www.retroselect.com, consulted 10 January 2010.

family life dynamics. Gwyn's account of the painting's making reveals that Mary had never left the room (she kept sketching), but Christopher did leave (to retrieve the camera). Mary had already identified the subject, scene and lighting but, as photographer, Christopher had taken up a mediating role in compositional determination. This was not the first time that he took and donated slides to Mary of a given subject of her choosing or his—later, there was also the slide Christopher gave Mary for the painting *Eviscerated Chickens* to encourage her back to painting after she had quit in frustration before Christmas one year.[71] Family members had come and gone during Pratt's moment of discovery at the supper table.

Pratt described this "table of 1968" as "simple and honest, jumbled and untidy in its pool of light...indicative of us."[72] In writing "us" Pratt offered an additional signifier of the painting's contemporary stance, a point further amplified through comparison with art history's famous supper table scene, Leonardo's *Last Supper* (1495-98: Santa Maria Del Grazie). Pratt's "us" is a present-day family supper table, one to be endlessly set and reset, cleaned and re-cleaned meal after meal for which Mary was chiefly responsible in this postwar nuclear family. There was no foreseeable end to suppers at this table. Clearing the table had been among those social proprieties expected of women in the West family household, and while Mary's mother had taught her to be highly efficient with such chores by using clearing trays, Pratt recalled how much she disliked the task even with help from her children while "Christopher meanwhile pushed back his chair and ambled off to watch the news."[73] Indeed, *Supper Table* was a revelation to Pratt for the reasons already written into the historical record but *Supper Table* was also a signifier of the often silent labour donated by women outside waged work to household operations—Beauvoir's endless repetition. Equally, however, Pratt did not leave *Supper Table* as

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[71] As documented in Tom Smart, *The Art of Mary Pratt: The Substance of Light,* 63.
[72] Mary Pratt as quoted by Gerta Moray, *Mary Pratt*, 38.
[73] Mary Pratt in *A Personal Calligraphy* (Fredericton: Goose Lane, 2000), 17.

mere testimony to women's oppression for the making of this work also consolidated a voice from which to speak as female subject in her geo-political and creative isolation. In her role as painter-developer of the subject and slide image Mary indeed had the last word on the subject: no one is at the table but Pratt herself as the painter and mother she had self-identified in 1967.

Pratt's *Supper Table* and Wieland's *Rat Life and Diet in North America* were made in the same year. For both artists, their tables were subject and stage set and strategic locations from which their creative voices were established: the results were, however, vastly different. From the Salmonier family dining table Pratt prioritized a largely private and diaristic experience and consolidated her technical and procedural acumen as a painter while Wieland concentrated on an emerging critique of nation-state politics. *Supper Table* was also a critical work in Pratt's exploration of domestic architectural spaces: it was her aesthetic study of the purposing and gendering of rooms in Euro-Canadian household life. Indeed, this was not the last of her dining room scenes to speak to women's social isolation and artist-couple relations.[74] It was left to Pratt's forthcoming exhibitions, however, to provide further evidence of these points. Three years hence her inclusion in the group-artist exhibition *Painters in Newfoundland* (1971) brought her much valued recognition and subject matter extracted from the Pratt family kitchen figured much more prominently in the shaping of her sex-gender identity as a female artist whose practice was visibly distinct from Christopher's.

There were few group-artist exhibitions in which Pratt participated during the formative years of her exhibition history, and almost none where both Christopher and Mary exhibited together.[75] In the six years between her two solo shows at Memorial Pratt's reputation remained

[74] There is the later dining table painting, *Dinner for One* (1994: PC) where Pratt set the table for her life alone after separation from Christopher in 1992, as illustrated Tom Smart, *The Art of Mary Pratt: the Substance of Light,* 133.
[75] Mary Pratt's works were never included in NGC Biennial exhibitions of the 1960s but Christopher Pratt's works were included as follows: 1961, cat. 71, *Boat in Sand*, illustrated; 1965, cat. 86, *Woman at a Dresser*; and 1968, cat.

largely confined to Newfoundland audiences but her inclusion in Peter Bell's *Painters in Newfoundland* exhibition expanded awareness to Toronto audiences. The exhibition further extended Bell's mission to widen knowledge of contemporary art from the province and, after opening at Memorial, it was presented at Toronto's Picture Loan Gallery. The focus of this exhibition combined with a finite cluster of artists from which to make a selection made it nearly impossible not to include both artists: Mary showed the two new works *Cakes, Apples and Potatoes* (1969: The Rooms), [Figure 5] and *Caplin* (1969: The Rooms), [Figure 42] and Christopher showed two serigraphs.[76] None of his works in oil were available for the show since

Figure 5: Mary Pratt, *Cakes, Apples and Potatoes,* 1969, oil on Masonite board, 82.5 x 52 cm, The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador (left)

Figure 42: Mary Pratt *Caplin,* 1969, oil on panel, 76.5 x 101.6 cm, The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador (right)

114, *Shop on Sunday*. The Pratt's reluctance to exhibit as an artist-couple is addressed briefly at the outset of Chapter Five.

[76] *Painters in Newfoundland* (St. John's and Toronto: Memorial University Art Gallery and Toronto's Picture Loan Society, 1971), cats. 16-19.

Bell was at the time circulating a major show of his work across Canada which included virtually all his major recent works.[77] The inclusion of both artists' works led to their inevitable comparison. Christopher's tour had made his representation weak while Mary's work shone through to garner significant critical attention. Both of her paintings were reproduced in the two reviews while Christopher's work remained un-illustrated.[78] Peter Wilson placed Mary Pratt in the forefront as the one artist in the show "who has been putting her time to best use," describing her realism as workmanlike and unsentimental, on par with work being done in the United States.[79] That Mary's work eclipsed Christopher's in critical reception was not surprising given the disparities in their object representation. Mary's rise to critical prominence, however, unsettled established hierarchies in their artist-couple relations. Wieland's ex-dealer Dorothy Cameron sent Pratt a copy of one clipping with the sardonic caption, "Who's the artist in this family anyway?"[80] Afterwards, Mary Pratt reflected on this exhibition as a potent example of the Pratt family's creative rivalry.[81]

Pratt's second solo show organized by Peter Bell at Memorial in 1973 further widened awareness of her work thanks to his inclusion of her work in the "partial retrospective" exhibition series, a project concept which toured work by emerging and mid-career artists throughout the Maritime provinces.[82] The addition of "partial" to the more comprehensive term

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[77] *Christopher Pratt* (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1970). The exhibition was presented in St. John's, 6-31 July 1970 and toured through February 1971 to venues including: the Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon; Agnes Etherington, Kingston; Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver; Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton; Victoria Art Gallery, Victoria; and Confederation Art Gallery, Charlottetown.
[78] Kay Kritzwiser included Mary Pratt's *Capelin*, in "Fresh young works from the unarrived," *Globe and Mail*, February 6, 1971 as the feature illustration promoting six new shows at Toronto galleries. Peter Wilson selected *Cakes, Apples and Potatoes* for the article, "Fifteen Artists have captured the flavour of Newfoundland," *Toronto Star,* February 13, 1971.
[79] Peter Wilson, "Fifteen Artists have captured the flavour of Newfoundland," *Toronto Star,* February 13, 1971.
[80] Dorothy Cameron as quoted by Sandra Gwyn in "Introduction," in Sandra Gwyn and Gerta Moray, *Mary Pratt,* 14.
[81] Interview with the Artist, 17 October 2009.
[82] The 'partial retrospective' series opened with Christopher Pratt (1965), Toni Onley (1967) and was followed by Tony Tascona (1972) and both Pratt shows toured to several Maritime venues. Christopher Pratt's first solo

"retrospective" clarified that such exhibits were not holistic career reviews but focused exhibitions.[83] Bell's introduction to the exhibition made clear that he had now caught up with Mary's self-framing of her practice as artist-mother and that he had finally moved beyond understanding her as "housewife painter." Less emphasis was placed on her matrimonial artist-couple status and Frederictonian pedigree and Bell granted that she was now a "circumspect artist" concerned with "transient phenomena" whose work had "become larger and technique more considered" and the spirit of the works "lively, intimate, youthful and gay minuets."[84] With Mary's focus now centred on subject matter extracted from/related to the Pratt family kitchen, Bell was among a succession of critics and writers to participate in the social construction of the identity "kitchen artist" through a conflation of kitchen and studio working spaces. By the time of this exhibition Mary Pratt had used her kitchen primarily as stage setting and compositional source but not as formal studio yet Bell claimed Mary's painting easel that had been "virtually beside her at the kitchen range" had now "left the kitchen" for placement in a "separate vacant room that now serves as her studio."[85] It was not actually until after this exhibition that Pratt finally enjoyed her own studio space. In preparation for this exhibition she worked as she had done since childhood, wherever she could, with and without children, and as domestic responsibilities facilitated. It was a long-term project to finally have a distinct studio of her own, and Pratt recalled with fondness the support given by her father-in-law, J.K. Pratt, in the

exhibition of 1965 originated by MUNAG appears to have been the beginnings of this series. Peter Bell developed the 'partial retrospective' concept.

[83] *Mary Pratt: A Partial Retrospective* toured through fall-winter 1973-74 to six venues: New Brunswick Museum, 1-22 August; Dartmouth Heritage Museum, 1-22 September; University of Moncton, 3-20 October; University of New Brunswick Art Centre, 1-22 November; Owens Art Gallery 1-21 December and Confederation Centre, 8-27 January. The show was not intended for tour beyond the Maritimes but went to Toronto on the initiative of artist-curator, David Blackwood who brought the exhibit to Erindale College.

[84] Peter Bell, "Mary Pratt--Introduction," *Mary Pratt: A Partial Retrospective* (St. John's: Memorial University Art Gallery, 1973), unpaginated. The exhibit opened 1 June 1973 in St. John's.

[85] Ibid.

development of her first studio which was a temporary structure that combined studio and greenhouse where she could paint and garden.[86]

The 1973 exhibition of twenty-three new works was a strikingly different exhibition than that of six years earlier and occasioned Pratt's first showing of *Supper Table* which held a critical place in demonstrating her pursuit of verisimilitude and engagement with domestic life as subject. More than half of the paintings shown depicted subjects drawn from activities related to the Pratt family kitchen in Salmonier. Just as Wieland had done in her films, Pratt also referenced the family kitchen through synecdoche but her subjects were more diverse, including sink and abundant references to food. The works *Baked Apples on Tinfoil* [Figure 43], *Red Currant Jelly* [Figure 44], *Eviscerated Chickens* [Figure 45], *Bags, Capelin* and *Salt Fish Drying* illustrate the diversity of subjects she painted that inferred the kitchen through synecdoche. These images were those of Pratt's life in Salmonier and they dominated the exhibition but Pratt continued reflecting on her life before marriage and the significance of home.

Figure 43: Mary Pratt *Baked Apples on Tinfoil*, 1969, oil on panel, 40.8 x 61 cm, New Brunswick Museum (left)

Figure 44: Mary Pratt *Red Currant Jelly*, 1972, oil on Masonite board, 45.9 x 45.6 cm, National Gallery of Canada (right)

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[86] Pratt spoke in interview about her father-in-law's support, 17 October 2009. Mary's last studio at Salmonier studio was profiled in "Mary Pratt, St. Mary's Bay, NFLD," *Canadian Art* I, no. 1 (Fall 1984): 58-59.

Figure 45: Mary Pratt*, Eviscerated Chickens*, 1971, oil on panel, 45.6 x 61.2 cm, The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The painting *Fredericton* (1972: PC), [Figure 46] was an important reminder to audiences of Pratt's increasing awareness of the geographical division of her life by marriage, her earlier life in Fredericton and her life after marriage with Christopher in Newfoundland. Pratt continued to long for her family and endured what were for her the difficulties of separation from the Wests.[87] Throughout these years she corresponded by letter with her parents and only visited Fredericton infrequently given the expenses and challenges of travelling outside Newfoundland. Her parents sometimes visited Salmonier for such events as her 1967 exhibition.[88] In the painting *Fredericton*, Pratt depicted a nearby home on the same street as the West family home in stately proportion. For her, the scene recalled her idyllic childhood:

> I am standing in the driveway of my father's house, looking down the street. The early morning sun is shining across the St. John River [Fredericton], through the elm trees and onto the faces of the houses. It is so familiar to me, so inevitable,

[87] In 1986 Pratt stated; "NFLD has given me a great deal--one of its most illustrious sons for a husband, a family tradition in both business and the arts for my children to consider, and a generous society in which to satisfy an ambition developed years ago in New Brunswick." as cited in "Convocation Address, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador" (1986) in Mary Pratt, *A Personal Calligraphy,* 86.
[88] Christopher Pratt, *Ordinary Things: A Different Kind of Voyage*, 32.

that I never imagine carpenters building these houses. I assume they have ‘grown,’ like the trees, and have always been there, and always will be there.[89]

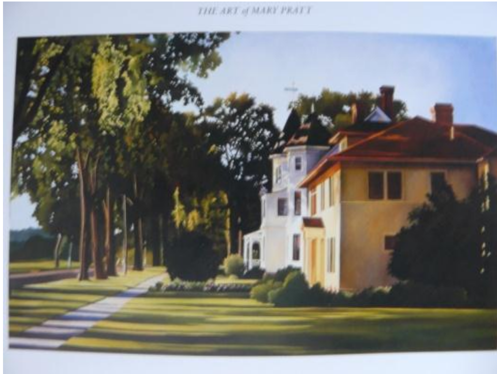

Figure 46: Mary Pratt, *Fredericton*, 1972, 74.8 x 107 cm, Private Collection (left)

Figure 47: Mary Pratt*, The Florentine*, 1971, oil on board, 30 x 40.6 cm, Private Collection (right)

The serenity of *Fredericton* was echoed in Pratt’s *The Florentine* (1971: PC), [Figure 47], a painting depicting the porcelain tea service given to Mary and Christopher on their wedding. Pratt remembered this service as another “visible reminder of the formality of her childhood,” a further marker of the ever-increasing distance between her family heritage and her married life.[90] Contrasts between the West and Pratt family histories were not inconsequential for either party in this Canada-Newfoundland marriage where Mary West had married into an anti-confederate family. Christopher reflected, “I always felt out of place in the West home, but never unwelcome. I didn’t like the claustrophobia of Fredericton, if that’s what it was. I did feel inferior, the causes and reasons were many and inadvertent. Mr. West believed that there should be learning in a house: art, music, literature, none of which had been priorities in our home.”[91] Both *Fredericton* and *The Florentine* were sharp contrasts to other exhibited works depicting

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[89] Mary Pratt as quoted by Gerta Moray in “Critical Essay” in Sandra Gwyn and Gerta Moray, *Mary Pratt,* 56.
[90] Ibid., 48.
[91] Christopher Pratt, *Ordinary Things: A Different Kind of Voyage*, 124.

what now comprised Pratt's immediate surroundings, images which included Pratt's explorations of slain and butchered raw meat. As Mary was to soon understand about rural life in Salmonier, hunting was part of the culture and a means of survival for many families.

Dick Marrie's Moose (1973: LU) depicted a moose carcass slung outside a neighbor's house, a scene Pratt identified as "the family's meat supply for the winter" and an "aggressive necessity" which, in mirror reflection against the house exterior, "hinted at a darker side to life."[92] Imagery of meat destined for the oven and human consumption appeared regularly in Pratt's oeuvre in various incarnations: there was the view onto the floor of the two eviscerated chickens sitting on the Coca Cola box waiting her attention which Pratt observed "symbolize much about life in this civilization."[93] After once cleaning chickens following her mother's rituals, Pratt determined that, "I thereafter contented myself with frozen chickens" for she had never been able to get over the "barbarism of butchering."[94] There were tamer images of baked and prepared non-meat goods from the Pratt family kitchen (baked apples and current jellies) included in the show but the contrasts illustrated by Pratt's staging of her two selves in this exhibition revealed the shaping of more sex-gendered identities than that of artist-mother. Here also were the identities Mary Pratt of Fredericton and of Salmonier—artist-daughter-wife-mother whose lineage in British-Canadian traditions of civility contrasted significantly with her married life in a coastal community where concerns of hunting, nature and coastal climate extremes prevailed. Pratt's second solo exhibition, then, consolidated her art practice as also an art of location, dislocation and relocation in a self-construction marked by contrasts of *here* and *there*.

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[92]Mary Pratt as quoted by Gerta Moray in "Critical Essay" in Sandra Gwyn and Gerta Moray, *Mary Pratt*, 60, and illustrated on page 61.
[93] Ibid., 52.
[94] Ibid., 52.

Her deployment of so-called kitchen subject matter was a means through which these interwoven experiences and identities were expressed.

Bell's double role as curator *and* public critic illuminated other sides to his understanding of Pratt's practice. In a review coinciding with the exhibit opening Pratt re-emerged once again as Christopher's artist's wife.[95] Bell praised her technical skills, her "small areas of exquisite abstract pattern" and saw her as "an artist of exceptional ability," but he was uncomfortable with her use of photography and assessed her creative direction as uncertain. Bell noted that *The Florentine* seemed "to belong to Fredericton" yet he did not move further his analysis on this or other paintings. In writing of *Dick Marrie's Moose* he focused on formalist concerns rather than the radical contrast represented by its explicit and raw subject matter relative to *The Florentine*. Recalling Lucy Lippard's remark that it was challenging for women to be taken seriously when working with domestic subject matter, Bell's framing of Pratt's exhibition in his double roles as curator and reporter only confirmed this problem. The description of Pratt's paintings as "dance minuets" diminished the seriousness of her work and Bell's statement of Mary's "surprise at her own strength" cast the show's strengths as accidental when she had been working steadily since 1968 while contending with multiple social constructions of the self in public life. Despite the difficulties of "equilibrium" in this marriage where his career was privileged over hers, Christopher recalled Mary's seriousness when reflecting on her mid-career survey in 1981: "Her paintings are incalculable enrichments of the slides from which they proceed. They are an enrichment that is both visual and spiritual and proceeds from her deep understanding of the

[95] Peter Bell, "An Exhibition by Mary Pratt: the dilemma of the realist painter," *St. John's Evening Telegram*, May 19, 1973, 8.

subjects she chooses to paint, with a love and mastery of the painting process, unique to contemporary Canadian art."[96]

The combined effects of Mary Pratt's inaugural exhibitions yielded insights into the conditions of her art practice and the social construction of her sex-gender identities as "house-wife painter," "kitchen artist" and "artist's wife." The experience of these shows was nonetheless critical to shaping Pratt's sense of self, the unfolding and tracing of her lived experience: she looked back with gratitude on the social recognition that came from these exhibitions. She regarded the Memorial gallery under Bell's leadership as "an amazing little institution" which had "absolute faith in the ability of local artists" enabling them to "believe in themselves."[97]

For Pratt and for Wieland their family kitchens offered a strategic voice of difference to speak with and from, a position which differentiated their art practices from their marriage partners, and a location from which to establish aesthetic and economic enterprises.[98] For these two artists who mobilized domestic kitchens to creative purpose there was no male equivalent, even in Canada's two famous bachelor-artist examples, Tom Thomson and A.Y. Jackson, whose working and living spaces had also combined the necessities of food, art and repose.[99] For them there was no conflation of professional studio life with domestic matters. In contrast, Pratt and Wieland navigated complex and contradictory relationships with their kitchens for these were at

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[96] Christopher Pratt, *Ordinary Things: A Different Kind of Voyage*, 54.
[97] Mary Pratt, "Convocation Address, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador (1986)," in Mary Pratt, *A Personal Calligraphy*, 85.
[98] Sales, rentals and screenings of Wieland's films brought regular income after 1968. See "Filmmakers Income Balance Sheet," three pages, Wieland Fonds, 1993-009/005, File 43. A price list indicates rentals starting at $15.00 through $35.00 for short-length films, and prices up to $400.00 for outright purchases. Most of her films were renting regularly to art schools, universities and public film events.
[99] The Tom Thomson 'shack' is permanently house on the grounds of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Jackson was life-long resident of Toronto's Studio Building as is documented in the website by G.R. Brzeski, "Toronto's Historical Plaques, The Studio Building," 2008, www.alanbrown.com

once spaces of toleration, acceptance, resentment, valorization and responsibility as much as they were also spaces of creativity and economic imperative.

Conclusion

Mary Pratt's female experience in a remote community became the focus of her practice for more than three decades. Like Wieland, Pratt's experiences were critical in establishing her creative voices of sexual and aesthetic differences, especially in relation to her artist-couple marriage. For both women their family kitchens were places where social norms of women's domestic deportment were exercised but where they also found inspiring subject matter and established their own aesthetic and economic enterprises. In their work with domestic subjects Wieland and Pratt contended with the double appellations "kitchen artist" and "artist's wife." More so than Nicoll, Wieland and Pratt endured these identity categories in relationship to their increasingly renowned husbands.

Wieland and Pratt began their practices where Nicoll left off but their subjectivities emerged in contexts of generational difference and with the support of the postwar North American feminist movement. Recall Mary Pratt's comment that "I think of myself quite consciously as a woman painting and I have quite strong feelings about the women's movement without really being part of it."[100] As Marion Nicoll had done they too performed their subjectivities but, whereas Nicoll performed sexual crossings to participate in a male-dominated art world including practices of androgyny, Wieland and Pratt asserted more strongly their two female identities. For Wieland and Pratt, their kitchens were not silent spaces of oppression to be painted out of their lives but were rather active locations from which their art practices were

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[100] As cited in *Mary Pratt: Paintings and Drawings* (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland Art Gallery, 1975), unpaginated.

built. Their kitchens also offered engaging subjects for exploration and exposed important elements pertaining to the social conditions of their art practices.

This chapter has considered that intimate creative association in this gendered world fostered some forms of visibility for two heterosexual and married women (Wieland's move to Isaacs Gallery and Pratt's first solo exhibitions at Memorial University Art Gallery) and that their visibility came with a price. Nonetheless, Wieland and Pratt did not face the difficulties of having differences of same-sex companionship and race added to their gender experiences in exhibitions. Indeed, the sex-gender policing of women's art practices continued in different forms again in women's "two-man" artist-couple exhibitions addressed in the next two chapters.

Chapter Five

Two Women's "Two-Man" Artist-Couple Exhibitions: The Social Emergence of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle as "The Girls"

Introduction

In 1985, Christopher Pratt declared, "I have no desire to be taken as a husband and wife evangelical team…to be looked at as some sort of ma and pa cotton candy act—people who've been married for 100 years living an idyllic life and all that."[1] Given the tenor of this statement when combined with Mary Pratt's parallel desire for independent exhibitions from her husband, it comes as no surprise that the Pratt's have maintained separate exhibition histories throughout their respective practices.[2] For other artists, though, it was not necessarily clear what action to take when opportunity arose to participate in this variant on the "two-man" exhibition in postwar Canada. In the artist-couple exhibit, two artists' practices were not only made available for creative comparison, but one's sexuality and companionship status were also often made explicit. When, for instance, Joyce Wieland and Michael Snow showed together in their second artist-couple exhibition in 1962 they proclaimed the event to be their "conjugal retrospective."[3] As Wieland experienced, when female artists married to well-known male artists exhibited together,

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[1] Christopher Pratt, as quoted in Marie Morgan, "Masculine/Feminine, Christopher and Mary Pratt," *Visual Arts, Banff Letters: Ideas and Education in the Arts* (Spring 1985): 3. Mary also recalled her desire to show separately in interview with Catharine Mastin, 17 October 2009.

[2] There was one exhibition including Mary and Christopher Pratt with relative James Pratt which is better-described as a 'family' exhibition than an artist-couple one since the exhibit also drew on the Pratt family art collection. This event was, *A Personal View of James Pratt, Mary Pratt and Christopher Pratt from the Private Collection of Mr. and Mrs. J.K. Pratt, An Exhibition in Aid of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind* (St. John's Memorial University Art Gallery, 1974), 2 pages, as sourced in the Mary Pratt Artist's File, NGC Library and Archives. There was "The James Coutts Gift: Works by Christopher and Mary Pratt" exhibit held at the Beaverbrook Art Gallery in 1997 but as the title illustrates, this was not an exhibition they lent works to.

[3] The two exhibitions, both titled *Drawings by Michael Snow and Joyce Wieland,* were respectively held at the Westdale Gallery, Hamilton, Ontario 1959 (founded in 1958 by Miriam and Julius Lebow) and the Hart House Gallery, Toronto, 9-28 October 1962. As documented in email correspondence between Linda MacRae, 7-13 April 2009, Christopher Regimbal, J.M. Barnicke Gallery, Hart House, University of Toronto and Loryl MacDonald , Records Archivist, University of Toronto, 11 February- 9 April 2009 to Catharine Mastin. Reference to the "conjugal retrospective" was made on a hand-written invitation, General Correspondence, Box 3, Michael Snow Fonds, Art Gallery of Ontario.

there were the additional difficulties of being cast as subordinate as "artist's wife" and being shadowed by the husband's reputation. The 1962 Wieland-Snow exhibition was the final time this artist-couple showed together, as they, like the Pratt's, focused afterwards on establishing their separate exhibitions.[4] These two examples illustrate that the artist-couple exhibit was especially problematic for women since their social recognition and visibility were often contingent on their marital and companionship status. Nonetheless, the women in these two Euro-Canadian heterosexual couples understood their participation in the artist-couple exhibition to be a choice for their alternatives included the solo exhibition. As the next two chapters featuring Frances Loring, Florence Wyle and Kenojuak Ashevak consider, the artist-couple exhibition was also used to signify much more than one's creative work and heterosexual marriage status: such exhibits effectively worked to construct women's sexuality and race-culture as hierarchies of difference between women.

In representing the same-sex partnership of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle, the artist-couple exhibition was persistently used to present their two art practices throughout both artists' life spans and they are yet to be shown solo in their posthumous exhibition histories.[5] These exhibitions have played a critical role in singularizing their sex-gender identities into, "The Girls" (their most popular critical sobriquet), and have also occluded important differences

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[4] Wieland and Snow showed together in film at the 8th International Artists Seminar at Fairleigh Dickinson University, Madison, New Jersey during their New York years together but there were no more artist-couple art exhibits after 1962. Documentation on this film project can be found in the Michael Snow Fonds, General Correspondence File, 1963-1968, Box 3, Art Gallery of Ontario Library and Archives.

[5] The first artist-couple exhibitions of Loring and Wyle were held at the following two venues: *Exhibition of Works by Loring and Wyle,* Toronto, Women's Art Association, March 1922; and *Exhibition of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle,* Hart House, University of Toronto, 15-29 March 1926. No records remain from these exhibits. There was one two-artist exhibit in which Wyle's works were shown, *Rock and Wyle: New Paintings by Geoffrey Rock and 12 Small Bronzes by Wyle*, 10-16 April 1966, Exhibit invitation, Florence Wyle Artists' file, NGC Library. There was also a three-artist show in 1954 with Wyle at Eglinton Gallery with Karl May and William Ronald paintings as cited in Elspeth Cameron, *And Beauty Answers: The Life of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle* (Toronto: Cormorant, 2007), 280. Their most recent exhibition was curated by Christine Boyanoski, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptor's Legacy* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1987).

between the artists' two sculptural practices in neoclassical figurative traditions.[6] Analysis of these exhibitions demonstrates that the social recognition granted to Loring and Wyle differed in significant ways from the experiences of the three Euro-Canadian heterosexual and married women who exhibited solo in the previous chapters. Indeed, these artist-couple exhibitions illustrate the diverse and complex mechanisms through which women's sex-gender identities were socially policed and how Canada's postwar exhibition system worked to represent the female artist in contexts of sex-gender difference.

In their exhibitions, Loring and Wyle experienced that sex-gender difference was far more complicated than simply a binary paradigm of male to female. They endured a lifelong leveling of their two art practices as parallel, inseparable and equal in significance and this phenomenon was a consequence of their social designation as "The Girls." Nonetheless, Loring and Wyle's artist-couple exhibitions also worked to destabilize the category "woman," contesting Euro-Canadian marriage norms to include same-sex and self-determined models. Following Judith Butler's expansive conceptions of plural sex-gender performance and identity, Loring and Wyle contributed significantly to the idea that sex-gender performance could be constituted differently. In their identity performances, living together and developing their respective art practices in what became their life-long partnership, they navigated cautiously what Butler has described as the dichotomy of "social sanction and taboo." As Butler explains: "In its [gender's] very character as performative resides the possibility of contesting its reified

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[6] By way of introduction to the persistent use of this designation, I cite Kay Kritzwiser's article, "The Girls show to foster young talent," *Globe and Mail,* June 2, 1969 and the exhibition, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy,* 1987 during which time gallery media and the press used "The Girls" as a media tagline to promote and describe Loring and Wyle's works.

status….One does one's body and indeed, one does one's body differently from one's contemporaries and from one's predecessors and successors as well."[7]

Loring and Wyle's Social Emergence in Canada: "The Girls"-"Women" Conundrum

Of the six artists in this study, it was the two practices of Loring and Wyle which illustrate most clearly the persistent deployment of the artist-couple exhibition to represent any artist's practice. Throughout their exhibition histories after arriving in Canada in the winter of 1912-1913, the artist-couple exhibition format was used to show their works on five occasions. These exhibits were the closest these two women ever came to the social recognition granted by the solo exhibition's focused privileging of the single artist. The first of these showings were modest and early-practice undertakings staged by the Toronto Women's Art Association in 1922 and the University of Toronto's Hart House in 1926. A long gap in their artist-couple exhibition history then followed until postwar, when curators Clare Bice (1909-1976) and Kenneth Saltmarche (1920-2000) presented Loring and Wyle's third artist-couple showing in 1953 at the Willistead Art Gallery, Windsor (WAGW) followed by tour to the Elsie Perrin Williams Memorial Art Museum, London, Ontario (now Museum London, ML).[8] Bice followed up again in 1962 to organize their fourth artist-couple showing, a large fifty-year survey which also served as their double retrospective. This exhibition was Loring and Wyle's most comprehensive and important one to that date, and the last major one to critically attend to the significance of their

[7] Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory," in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader,* edited by Amelia Jones (New York: Routledge, 2003), 393.
[8] The exhibition is listed in Boyanoski's "Major Exhibitions" in *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy,* 129, as only showing in Windsor but the following reviews indicate that the show was at two venues: "Sculptures Form Fine Exhibition," *London Free Press*, January 13, 1953; and exhibition invitation "Sculpture by Frances Loring and Florence Wyle," Willistead Art Gallery, 20 November 1952, Frances Loring Artist's File, NGC library.

two practices during their lifetimes.[9] Following presentation in these four public gallery spaces, Toronto commercial art dealer Jack Pollock then organized a fifth artist-couple exhibition in 1966, and, a year following both artists' passing, he presented one more artist-couple Memorial Exhibition in 1969.[10]

In the years making up the distance between Loring and Wyle's artist-couple showings of 1926 and 1953, both artists also participated regularly in large group-artist annual exhibitions such as those organized by the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (RCA), the Ontario Society of Artists (OSA), and, most significantly given their medium of preference, the Sculptors' Society of Canada (SSC), but always separately and not as an artist-couple.[11] Aside from a four-woman exhibition in 1942—their sculptural incursion into the Art Gallery of Toronto's "Print Room" with sculptors Dora Weschler and Jacobine Jones—these were virtually their only exhibition options in Canada's interwar exhibition market.[12] The compression of their most major exhibitions during the 1960s into three artist-couple showings (1962, 1966 and 1969), however, is reason for pause. This chapter explores how the representation of their sex-gender identities in these exhibitions continued to present a conundrum for organizers, reviewers and critics, oscillating back and forth between the categories "women" and "The Girls." Loring and Wyle's respective self-identifications (or not) with these two identity categories illuminates important aspects of this social problem.

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[9] There have been several name changes to the London museum since the 1950s as are identified in the Abbreviations List in the front matter entry for to Museum London (ML), the gallery's current name.

[10] Jack Pollock (1930-1992) was a young Toronto art dealer then in his thirties and is not to be confused with the American abstract expressionist painter Jackson Pollock (1912-1956). He was also an artist who studied at Ontario College of Art, and exhibited at Expo '67, as documented in Kathleen M. Fenwick, *Canadian Prints and Drawings, Expo '67* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967), cat. 18.

[11] Since opportunities were few, and because the respective contributions to sculptural practice were broadly endorsed by juries who consistently saw merit in including both sculptors' works, it was common to find both artists showing concurrently.

[12] This point is documented in *In the Print Room: Jacobine Jones, Frances Loring, Dora Weschler, Florence Wyle* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Toronto, 1942) and Augustus Bridle, "Work of 4 Women in Sculpture Show," for the exhibition dates 6 March-5 April 1942, Scrapbook, Box 16, Frances Loring and Florence Wyle Fonds, Art Gallery of Ontario Library and Archives (hereafter referred to as Loring and Wyle Fonds).

The biographies and oral testimonies of Loring and Wyle illustrate that they did not fit neatly within the category "woman" and their self-identifications with this identity were by no means straightforward. Both women were members of the Toronto Women's Art Association (WAA) and these affiliations remained obvious examples of their self-identification *with* the category "woman." Loring was active for some three decades in the WAA, beginning as a member in 1917, followed by terms as Vice-President (1930-34), Chair (1935-1936), and finally as President (1938-40).[13] In contrast, Wyle remained distant from WAA Board work. In this women's socio-organizational context then, Loring clearly self-identified with the social framing of the category "woman" much more publicly so than did Wyle, preferring as she did greater visibility, profile and leadership. Wyle expressed her self-identifications with the category "woman" differently from Loring, using the platform of sex-gender performance to express her views. She observed; "I like men. But women do most things very much better."[14] Both artists shared similar views on the necessity of female visibility through exhibitions and understood this concern as a matter of feminist justice: indeed, neither one is known to have declined opportunity to participate in women's exhibitions, including, of course, their female-only artist-couple showings.

Most certainly, Loring and Wyle did not remain neutral when matters of gender parity and gender self-identification were directly raised before them, but neither did they necessarily wish to consistently self-identify as a female artist working in sculpture. When, for example,

[13] As cited by Boyanoski in *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy*, 127-8. Reference to some of Loring's Board work at the WAA can be found on the 2010 website www.womensartofcanada.ca under history and past presidents since 1887.
[14] Florence Wyle as cited by Rebecca Sisler in *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Company, 1973), 83.

they were described as “sculptresses” they are said to have detested the term.[15] In preferring to see themselves as colleagues and sculp*tors*, they asserted, rather, the *in*significance of sex-gender to an artist’s social recognition. How Loring and Wyle intersected their feminisms with the category “woman” is thus significant to understanding their self-identifications, their shared views, *and* their differences as two independent subjects. Although Loring and Wyle’s first biographer, Rebecca Sisler, has argued that they were both “ardent feminists,” she was also careful to underscore that their engagement with feminism was not identical, describing Wyle for instance as “fiercely feminist,” but not Loring, the opposite we might expect of Loring given her place on the WAA Board.[16] As feminist scholars like Sisler have long recognized, the categories “feminism” and “women” have thus existed in complex tension since historically, feminism recognized only gradually the proliferation of differences between women, across the lines of race, class and sexuality.[17] Indeed, Loring and Wyle might well have agreed with postmodern poet, Denise Riley regarding their affections and disaffections, enfranchisements and disenfranchisements, with the category “woman.”

For Riley, “woman” has been a “troublesome and volatile” term that feminism is required to both lay claim to and to disengage from, to concentrate on and to also refute, if the category is to be understood at all.[18] As she has argued, there was also the problem that “woman” was cast as a fixed, permanent and inflexible identity, unaccepting of change in lived experience. To inhabit any gender at all, Riley argued, involved a certain “degree of horror.” She posed the question: “How could someone “be a woman through and through, make a final home in that

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[15] Rebecca Sisler quoted them as saying, “Why should there be sculptress any more than doctress,” in *The Girls*, 83. The artists were also quoted as saying that they regarded the term sculptress with “well founded disfavour,” in Anonymous “Women with Mallets,” *New World Illustrated* (February 1942), 27.
[16] Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle,* 82.
[17] A foundational text exploring this problem was, bell hooks,’ *Ain’t I a Woman?: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981).
[18] Denise Riley, “Does Sex Have a History,” in *Am I That Name” Feminism and the Category of “Women” in History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 1-4.

classification without suffering claustrophobia? But, if being a woman is more accurately conceived as a state which fluctuates for the individual…then there are always different densities of a sexed being in operation."[19] Monique Wittig has also contended in "The Straight Mind" that there was also the ideologically-hinged relationship of "woman" to heterosexuality. For her, this problem ultimately rendered the very category "woman" an uninhabitable sex-gender identity for the lesbian subject.[20] The fact of Loring and Wyle's complex relationships to the category "woman," their assertions of and disavowals of it, cannot, however, account for the persistent use of "The Girls" as the dominant identity appellation to describe their companionship in literature and exhibitions, a practice which has continued in recent writings on them, including significantly, their most recent double-artist biography.[21]

Loring and Wyle left no evidence to confirm their self-identifications with the category "the Girls" and, arguably, small wonder. This singularizing identity was socially underscored through both their co-residential arrangement and their unusual Toronto Church-Home-Studio which was regularly the subject of social columns. "The Girls" had significant implications on both artists: how, for example, it worked to establish their non-conformity to heterosexual marriage; and how it ideologically operated to contain them and their same-sex relationship. Why, one wonders, "The Girls," and not "the spinsters" or the "old maids," identities their two lives managed to escape as single and co-habiting women. In popular valence, after all, spinster and old maid had long inferred the subject's status in waiting since their marriage prospects had apparently passed by. Had Loring and Wyle followed Victorian order as women living under the

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[19] Ibid., 6.

[20] Monique Wittig, "The Straight Mind," in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader,* edited by Amelia Jones (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 130-135.

[21] Rebecca Sisler has been cited previously, Elspeth Cameron, *And Beauty Answers: The Life of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle* (Toronto: Cormorant, 2007) and Christine Boyanoski's *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy* cited previously.

economic control of their respective fathers or brothers in domestic service beyond early adulthood, surely they would also have had to confront these non-married female identities.[22] However, Loring and Wyle's haste after art school in forming their co-residential partnership in New York seemed to divert the application of these social appellations to their lives. Their household remained without any male head and to simply pluralize spinster and old maid to describe them was anachronous for their lives did not accord with these single-woman identity categories. In Canada, however, the search persisted for a term that could be used to socially frame Loring and Wyle's relationship, and, as Sisler argued, "The Girls" seemed somehow to sustain their "unconventional lifestyle as neither bohemians, nor hippies, nor eccentrics."[23] However, to apply "The Girls" to Loring and Wyle's lives is not without its definitional difficulties.

The literature on Loring and Wyle engages in using the term "Girls" in contexts of endearment. However, the application of a normatively pre-adult and pre-sexual female identity onto the lives of two adult, aging, and also posthumous women's lives, was a social act of diminishment and also a pronouncement of their aberration from women's normative heterosexual marriage path. "Girl," after all, as Freud had influentially conceptualized it in his essay on "Femininity" was not a category used to describe the married female subject; her heterosexual marriage, love object shift from female (mother) to male (father), shift from bisexual to heterosexual subject, and transferral of erotic climax from the clitoris to the vagina,

[22] Feminist studies have offered much variation in the categories "spinster" and "old maid" addressing women's varied economic, employment and sexual independence from patriarchal households. Such writings include: Trisha Franzen, *Spinsters and Lesbians: Independent Womanhood in the United States* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1996); and Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1985).
[23] Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle*, 3.

were the key points that ensured her admission to the category "woman."[24] Following Freud's line of thinking, without these sex-gender performance crossings, the female subject could not be a "woman." For Loring and Wyle, one imagines that these "girl-woman" subject positions would have been akin to Denise Riley's "gender horror." Applied to their two lives, "The Girls" at once included and excluded Loring and Wyle from both sex-gender categories. While "The Girls" recognized Loring and Wyle's respective sex as female in the biological sense, it also precluded their participation in Freud's completed path to normative "womanhood" and made visible their non-conformity to heterosexual marriage. Clearly, Loring and Wyle exceeded the boundaries of these categories during the emergence of these influential sexology writings, but the question remained as to how to frame their sex-gender identities following their arrival in Canada.

In the United States, their former sculptor instructor, Lorado Taft (1860-1936), widely renowned for his public monuments and tome *History of American Sculpture* (1924) had reductively cast Loring and Wyle as "lesbians" in a disparaging employment reference following their study with him.[25] As it turns out, the social construction of Loring and Wyle as "The Girls," was a Canadian (and Torontonian) invention, its etiology dating specifically to Loring and Wyle's early life together in Toronto and linked to their earliest participation in a 1915 exhibition and the response of local media. There are two critically important portrait busts they

[24] Sigmund Freud, "Femininity," in *Freud on Women: A Reader*, edited by Elisabeth Young-Bruehl (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1990), 342-362. I draw on Freud's work to explore this sex-gender identity construction because his writings were widely influential and remain among those few documents to theorize the young female subject's sex-gender identity formation which use the term "girl." In feminist theory, concentration on the adult female subject has meant that the category "girl" has not been interrogated comparably to the subject "woman." Freud's analysis though will not surprise the reader as problematic for its heterosexism and phallic privileging of masculinity. Nonetheless, his analysis of the trajectory girl-to-woman provides a context in which to analyze Loring and Wyle's sex-gender identities as "the girls" and offers a sharp contrast to Judith Butler's concept of sex-gender identity as unfixed and revisable in lived experience.

[25] Lorado Taft's *History of American Sculpture* was published in 1924 by MacMillan, New York. Taft's comment is recorded by Rebecca Sisler who wrote that; "Taft, still nursing his bitterness toward Florence, self-persuaded that she had not fully appreciated all he had done for her, had written French (a sculptor) warning him that Florence and Frances were not only inconsequential sculptors but a couple of "Lesbians" to boot." As cited by Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle,* 21.

made of each other that serve to introduce the particulars of this sex-gender identity conundrum and its history in their Canadian exhibitions. To explore this problem, consideration is first given to the significance of these portraits to the social emergence of Loring and Wyle as "The Girls" following their arrival in Toronto. Secondly, analysis is made to what I have named Loring and Wyle's "social exit" from this category and their contingent relocation to the category "women" following their withdrawal of the portrait busts after the 1915 exhibition. Finally, through analysis of their artist-couple exhibitions of the 1960s, consideration is given to Loring and Wyle's "social return" to the category "The Girls" as these two portrait busts were brought back into public exhibition in Loring and Wyle's later lives. These discussions expose that the two portrait busts held a strategically important place in constructing and circulating "The Girls" as Loring and Wyle's dominant sex-gender identity, and were echoed by their artist-couple exhibitions of the 1960s.

Figure 10: Frances Loring, *Portrait of Florence Wyle,* 1911, plaster with paint, 53 x 25.5 x 21 cm, National Gallery of Canada (left)

Figure 11: Florence Wyle, *Portrait of Frances Loring*, 1911, plaster with paint, 55.5 x 35.5 x 24 cm, National Gallery of Canada (right)

In the shared New York studio of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle in Greenwich Village in 1911 it is recalled from Chapter Two that these artists sculpted two portraits of each other—the works by Frances Loring of *Florence Wyle* (1911: AGO), [Figure 10] and by Florence Wyle of *Frances Loring* (1911: AGO), [Figure 11]. As art objects, these busts were parallel statements of their lives as artists, sculptors and women, and also testimony to their respective command of material, form and subject in neoclassical figurative traditions.[26] Only once did Loring and Wyle make such homages to each other and only twice during their lifetimes did they exhibit them together. The first of these occasions was the exhibition *The Works of Toronto Sculptors* in 1915, followed by inclusion in their artist-couple retrospective at Pollock Gallery, Toronto, in 1966.[27] For more than half a century then, the busts remained largely in the privacy of their studio.[28] In the public exhibitions in which they usually participated, where artists were often responsible for self-determining their submissions to juries, and thus also issuing some control over their exhibition representation, this significant gap is reason for pause. Whatever goals the artists had by including these works as among their recent accomplishments in figurative statuary, Loring and Wyle learned quickly in 1915 just how the joint display of these two objects in Toronto would work to consolidate their same-sex artist-couple status, their social designation as "The Girls" in exhibitions, and shape future social and critical reception to their work.

[26] The busts are respectively 53 and 55 cm or 21 and 21.5 inches each in height.
[27] The first exhibit was *The Works of Toronto Sculptors* held at the Grange, Art Museum of Toronto, 13 November-15 December 1915 and the second was their first major commercial exhibition, their artist-couple showing at Toronto dealer Jack Pollock's gallery, as documented in *The Works of Toronto Sculptors* (Toronto: Art Museum of Toronto, 1915) and Alan Jarvis, *Frances Loring-Florence Wyle* (Toronto: Pollock Gallery, 1966).
[28] Loring showed her portrait bust of Wyle in a 1944 OSA show (cat. 105) but Wyle did not. Otherwise both busts were withdrawn from circulation and not again shown together until 1966.

In the 1915 Toronto Sculptors' display the portrait busts had served to introduce Loring and Wyle and their works to the local art scene, and were among their most prominent recent accomplishments.[29] However, their inaugural exhibition presence issued more than these two results since the busts were also a referent to their mutual interests in each other as portrait subjects and to their co-residential studio arrangement. News of their arrival on the Toronto scene as a co-habiting female artist-couple had been made the year prior by critic Estelle Kerr, who had already cast Loring and Wyle as "The Girls" by describing them thus three times in her article for Toronto's widely-circulated *Women's Saturday Night*.[30] Despite Kerr's pluralization of "girl" to recognize the fact of two social subjects, this designation nonetheless collapsed Loring and Wyle's identities together. Kerr's designation would turn out to be the beginnings of nearly a century's worth of subsequent writings attending to the social framing of Loring and Wyle's sex-gender identities.

If the almost relentless display of these busts together after their re-entry into the market through Pollock's 1966 Loring-Wyle exhibition is any indication of what purposes they would have been put to during the artists' own lifetimes, then Loring and Wyle had clearly been savvy to restrict their circulation after 1915. A survey of their use in and after 1966 illustrates the chronological trajectory of this problem. In 1966, the portraits were again called upon in Pollock's exhibit to introduce the artists, this time as cover illustrations for the exhibition brochure in flattened silhouettes strategically facing each other.[31] The bi-fold cover [Figure 48] opened to a vintage 1914 artist-couple photograph identifying who was who— an image incidentally also used as cover image for Loring and Wyle's 1987 artist-couple retrospective

[29] The checklist *The Works of Toronto Sculptors* lists that Loring showed 15 works and Wyle showed 24 works. Loring and Wyle were exhibited with more works than any other sculptors in this exhibit of nine artists.
[30] Estelle Kerr, "Women Sculptors in Toronto," *Women's Saturday Night*, June 20, 1914.
[31] Cover illustration, Alan Jarvis, *Frances Loring—Florence Wyle,* which is a two-page fold out with portrait busts facing each other.

exhibition publication [Figure 49] and exhibit invitation, and the dust jacket for their 2007 double biography.[32] [Figure 50] Pollock recycled this double-bust presentation strategy again in his 1969 Loring and Wyle Memorial Exhibition when the busts were used to introduce the couple on the exhibition invitation [Figure 51].[33] The busts appeared on two more important memorial displays in the 1980s. In the Loring and Wyle Parkette dedicated to their legacies in 1984, the two bronze-cast busts were permanently positioned kitty-corner to look across to each other.[34] In their artist-couple retrospective at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1987 the busts were the first objects shown at the exhibition entranceway.[35] The National Gallery of Canada's permanent collection display of Canadian art of 2009 once again exhibited the busts side-by-side.

Figure 48: *Loring and Wyle Exhibition Brochure,* Pollock Gallery, 1966, bi-fold cover (upper left)

Figure 49: Cover Image for the 1987 Exhibition Catalogue Cover and Opening Invitation image, Art Gallery of Ontario (upper right)

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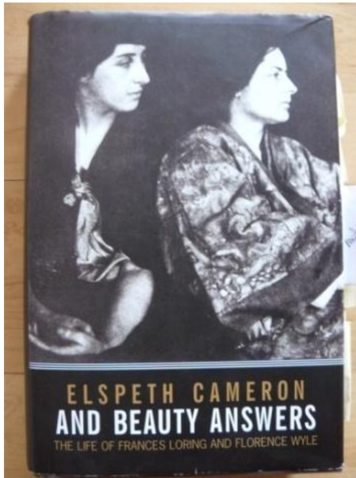
[32] As documented in the cover illustrations for Christine Boyanoski's *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy* (soft cover) and Elspeth Cameron's *And Beauty Answers* (dust jacket). A copy of the invitation for the 1987 exhibition using the busts is located in the AGO Artists' Files for Loring and Wyle.
[33] A copy of Pollock's invitation is located in the Artist's File for Florence Wyle, NGC Library and Archives.
[34] Alan Brown, "Loring and Wyle Parkette," www.torontohistorypages.org,, site accessed 15 January 2010.
[35] Exhibition layout for the 1987 exhibition *Loring and Wyle: Sculptor's Legacy*, in "Hanging" file, Art Gallery of Ontario Institutional Exhibition Files, Box 5-2-2, AGO Library and Archives.



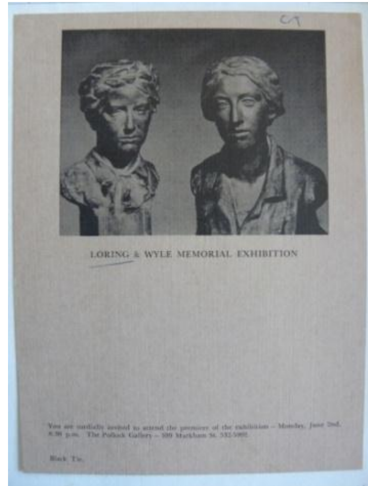


Figure 50: *Dust-Jacket Cover for Elspeth Cameron's And Beauty Answers: The Life of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle*, 2007 (lower left)

Figure 51: *Invitation, Memorial Exhibition of Loring and Wyle*, Pollock Gallery, 1969 (lower right)

The proliferation of examples supporting the use of these busts as a quasi-meet-the-artist-couple introduction and false tool of subject familiarity has perpetuated the seeming necessity of their joint biography and exhibition, their inseparability as artists and subjects. As the above historical evidence suggests, Loring and Wyle had contained the exhibition of these busts after 1915 but their utility after Pollock's 1966 exhibition, and in subsequent retrospective and memorial displays, tells a different story, one in which these busts have come to represent a perpetual conjoining of their life in exhibitions and permanent civic monuments. Of necessity, as aging and physically challenged artists by the mid-1960s, Loring and Wyle had effectively relinquished control over their use and inclusion in exhibitions. Evidently then, after 1915, Loring and Wyle were far more careful than writers have thought previously about *what and how* they would exhibit their work. In the face of this evidence, little doubt remains that their efforts had aimed to issue some elements of control over their self and artist-couple representation, and also public understandings of their two sex-gender identities in exhibitions. A brief look over Loring and Wyle's exhibition histories in the intervening years between 1915 and 1966, and also

an examination of their co-residential history after 1920, are significant factors in exploring further the sex-gender semiotics of this exhibition record.

For both artists, exhibiting was a long-term commitment that sustained social and critical reception of their two art practices and their exhibition history suggests that neither one stepped aside to make more room for the other's greater visibility. Their exhibition histories as listed on their two curriculum vitaes were always separate. There was no "Loring-Wyle Curriculum Vitae" to represent their businesses together for they were always two separate producers and businesses even though they sometimes both produced work for the same commissions.[36] The crucial role that Loring and Wyle each played in the formation of the Sculptors' Society of Canada (SSC) as founding members, practitioners and leaders committed to the establishment of a professional infrastructure for sculptural practice meant that they exhibited concurrently but always separately in SSC exhibitions and those of other societies. Their participation in SSC exhibitions and prestigious international ones including *Canadian Art* at the New York World's Fair (1939) and *A Century of Canadian Art* shown at London's Tate Gallery (1938), indicate that Loring and Wyle did not hesitate to exhibit multiple times those works each artist considered to be their more important ones: this practice was not so, however, for their two portrait busts of each other.[37]

After the portrait busts moved back to the privacy of the Loring-Wyle studio in 1915, usage of the sobriquet "The Girls" would abate in social and critical circles and their lives were

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[36] Examples of commissions they both worked on include the following: First World War Munitions Workers (1918-21); Bank of Montreal (1948); Harry Oakes Pavilion (1939-41); and Calvert Drama Festival Trophies (1953). Wyle helped Loring with some final stages of the Robert Borden commission but only on account of Loring's ill-health at the time. Otherwise, they are not known to have worked together on the same works.
[37] The repeated exhibition of works by each artist can be traced in Christine Boyanoski's catalogue listing in *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy* over many works. To briefly cite an example by each artist, Wyle's *Study of a Girl* which was shown eleven times between 1931 and 1953 and Loring's *Eskimo Mother and Child* which was shown ten times during her lifetime as documented in *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy*, 98, 108. The exhibition histories on the two busts are also referenced in Christine Boyanoski, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy,* 72-73.

contingently moved over into the categories “woman” and “women” in social columns and reviews.[38] In critical efforts to work their two lives into these categories, accounts nonetheless played up the reality of their same-sex household and social aberration as two women in a profession perceived to be male territory; in these scenarios they were described as a “women’s sculptural team” and “women with mallets.”[39] To be sure, their living arrangement and specifically their distinct studio-residence must be considered a central factor in analyzing how the collapsing of their identities was effected, for during their lives their studio was the subject of much critical attention, arguably more so than their respective art practices. Indeed, virtually none of their artist-couple exhibitions was staged without taking note of the fact of their co-residence.[40]

The purchase of a former Gothic-revival style school house at 110 Glenrose Avenue in Toronto as Loring and Wyle’s home—a building which once serviced the Deer Park Anglican Church—made for regular talk in the social columns on women in local papers.[41] [Figures 52a and b]

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[38] This shift is evident in the following articles between 1914 and 1966 describing them as women rather than girls: “Woman Academician,” *Hamilton Spectator,* November 2, 1938; “Canadian Woman Artist Made an RCA,” November 24, 1938; New Woman Academician,” *Ottawa Citizen*, November 24, 1938; “Women with Mallets,” *New World Illustrated* (February 1942); “Distinguished Woman Sculptor Here” *Edmonton Journal,* October 16, 1952; “Woman Wins Contents for Memorial Design, *Ottawa Citizen*, December 28, 1954; “Noted Woman Sculptor To Receive Degree,” *St. Catherine’s Standard* May 5, 1955; “Why would a woman want to be a sculptor?” *Toronto Star Weekly*, January 2, 1960. There was just one review in these years describing them as ‘girls’ which was Arthur E. McFarlane, “Two Toronto Sculptors Are Doing Big Work in Novel Studio,” *Toronto Star Weekly*, August 1, 1925.

[39] The following articles document these points: Lyn Harrington, “Unique Church-Studio Is Home and Workshop for Loring and Wyle, Canadian Sculpture Team,” *Saturday Night,* November 18, 1944, NGC Artist’s File copy; and Anonymous “Women with Mallets,” *New World Illustrated* (February 1942), 27. The church is now an architectural landmark in Toronto and is owned by Bobbie and Marlie Sniderman, son and daughter-in-law of the music store, *Sam the Record Man*. Alice Lawler, *Book Review: And Beauty Answers* (19 June 2008) on the website “Where Queers Conspire” at www.wherequeersconspire.com.

[40] This was the case with all three artist-couple exhibits of the 1960s and all publications on them to follow. Their exhibits during the 1920s are too sparsely documented to definitively prove this point but articles on their studio appeared frequently, as cited in the notes below this entry.

[41] The following reviews attend to this point: “Novel Studio for Sculptors,” *Toronto Mail and Empire*, November 20, 1920; “Turn Unused Church into Sculptors’ Studio,” *Toronto Star*, November 1920; and Arthur McFarlane, “Art Awakens in a Forgotten Church,” *Toronto Star Weekly*, 1 August 1925.

Figures 52a and b: *The Church-Studio of Loring and Wyle*, 110 Glenrose Avenue, Toronto (left, exterior; right interior)

It was in 1920, following the fiscal successes offered by their important sculpture commissions of the First World War, that Loring and Wyle sunk their proceeds into down payments on this property and one other, the "Cherrywood Farm" at Rouge River, Ontario. Their prudent commitment to the acquisition of these properties was an extraordinary example of both artists' pragmatic economic collaboration (while maintaining separate finances) and concrete evidence of their joint partnership and nurturance of two independent art practices in a deeply gendered art economy.[42] Of the two properties though, it was their much acclaimed church-home-studio which made most visible just how adeptly they shared the twin goals of professional lives as artists and economic survival.

In their Toronto home-studio, Loring and Wyle thriftily reduced to one domicile what could have been the quadruple expenses of separate studio spaces and homes for two artists. In a brilliant re-conceptualization of the building's spatial use, the congregational nave became their working studio, the vestry purportedly their shared bedroom, and the crypt their kitchen, dining

[42] The remaining correspondence in "Loring and Wyle Trust Fund," File 4.11, Loring and Wyle Fonds indicates that they each maintained separate chequing and savings accounts.

room and bathroom.[43] The peaked ceiling offered flexibility in accommodating the often substantial heights their public commissions demanded. The first impression on visitors was the nave full of sculpture, a proclamation of their creative lives and professional face to the world. The statement made at the outset of this living arrangement, where sculpture prevailed over all else, reflected just how seriously Loring and Wyle chose to assert a public view of their lives as professionals. As Daniel Buren has observed of the significance of the artist's studio, such spaces are "less dispensable to the artist than either the gallery or the museum" for the studio "precedes both."[44] For Buren, as it was for Loring and Wyle, the studio was a place of "production, storage, and finally, if all goes well, distribution. It is a kind of commercial depot."[45] For these two sculptors, consistently making work and seeking prominent and sometimes lucrative commissions, the church-studio was just such a venue of production and display to the outside world and prospective clients, but their studio was a marked departure from virtually any historical or contemporary model.

Loring and Wyle's studio at 110 Glenrose Avenue expressed their understandings of traditional gender and power relations within religious architectural history and the Gothic-revival style which they would now turn to female ends. Literally and figuratively, they turned upside down the church's traditional masculine and patriarchal operational histories. For Christianity, the church ideologically worked to sanctify women's reputations as virgin or redeemed subjects through penance, and it socially preserved those of its married subjects who regularly attended services. Such imagery of sexual purity and abiding morality was contrasted with its ideological opposite—the fallen woman. Before Loring and Wyle's domestic appropriation of this Sunday school structure, no doubt countless female subjects had been

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[43] Anonymous, "Novel Studio for Sculptors," *Toronto Mail and Empire*, November 20, 1920.
[44] Daniel Buren, "The Function of the Studio," *October* 10 (Autumn 1979): 51, 53.
[45] Ibid., 53.

taught early how to guard their reputations through sexual abstinence until marriage, and then, to remain in subjection to a husband as mother and wife. In this architectural paean to heterosexual marriage and nuclear family procreation, however, Loring and Wyle confidently and publicly asserted the value of their same-sex household. As the new property owners, the nave was no longer populated by a congregation of young worshippers but rather by Loring and Wyle at work, their numerous sculpted forms and those visitors interested in their work; the nave was now a place of production, commerce and self-realization, not religious dogma. The vestry's traditional function as a place of male church administration was re-purposed as private and personal. Loring and Wyle hereafter carefully safeguarded knowledge of the activities of that space and left no historical evidence to prove or disprove the affective and/or non-affective contours of their relationship.[46]

The Loring-Wyle home-studio was a remarkable confounding of traditional notions of public and private space. There would be no "kitchen artist" in this household which they socially ensured when culinary affairs were moved below deck and out of sight from visitors to the crypt, a space normally dedicated to ceremonial burial of saints and high-ranking church officials. Loring and Wyle hosted many social gatherings in which food and entertainment were abundant but sculptural professionalism remained the dominant impression on visitors.[47] As director-curator, Kenneth Saltmarche, once observed; "The studio has been much more than a social centre."[48] Loring and Wyle perpetuated certain aspects of the building's history as a site of sociality and education, but now dominantly for sculptural art and women's work. Once

[46] The Loring and Wyle Fonds include no personal letters or diaries between and by the two women.
[47] As A.Y. Jackson recalled, "he and Varley owed a great many meals to the Girls hospitality." As cited in Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle,* 27. In A.Y. Jackson's, *A Painter's Country: The Autobiography of A.Y. Jackson* (Toronto and Vancouver: Clark, Irwin and Co., 1958) he observed; "What wonderful parties they put on! Artists, musicians, architects and writers were proud to be invited to a Loring-Wyle party," 149.
[48] Kenneth Saltmarche, "Sculpture Exhibit," *Windsor Star*, January 12, 1963.

described as the “Salon of Canada’s Art world,” the studio offered female artists of all ages an alternative to Toronto’s exclusively male Arts and Letters Club, where Loring and Wyle mentored younger women including their first biographer, a then young Rebecca Sisler.[49] As painter-friend A.Y. Jackson observed; “The art of Canada has, for many years, revolved around the [Loring-Wyle] studio…It was second only to the Arts and Letters Club.”[50] In all, Loring and Wyle’s church-home-studio was a visible contest to every aspect of traditional religious architectural history; it was a daring move indeed in Victorian “Toronto the Good.”[51] The Loring-Wyle church-studio underwent various modifications over the five decades they spent there, including soon after their arrival the addition of a massive fireplace for heat, and that was also when the kitchen was moved to the crypt. The addition of a separate studio and bedroom space for Wyle in the 1950s offers the possibility that they had long-desired separate working and living spaces and had not necessarily shared a bedroom out of anything more than economic necessity. Regardless, the fiscal realities of their early years with two mortgages and no steady income meant that the idea of separate working and resting spaces remained a long-deferred project.

Loring and Wyle’s second property, the Cherrywood Farm, was a productive and summer recreation property, and also an extension of their joint efforts in fiscal management to support the Toronto studio. This property provided them with firewood for heating the Toronto property, wood for sculptural carving, and a garden for growing and harvesting food for winter months. Although Loring and Wyle could not have predicted the proceeds to come from Cherrywood in

[49] Sid Adelman, “It was the salon of Canada’s art world, but time seems to have passed it by,” *Toronto Telegram*, February 1, 1969. As documented in Margaret McBurney, *The Great Adventure: 100 Years at The Arts and Letters Club* (Toronto: Arts and Letters Club, 2007), 138-167, The Arts and Letters Club finally conceded to female members in 1985.
[50] A.Y. Jackson as cited in Christine Boyanoski, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors’ Legacy*, 1987, vii.
[51] The origin of this description of Toronto dates to Christopher St. George’s, *Of Toronto the Good: A Social Study of the Queen City of Canada As It Is* (Montreal: Toronto Publications, 1898).

the postwar years, the farm also became an economic boon as they gradually sold off sections of it to developers for the extraction of its gravel resources.[52] From this property, Loring and Wyle garnered enough means to survive when art commissions and their abilities to produce works slowed in their later years. To be sure then, at the core of Loring and Wyle's relationship was a strategic creative *and* economic base. This studio-living arrangement bore no parallel to those of Wieland, Nicoll and Pratt where their studio space needs were cast as secondary to the labour and organization they provided to daily family life. In contrast, for Loring and Wyle, the studio had consistently been the priority from the outset of their first living space in New York.[53]

Loring and Wyle's home-studio has been a tempting ground on which to speculate about the elusive particulars of their relationship and it comes as no surprise that writers of the day, and since then, have pondered the complications of socially framing their lives in relation to it. On my introduction to Rebecca Sisler, she insisted on my knowing that "they were not lesbians" even though I had not posed this question.[54] Sisler's insistence on undoing a sex-gender identity that has long chased Loring and Wyle's legacy serves well as an example of why historian Martha Vicinus made a significant effort in 1995 to extrapolate the persistent difficulty of writing same-sex lives—that "writers are both reticent to name women's same-sex desire and overeager to categorize and define women's sexual behaviour.[55] More importantly, Vicinus contends that the historian's focus needs to be on "the variety of women's sexual subjectivities"[56]

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[52] A.Y. Jackson, *A Painter's Country: The Autobiography of A.Y. Jackson*, 149.
[53] In New York Loring and Wyle's home-studio was in Greenwich Village (1909-1912). They also had two studios in Toronto, first on Adelaide Street (1912-1914) and second on Church Street (1914-1920), before the purchase of 110 Glenrose Avenue. As documented in Boyanoski, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy*, 127.
[54] Author's conversation with Rebecca Sisler, Collectors Gallery of Art, Calgary, exhibition opening of Historical Art by Members of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts , September 12, 2009.
[55] Martha Vicinus, "Introduction," *Lesbian Subjects: A Feminist Studies Reader* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 2.
[56] Ibid., 2, 9.

In the artist-couple exhibition analysis which follows it is the extrapolation of Loring and Wyle's separate subjectivities as artists which forms the bulk of my analysis. However, before pursuing this point, their working and living arrangement in the Toronto Church provides an opportunity to address the structure of their partnership in women's history. Such an analysis moves writings on Loring and Wyle beyond the search for an applicable sexology category to describe their lives towards understandings of their relationship in contexts of the *longue durée* of women's shared economic, creative and co-residential histories when heterosexuality and marriage were not options for whatever reasons.

To have overlooked the importance of Loring and Wyle's relationship in wider histories of women's same-sex households and economic partnerships would have been to exclude their story from these important female same-sex histories, affectionate and otherwise. Those aspects of their relationship which drew on the model of the Boston marriage assist in establishing a structural parallel to their two lives because, in this context of pre-19th century women's history, the Loring-Wyle partnership emerges as more rather than less normative.[57] As Lillian Faderman has argued, it was, after all, sexology writings from Havelock Ellis through Sigmund Freud which had constructed such identity categories as "lesbian" and this reality has distorted understandings of a much longer history of diverse female same-sex households with and without affective relations.[58] She contends the category "lesbian" was anyway socially constructed before women were able "to choose such a life."[59]

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[57] Loring and Wyle are not known to have consciously self-identified with this marriage model or any other designation to describe their partnership.
[58] Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Presen*t (New York: William Morrow and Company Inc., 1981).
[59] Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Penguin, 1992 edition, first published 1991), 5, 9.

For two educated women like Loring and Wyle aspiring to independent professional lives, a same-sex household following the women's friendship model offered different and viable possibilities for economic survival. The "Boston marriage" companionship, as it became known on the eastern American seaboard following Henry James' release of *The Bostonians* (1886), had long offered women alternatives to monogamous heterosexual marriage.[60] Where two partners made a co-residence together, it was at least structurally possible to create a "relationship of equals in terms of finances, responsibilities and decision-making, all areas where the husband claimed precedence and advantage in heterosexual marriage."[61] Given the challenges of financing life through the inconsistencies of art commissions, Loring and Wyle clearly carried each other between projects. While details on their finances remain elusive, structurally their partnership was not grounded on the gender-power disparities intrinsic to the breadwinner-homemaker marriage model.[62] Without the burden of that marriage contract, the terms of the Boston marriage were also self-determined; they could involve shared residential arrangements, be sexual and/or asexual, and sometimes co-existed alongside heterosexual and front marriages.[63] In the non-fictional example of writers Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) and Vita Sackville-West (1892-1962), women legally married to men could also explore parallel Boston

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[60] Lillian Faderman discusses the Boston marriage model in *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, 15-18, 21. Henry James' *The Bostonians* was first issued in full-book form by McMillan and Company, London and New York, 1886. James' plot includes three main characters; Verena Tarrant, Olive Chancellor, and Basil Ransom. Olive and Basil are cousins who both pursue Verena's love and affections.

[61] Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America*, 18.

[62] There is no land title documentation in the Loring and Wyle Fonds to illuminate the ownership structure on their two properties but their biographers have consistently advanced that Loring and Wyle were equal financial partners. Extant documentation, however, makes it difficult to extrapolate if there were serious fiscal disparities between Loring and Wyle's self-earned revenues and household economics.

[63] These points are argued in Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men,* and Esther D. Rothblum and Kathleen A. Brehony, *Boston Marriages: Romantic but Asexual Relationships Among Contemporary Lesbia*ns (Amherst; University of Massachusetts Press, 1993).

marriages.[64] For Loring and Wyle, however, their partnership was evidently a lifelong one and also an exclusive one which operated outside the companionship strictures that came with heterosexual marriage in its privileging of the male marriage partner's power over legal and economic rights. It need not, however, have been named "The Girls."

Monumental Differences: The Loring and Wyle Artist-Couple Exhibition of 1962

Loring and Wyle's portrait busts of each other, the critical response to their arrival on the Toronto scene during wartime, and the circulation of stories pertaining to their novel studio in the interwar years are intertwined factors that fed into the construction of their identities as "The Girls," and which have also led to their seeming inseparability. In their later years and posthumous lives, this inseparability has become a vexed problem and the parsing of their two subjectivities has not since been an easy one for any author. With both artists' works in every direction in the church-studio nave the task was especially difficult for those less familiar with the two artists' practices and it is no surprise that one reviewer went so far as to suggest that "Loring and Wyle should really be viewed as a single talent, not two."[65] After both artists had passed on Kay Kritzwiser's 1969 memorial exhibition review was a critical one to signify the artists' "social exit" from the category "woman" and their "social return" as "the Girls;" over the next four decades usage of this term escalated in scholarship and writings on them.[66] It was Rebecca Sisler who took this identity to its greatest visibility when she released the first Loring and Wyle double biography using "The Girls" as her book title in 1973, coupled incidentally

[64] An introduction to the Woolf and Sackville-West relationship is detailed in Louise de Salvo, "Tinder-and-Flint" Virginia Woolf & Vita Sackville-West," in *Significant Others: Creativity and Intimate Partnership,* edited by Whitney Chadwick and Isabelle de Courtivron (New York and London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 83-95.
[65] James Purdie (1970) as quoted by Elspeth Cameron, *And Beauty Answers,* 1.
[66] Kay Kritzwiser, "The Girls' Show to Foster Young Talent," *Globe and Mail*, June 2, 1969.

with an illustration of the two now familiar portrait busts on the book's dust jacket.[67] In Elspeth Cameron's more fulsome double biography of 2007 she deferred reference to "The Girls" to the text itself. Nonetheless, both biographers (and also curator, Christine Boyanoski in her retrospective exhibition catalogue essay) peppered their texts heavily with this appellation.[68] The persistent use of this designation in these important writings has continued to occlude Loring and Wyle's divisibility, their two subjectivities, as Vicinus would have it.[69] Given such a paucity of personal writings by either subject, the project of Loring and Wyle's individuality continues to remain challenging, but a detailed view of their largest and most important postwar artist-couple exhibition in London in 1962 occasions opportunity to analyze the significant differences represented by their two sculptural practices.[70] In their portrait busts of 1915, such creative differences were not so clearly in evidence as young artists fresh from their formal educations but by the interwar years—those considered "the height of their artistic careers" and which comprised a significant portion of works shown in their postwar artist-couple exhibitions—such distinctions were visible to a discerning eye.[71] The 1962 exhibition was also the last time that the artists had input into their social representation and that their portrait busts of each other remained out of view in exhibitions.

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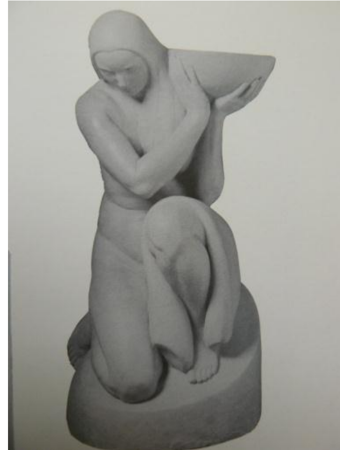
[67] This image appears in the book review by Pat Drevnig, "artbooks: the Girls," in *Artmagazine,* Volume 14-15 (Fall 1973), pagination unknown, copy in Florence Wyle Artist File, NGC Library and Archives.
[68] Deciphering the artists' works has not been made any easier in the catalogue listing for *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy* which is organized chronologically with both artists' works juggled together rather than listed separately by maker, 69-126.
[69] Both Sisler and Cameron have made significant efforts to parse the two personalities and indeed my analysis is not exempt from the conundrum of Loring and Wyle's inseparability and the difficulties of the double biography. Nevertheless, I refrain from describing them as "the Girls" and here concentrate on the differences signified by their art practices to continue explorations of their subjectivities and move discussions towards solo study and exhibition parallel to the heterosexual women in this study.
[70] Of Loring and Wyle's five artist-couple exhibits during their lifetimes, the 1962 exhibit offers the most complete documentation for analysis. I prioritize those sculptures which the artists considered their most important ones and which documentary evidence (exhibit lists and photographs) confirms were included in the 1962 exhibition.
[71] Boyanoski makes this point in *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy,* 29. Additionally, she offers a thorough assessment of the stylistic influences on each sculptor and thus this subject is excluded from the present study. Alternatively, I concentrate on three concerns with the goal of further parsing their two subjectivities as women and artists.

Figures 53a and b: Frances Loring and W.L. Somerville, *Queen Elizabeth Highway Monument*, 1939, limestone, Gzowski Park, Toronto.



Figures 54a and b: Florence Wyle, *Bain Fountain,* 1948, Location Unknown. As illustrated in *Canadian Art Magazine* December-January 1943-44.

By the early 1960s, Loring and Wyle were long overdue for more detailed assessments of their sculptural practices for their reputations had grown to prominence through such important commissions as Loring's *Queen Elizabeth Highway* monument (1939: now Gzowski Park, Toronto), [Figures 53a and b], Wyle's *Bain Fountain* (1948: LU), [Figures 54a and b] and Loring's very public monument on Parliament Hill of Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden (1954-57), [Figures 55a and b]. For the Queen Elizabeth commission, Loring had partnered with

architect W.L. Somerville (1886-1965) to produce a massive carved lion, and on the Bain Fountain project, Wyle had partnered with the prominent landscape design firm, Dunnington-Grubb to complete the serene figurative fountain sculpture for the H.R. Bain family.[72] Both monuments had garnered much press attention and, like so many others in the two artists' practices, these commissions stood to represent a great number of their creative differences, differences also shown in their late-career artist-couple exhibitions.[73]

Figures 55a and b: Frances Loring, *Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden,* 1954-57, bronze, Parliament Hill, Ottawa. (left, general view; right detail)

Loring's powerful feline poised ready for charge was a monumental stone carving in limestone which stood to symbolize her view of Britain's unfaltering confidence in victory on the eve of the Second World War. The lion was placed at the base of Somerville's neoclassical

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[72] Dunnington-Grubb was a landscape architecture firm owned by Howard B. Grubb (1844-1931) and Lorrie A. Dunnington (1877-1945). Among their major commissions was the city beautification project on Toronto's University Avenue. Dunnington-Grubb also founded Toronto's prominent garden centre now known as Sheridan Nurseries, as documented on the website: www.toronto.ca/archives.workinprogress_gardens.html.
[73] Loring's lion was reviewed by: Josephine Hamilton, "Lion on Queen Elizabeth Way," *Kingston Whig Standard*, December 20, 1947; and Pearl McCarthy, "Art is Everywhere," *Globe and Mail,* May 4, 1957. Wyle's *Bain Fountain* was reviewed in Loring's feature "Sculpture in the Garden, *Canadian Art*, 1:2 (1943-44), 65 and in *Globe and Mail*, March 24, 1951. Elizabeth Wyn Wood featured Wyle's Fountain and Loring's lion as illustrations in "Observations on a Decade, 1938-48: Ten Years of Canadian Sculpture," *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada* 25:1 (January 1948), 16 and 17 respectively.

tower structure faced with an Ionic column and capped at the top with a royal crown. Wyle's contribution to the monument, a modestly-scaled relief portrait of the Queen and King, was positioned just above the lion and was physically diminished in comparison. The Queen Elizabeth monument exemplified Loring's attraction to high-profile public commissions in heavily trafficked locations where her legacy would, she hoped, be permanently remembered.[74] In contrast, Wyle's *Bain Fountain* was a monument designed for repose among private audiences. The circular-shaped fountain included a gently flowing waterfall opening to a wider octagonal pool below and cresting the top and centre above the two pools was a female nude poised with a large bowl ready to re-supply the fountain. In *Bain Fountain*, Wyle realized well her "worship of beauty" for the female form and its harmonious relationship to garden architecture.[75] The comparison of these two examples of Loring and Wyle's work in commissioned sculpture make clear some of the critical aesthetic and conceptual differences comprising their two practices, and also the different types of commissions they were each drawn to. In short, their two identities as shaped in this comparison reveal Loring to be a maker of highly visible and large-scale public monuments and Wyle to be maker of more serene and calming private garden works. Their prominence as public and private art sculptors had indeed made Loring and Wyle worthy candidates of in-depth examination of their practices in exhibitions and it was curator Clare Bice (1920-2003) who rose to the occasion for the 1962 exhibition in London.

[74] The Queen Elizabeth monument was moved to Sir Casimir Gzowski Park after the highway expansion usurped the land where the monument once stood.
[75] Florence Wyle, "The Scent of Fields," in *Poems* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1959), 8-9.

Clare Bice was a friend and colleague, painter and author-illustrator in his own right, and sometime visitor to the Loring-Wyle studio.[76] He became familiar with Loring and Wyle through participation alongside them in various OSA and RCA annual exhibitions.[77] As Bice framed it, the retrospective he named *Fifty Years of Sculpture: Frances Loring and Florence Wyle* was an artist-couple career review and their most major social recognition in exhibitions to date with its fulsome scope and extended tour in southwestern Ontario.[78] Sisler named the show "a resounding success" and noted that it "aroused more enthusiasm among the gallery-going public than any show within the previous ten years."[79] More than anything, she argued, the exhibit boosted the morale of both sculptors. Bice's fifty year timeline also made clear (counting backwards from 1962), that this "retrospective" was actually a Canadian exhibition to the exclusion of both artists' earlier American works made before 1912.[80] Because Bice had drawn a dividing line between their American and Canadian years, the exhibition was also a referent to their co-residential artist-couple status on Canadian turf.

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[76] Clare Bice was born in Durham, Ontario and a graduate from University of Western Ontario (1928) and the Art Students League, New York (1932). He was curator at Museum London from 1940-1972, save his service during the Second World War. Among his many author-illustrator publications include, *Great Island: A Story of Mystery in Newfoundland* (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1954).
[77] Bice showed regularly with the RCA beginning in 1936 and was a regular exhibitor through the 1940s and 1950s as were Loring and Wyle. As documented in Evelyn McMann, *Royal Canadian Academy of Arts: Exhibitions and Members, 1880-1979* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 36, 245, 438.
[78] There had been the 1952-53 artist-couple exhibition, *Sculpture by Frances Loring and Florence Wyle* shown in Windsor and London as indicated by an invitation dated 20 November 1952, and the review by Lenore Crawford, "Sculptures Form Fine Exhibition," *London Free Press*, January 13, 1953. Artwork lists for this show are not known but Loring's *Goal Keeper* and Wyle's *Study of a Girl* were illustrated on the invitation. The exhibit may also have traveled in 1953 to Robertson Gallery, Ottawa (March), and McMaster University (November), as documented in Boyanoski, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy*, 129. The 1962 exhibition *Fifty Years of Sculpture, Frances Loring and Florence Wyle* was shown in London (2-27 November), London Public Library, London; Art Gallery of Hamilton (December 1962), and the Windsor Art Gallery (January 1963) as documented in Kenneth Saltmarche, "Sculpture Exhibit," *Windsor Star*, January 3, 1963; and Anonymous, "Exhibit is Tribute to Two Women Sculptors," *Globe and Mail*, 3 November 1962, File 3.5.44, Loring and Wyle Fonds.
[79] Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls; A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle*, 11.
[80] Usage of the term retrospective to frame this exhibition appear in reviews of the exhibition including Lenore Crawford's "Fifty Years of Sculpting: Loring and Wyle at the London Public Library and Museum," *Canadian Art* 84 (March-April 1963), 79.

The context for Loring and Wyle's exhibition in a shifting postwar art world included conceptual, environmental and abstract sculptural expression in such non-traditional media including welded steel and ephemeral materials. Loring and Wyle's continued adherence to modernist figurative and representational art traditions meant that both artists were recognized as contributors to past sculptural traditions and not to present-day practices including abstraction. As organizers phrased it, the exhibition was "a tribute celebrating not only the fact they have worked together for fifty years but their great encouragement and contributions to the growth of sculpture."[81] The casting of Loring and Wyle as "past contributors" to a medium in these exhibitions was partially accounted for by their long legacies as founding members of the SSC in which they both worked diligently to advance the development of professional sculptural practice, to source suitable exhibition opportunities and spaces for sculpture, and to raise important questions regarding standards of practice and visibility for the sculptor in exhibitions and urban architecture. This assessment was almost impossible to avoid given realities of contemporary sculptural practices when combined with the artists' own oral testimonies expressing their disdain for current trends.

Concurrently shown alongside Loring and Wyle's exhibition, Bice had presented the open-air exhibition *Contemporary Canadian Sculpture* (including works in various experimental media), organized by the National Gallery of Canada.[82] Loring and Wyle's work was in sharp contrast to works in this exhibition, and their testimonies on contemporary sculpture put the matter in sharp relief. Loring's anxiety concerned expressionist work and she declared: "People

[81] An invitation is in the exhibition files of Museum London, and was sent electronically from Linda Louwagie-Neyens to Catharine Mastin, 28 October 2009. What works represented their production in 1912 remains unclear in Loring and Wyle's lists for the exhibition as no works are dated in those documents and titles are inconsistent.
[82] Reference to the concurrent presentation of this exhibit is made on the exhibition invitation to Loring and Wyle's show, "A Month of Sculpture." Email scan of the invitation sent from Linda Louwagie-Neyens to Catharine Mastin, 28 October 2009.

are turning to sculpture, because they got so fed up with ten-foot canvases covered with blobs of paint."[83] Wyle's disdain included the artist's departure from nature and traditional academic study and the access to new materials and techniques. "Sculpture has gone down very rapidly in the last few years," Wyle noted. "Young sculptors are just not studying enough. They dare to flout the things nature does so well. They don't know anatomy. A knowledge of anatomy gives vitality [and] vigour to sculpture."[84] By 1965, she exclaimed that contemporary abstract sculpture was simply "rubbish"[85] and the thought of welding the unthinkable antithesis of beauty. She declared bluntly: "You don't find beauty in welding."[86]

Five years hence, Dorothy Cameron's selection of contemporary sculpture for the open-air exhibition, *Sculpture '67,* included just the forms of abstraction that Loring and Wyle so reacted against. Works included were made from such contemporary materials as welded steel, fiberglass, cast aluminum, cement, glass, plastic and PVC, and these illustrated just how radically changed sculptural practice was on the Toronto scene.[87] The relegation of Loring and Wyle's works to past traditions, however, regrettably set them outside living and vibrant sculptural practices to which they each nonetheless contributed, albeit on traditional terms. In the years leading to this exhibition, both artists continued to garner respect for their achievements within figurative aesthetic constituencies and their adherence to traditional craftsmanship and had secured prominent public commissions including Loring's *Sir Robert Borden Monument* (1954-57) and Wyle's *Calvert Drama Festival Trophies* (1953: LU), [Figure 56].

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[83] As quoted by Linda Munk, "A Talk with Miss Loring and Miss Wyle" *The Woman's Globe and Mail*, May 6, 1965, File, 4.13, Loring and Wyle Fonds.
[84] Kay Kritzwiser, "Hands that mold beauty," *The Globe Magazine* (7 April 1962), 14.
[85] Linda Munk, "A Talk with Miss Loring and Miss Wyle."
[86] Elspeth Cameron, "Deco Walls with Wyle and Loring," *Niagara Current* (Summer 2003), 51.
[87] Dorothy Cameron, *Sculpture '67: An open-air exhibition of Canadian Sculpture presented by the National Gallery of Canada as part of its Centennial program at the City Hall of Toronto* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1968).

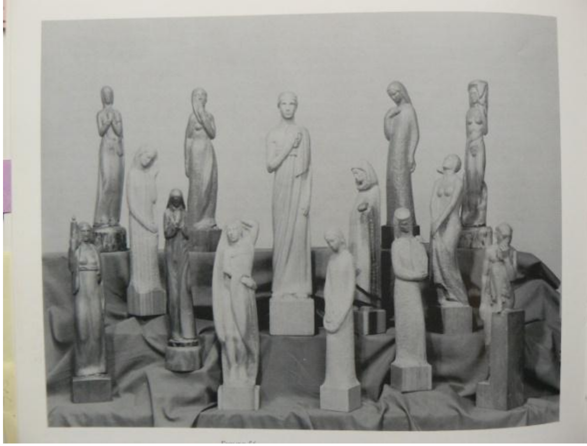

Figure 56: Florence Wyle, *Calvert Drama Festival Trophies,* 1953, sumac, dimensions variable, Private Collections.

Knowledge of the sculptural contents of the1962 exhibition remains partial given both artists' multiple exhibit listings and the absence of consistent documentation in organizing-venue and curatorial records.[88] However, as Sisler summarized, most of their major works were included—that is, those which were not already in permanent locations and which remained unsold in the artists' possession. The exhibit was assembled based on Loring and Wyle's respective lists of "Works Available" from their studio holdings. There were no works on loan from major public and private collections housing important examples of each sculptor's practice. Notable exclusions were both artists' RCA diploma works recognizing their raised status as "Academicians" which were previously deposited in the NGC's collection—Wyle's *The Cellist* (c. 1937), [Figure 57] and Loring's *Head* (1948-49), [Figure 58].[89] Both carvings amply demonstrate their different handling of the portrait bust in wood—Wyle's polished and

[88] There are two lists for Wyle's works in File 3.5.44 in the Loring Wyle Fonds. Loring lists her works shown in London 1962 on her "Exhibitions CV," (10 page listing for 1962), a copy of which remains in the Artist's File, NGC. In the registration files at Museum London there are also exhibit listings as follows: "Work Available for travelling exhibition by Loring;" and "Sculpture available for travelling exhibition by Wyle, 1962," email from Linda Louwagie-Neyens to Catharine Mastin, 28 October 2009. Photographic documentation of the exhibition contents is also found in File 10.1, Loring and Wyle Fonds. The Clare Bice Fonds (accession LMS-0070) held at the Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa focus on his writings and art but do not contain information pertaining to the Loring-Wyle exhibition.
[89] Wyle's *The Cellist* was deposited in 1941, and Loring's *Head* was deposited in 1950, following their elections to RCA Academician status in 1940 and 1948 respectively.

detailed surfaces versus Loring's much rougher chiseling effect. Two of Wyle's major figurative works, the bronze *Sun Worshipper* (c. 1916: NGC, purchased 1918), [Figure 59] and the marble *Torso* (a.k.a. *Mother of the Race,* c. 1933: NGC purchased 1933), [Figure 60] were also notable absences given their place as major figurative works in Wyle's *oeuvre*.

Figure 57: Florence Wyle, *The Cellist,* c. 1937, mahogany, 37 x 29.1 x 19.1 cm, National Gallery of Canada (left)

Figure 58: Frances Loring, *Head*, *c.* 1949, butternut wood, 71 cm (height), National Gallery of Canada (right)

Figure 59: Florence Wyle, *Sun Worshipper*, c. 1916, bronze, 68.6 cm, National Gallery of Canada (left)

Figure 60: Florence Wyle, *Torso* (a.k.a. *Mother of the Race)*, c. 1932, marble, 100.6 x 52.3 x 35 cm, National Gallery of Canada (right)

Loring and Wyle had frequently advocated through SSC initiatives that the exhibition of the sculptors' practice was not comparable to that of the painter in temporary exhibitions: when, for example, exhibit juries were referred to as "Hanging Committees," there was an assumption that submitters were painters.[90] Among the challenges sculptors had in exhibiting their works was that major commissions realized as permanent monuments could not be moved and thus such projects had to be represented by maquettes and/or photographic documentation of the works in-situ, or they would not be represented at all.[91] To exhibit a photograph of a commission, however, was not to appreciate the scale, dimensionality and relationship of the work to its location, and, to exhibit a maquette was not to exhibit the final work since permanent materials such as bronze, marble or stone each produced distinct aesthetic results commensurate with their materiality.

Loring and Wyle's two exhibit lists confirm that they were represented by numerous works in plaster, the sculptor's "original" yet also preliminary work.[92] The exhibiting of maquettes did, however, offer some control over creative quality for it was this object which was usually of the artist's direct hand. With clients sometimes dictating in what finished materials a commission would be realized Loring and Wyle had to subcontract production to skilled labourers and foundry technicians with results which were not always to their satisfaction. When, for instance, the carver hired to realize Loring's lion for the Queen Elizabeth monument made a

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[90] The term refers to the privileging of painting over other expressive media, and reference is made to it in the Ontario Society of Artists Fonds at the Archives of Ontario, where a 1908 photograph of the jury is titled "Hanging Committee, 1908," photograph F1140-7-0-2.1, www.archives.gov.on.ca.

[91] Lenore Crawford, "Sculptures Form Fine Exhibition," *London Free Press*, January 13, 1953 makes reference to photographs of such works being shown. Commissions excluded from the exhibition were Loring's *Queen Elizabeth II* and Robert Borden monuments and Wyle's *Bain Fountain*. *Girl with Basin* was included and was in the same theme as *Bain Fountain*, Photograph 271a, File 10.1, Loring and Wyle Fonds, but no works appear to have represented Loring and Wyle in maquettes for these commissions. The Borden maquettes were finally first exhibited in 1987.

[92] Sculptors like Loring and Wyle have considered the plaster a complete work in itself but works in this medium were also intended for casting in more permanent materials and thus have also been considered studies for larger works.

change to her composition without her permission, she fired him on the spot and finished the work herself.[93] The sculptor's challenge in finding patrons interested in realizing works in permanent materials was also different from the painter's and this often translated to fewer "finished" works in their oeuvres to select from. Shipping costs for large works often meant that such works could simply not be included in exhibitions. For both Loring and Wyle, these factors compromised larger understandings of their practices and their representation in exhibitions. There was also the difference in their two approaches to sculptural practice—Wyle's greater emphasis on self-directed projects and thus her more numerous works on exhibition and Loring's greater emphasis on high-profile public commissions and lesser production of self-directed works. In assessing the total artists' estate holdings now held in public trust, it is also clear that Wyle was far more prolific.[94] In these respects then, the exhibition (artist-couple and otherwise) served each artist differently.

Finally in 1962, after decades of activism to improve exhibition spaces for sculptural display, Loring and Wyle did not again have to solve the problem of the sculptor's art being paired with painting, tucked into corners and hallways in group-artist exhibitions dominated by paintings. As art critic Pearl McCarthy had once explained: "too often, by exigencies of space, the sculpture has been shown mixed with paintings and even the most agile mind '[is] taxed to appreciate [it] properly under these circumstances."[95] Their artist-couple exhibition in London

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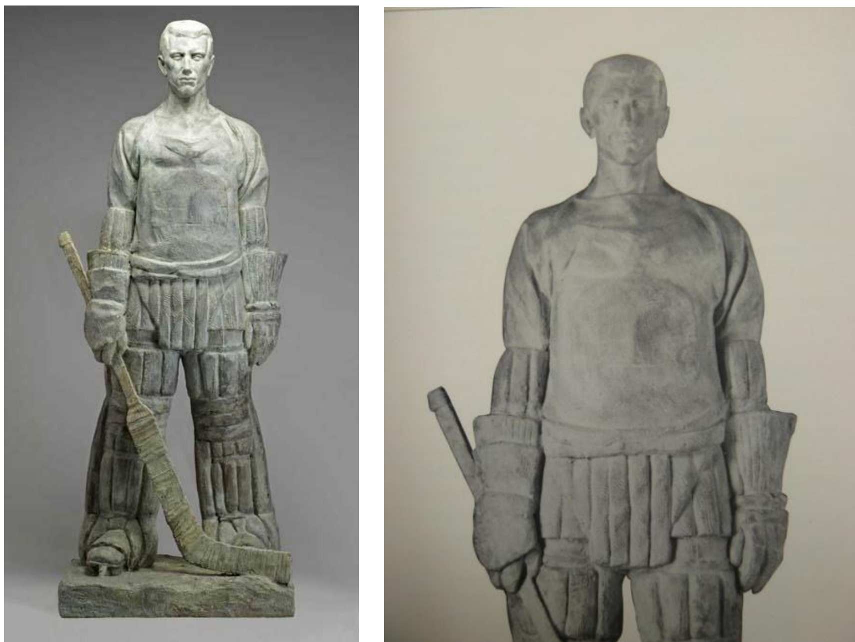
[93] As cited in Cameron, *And Beauty Answers,* 192.
[94] Collections listing donated by the Estates of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle, 1983, Art Gallery of Ontario, Collections Services Record Report, sent to Catharine Mastin, 10 March 2010. A total of 200 works is listed by both artists: 47 by Loring; 153 by Wyle. There are works in other collections but this represents the bulk of both artists' practices in any single location. Wyle also donated a collection of 32 works to the Waverly Public Library in 1945 but the contents of this are not presently known. My correspondence with the library indicated that they no longer appeared to own the collection.
[95] Pearl McCarthy, "Canadian Sculptors' Achieve Distinction," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, April 8, 1932. The Art Museum of Toronto's (AMT) exhibition facilities during Loring and Wyle's exhibition history were as follows: the AMT Public Library Building ,1910-1916; College Street Public Reference Library, 1917-1919; Art Gallery of

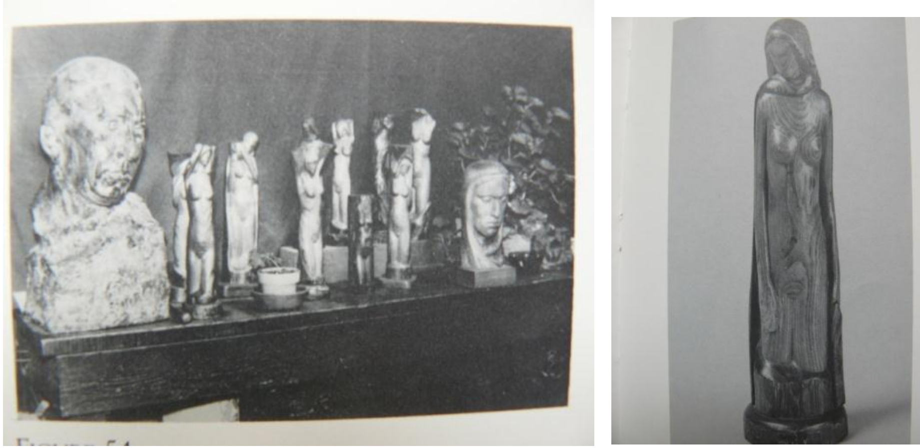
occupied one single space and Loring oversaw the installation.[96] Only those works requiring a flat-wall surface such as their bas-reliefs were so placed on walls and all others were spaciously shown to enhance their three-dimensionality. With Loring's massive *Goal Keeper* (1935: AGO), [Figure 61] as a centerpiece in the exhibition (a towering height of 7'6" plus plinth), she emerged once again as sculptor of large-scale monuments with her eye on iconic commissions of public subjects. Wyle, in contrast, maker of the finely carved and modestly scaled *Rivers of America* series, [Figure 62] emerged as an artist of more private sculptural pursuits committed to realizing her own aesthetic projects in figuration.



Figures 61a and b: Frances Loring, *Goal Keeper*, c. 1939, plaster, 242 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario (left, full view; right, detail)

Toronto (AGT) at Grange Park, 1920-67, as cited in Joan Murray, *Ontario Society of Artists: 100 Years* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1972), 16.

[96] This fact is confirmed by the exhibition photo numbers 267-271, File 10.1, Loring and Wyle Fonds. The article referencing Loring's assistance is, "Exhibit is Tribute to Two Women Sculptors," *Globe and Mail*, November 3, 1962. Clare Bice was away during the installation and opening which explains why it was turned over to Paddy O'Brien as documented in James Reaney, "The Day the Girls Came to London," *London Free Press*, article published in 1998, electronic scan sent from Linda Louwagie-Neyers, 28 October 2009.



Figures 62a and b: Florence Wyle, *Rivers of America,* 1945-50, sumac, dimensions variable, Art Gallery of Ontario, and Private Collections (left, various works; right, *Platte River*)

The larger scale of Loring's works made for fewer examples of her practice in the exhibition, whereas Wyle's smaller scale accommodated a greater number of hers. In permanent monuments outside the temporary exhibition, however, Loring's eye on key public figures, like her recently completed monument of Sir Robert Borden, would be much better represented permanently than Wyle whose private garden works have not secured well her long-term visibility in outdoor art. As documentary photographs of the exhibition illustrate, however, the single space used for both artist's presentation did not readily distinguish the two artists' practices for those unfamiliar with each practitioner's history.[97] The overall impression with both artists' works throughout the space suggested their potential collaboration rather than their two distinct practices. Nonetheless, their creative differences remained significant enough and a comparison of both artists' key works depicting women and motherhood illuminate not only their aesthetic differences, but also offer further insights into the two sculptors' subjectivities and self-identifications with the category "woman."

[97] Photographs 267, 269, 270 and 271a, File 10.1, Loring and Wyle Fonds.

Wyle was represented by a selection of portrait busts of her artist-friends (Jackson and Varley), fountains works, various female figurative statuary, some studies for her First World War commission, and some newer works. Broadly, the selection was consistent with how she had self-represented her practice in previous showings throughout SSC and other society-based exhibitions of the 1930s and 1940s.[98] From the outset, Wyle had established the female figure as central to her private art practice and commissioned art and works such as her much exhibited plaster version of *Study of a Girl* (c. 1931: AGO), and the plaster version for *Sea and Shore* (c.1950: marble version, AGO) reflected these concerns. Her representation as fountain and garden monument designer included the cast stone, *Blue Heron* (c. 1931: AGO) and some infant-putto figures, all works in keeping with the contemplative qualities characterized by the *Bain Fountain* commission, but no preliminary works related to the Bain commission were shown. Wyle's more recently completed *Rivers of America* project (1945-50) was however, an important work to reflect her distinctly different sculptural practice from Loring in this exhibition, and these differences included her aesthetic approach, object content and scale. The series begun originally with eight sumac wooden carvings was expanded to ten when it was shown in 1962.[99] Wyle had hoped to sell the series together as one work but their eventual dispersal has meant that collection locations for many works originally comprising the series are not known. However,

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[98] "Sculpture by Florence Wyle to be exhibited at London Art Museum, Nov 2-27, 1962," lists the following works: 1. *Harvester*; 2. *Madonna;* 3. *Portrait of A.Y. Jackson*; 4. *Portrait of F.H. Varley*; 5. *War Worker* (Rama Marble); 6. *Justice*, marble; 7. *Re-Birth*, bronze; 8. *Draped Torso* (plaster); 9. *Garden Baby*, (plaster); 10. *Garden Baby Pair*; 11. *Blue Heron* (limestone); 12. *Sea and Shore* (plaster); 13. *Girl* (plaster); 14. *Young Woman* (plaster); 15. *Girl with Basin* (plaster); 16. *Sylvia*, (plaster); 17. *Reclining Nude,* (plaster); 18. *Madonna and Child* (bronze); 19. *Negress* (plaster); 20. *Rivers of America* (10 wood carvings); approximately one dozen small plaques and reliefs; one dozen plaster and wood three-dimensional pieces, File 3.5.44, Loring and Wyle Fonds.

[99] Eight works were first shown together in the 1949 SSC exhibition and the listing "Sculpture by Florence Wyle to be exhibited at London Art Museum, 2-27 November 1962" lists the series comprised of ten works.

two known ones, *The Illinois* and *The Platte*, offer an indication of the conceptual coherency Wyle gave to the series.[100]

Realized as a self-directed project, *Rivers of America* is exemplary of Wyle's aesthetic concern with the three-quarter female form. Her conception of the project in a series was, for her, a rare concession to the trends of modernity in which she worked an idea over several objects rather than producing a single "masterwork." The series was carved in sumac wood harvested from Cherrywood Farm and each work was modest in scale, measuring 12"/30.5 cm.[101] Her shift to sumac and a modest hand-held scale yielded striking visual effects in which the natural wood grain was put to representational purpose. In both *The Platte* (c. 1945-9: PC) and *The Illinois* (c. 1945-9: PC) the concentric growth circles of the sumac's branches enhanced the shapely contours of the figure's breasts, upper thighs, torso and arms.[102] So polished was the surface that no evidence remains of the once rough-cut tree bark and outer growth rings. It had been this attention to the "delicacy and beauty of treatment," that drew the attention of critic Andrew Bell when the series was first shown in the 1949 SSC exhibition.[103] Bell considered the series "a *tour de force* in the matter in which she squeezes every ounce of nuance out of the wood graining."[104]

Other works comprising the *Rivers of America* series included two South American rivers (the Amazon and Orinoco), and the remaining eight were American (the Hudson, the Colorado, the Platte, the Mississippi, the Colorado, the Wabash, the Missouri, and the Illinois).[105]

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[100] A photograph of nine of works included in *Rivers of America* illustrated in Boyanoski, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy*, 60, fig. 54, shows they were all figurative and approximately the same size.
[101] A.Y. Jackson observed in *A Painter's Country: The Autobiography of A.Y. Jackson* that "Wyle used the sumac trees from this property for her wood carvings," 149.
[102] These two sculptures are unavailable for reproduction but are illustrated in Christine Boyanoski, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy*, (cats. 77 and 78), 115.
[103] Andrew Bell, "An Exhibition of Canadian Sculpture," *Canadian Art* VI, no. 4 (Summer 1949): 156.
[104] Ibid., 156.
[105] On Wyle's "Sculptor List," the first eight works are listed as representing these rivers: Amazon, Hudson, La Platte, Missouri, Mississippi, Colorado, Wabash, and Orinoco, File 3.5.54, Loring and Wyle Fonds. It is possible that the St. Lawrence and the Niagara rivers followed in the final grouping which brought the series to ten. Elspeth

Dominantly then, the project was American in emphasis and arguably also an autobiographical reference to her American ancestry. After her arrival in Canada in the winter of 1912-13, Wyle spent the remainder of her life away from her country of birth and so far as we know, also from her family. Throughout these years though, she did not entertain, as Loring had done, the prospect of becoming a naturalized British subject and Wyle retained her American citizenship.[106] This gesture of national allegiance expressed in *Rivers of America* suggests then, that she continued to reflect on questions of citizenship and identity in later-life.

The representation of rivers as female bodies, however, stood also to comment on Wyle's conceptualizations of the female subject and body in public and private life. In conceptualizing together body and river-earth, *Rivers of America* enveloped the female body into the nature-culture binary of female and male social roles. The prescription was, however, one that Wyle did not herself live as woman and feminist contributing to public life as sculptural aesthetician. To be sure, the contradiction represented by the work she made and the life she lived was more complex and multi-layered; it was a position that also included Wyle's broader valorization of nature which she made clear in her poetic writings relating to body-nature-earth themes and these subjects she also compared to the specificity of her own time-life cycle.

Wyle the poet and figurative sculptor was keenly aware of the body's cycles of time and how they intertwined with yearly cycles and the passing of seasons. It was with regularity that her poems made reference to these subjects.[107] In "February Sun" she observed:

Cameron notes that the project included these rivers but Wyle does not identify them as part of the project as documented in Cameron's, "Deco Walls with Wyle and Loring," 51. If Wyle's list is taken as authoritative then the project did exclude Canadian and border rivers altogether.

[106] Loring became a naturalized British subject in July 1926 as documented in "Biographical Information," File 1.2.11, Loring and Wyle Fonds.

[107] Poems referencing the seasons included the following: *Autumn; Spring; Spring Comes Up the Land; Summer is Done; Autumn Sumac; Summer is Done;* and *Summer Storm.* Poems referencing months included the following: *February Sun; October is Sad; April Snow; The Joy that April Knows; Late August;* and *October,* as published in

The February Sun on cheek and land
How good it is—
Warmth after cold
Food after hunger.
These are things
Only the old,
And those who have known cold
And hunger,
Can understand.[108]

In the poem "Alone" Wyle referred to ideas of solitude and loneliness, and in "The Dark Pine Bough," she valorized nature, noting that "there is nothing in all the world now, one half so lovely as the dark pine bough."[109] She lamented the inevitable toll of passing time and its impact on the body, and in the poem "Lost" she reflected on her own much-changed body:

I am lost in this forest of days…
My feet are broken with striving
My hands are broken with pain
My soul is broken with knowledge,
Yet I must circle again
These dim ways
Leading to darkness.[110]

Wyle also spoke in her poems of the earth's strength and humanity's place in relationship to space and time. In the poem "The Ranges" she wrote: "Born in turmoil of heat and light and thunder, Age after age they have watched man pass."[111] In this humble portrait of life's brevity and throughout her poetic writings, Loring was very much absent, for these writings alternatively opened for Wyle another space of self-reflection onto and about the world.

The philosophical informants shaping Wyle's understanding of body-nature-earth relations are but sparsely known from her own scarce writings and so to provide a focused

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Florence Wyle, *Poems* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1959) and *The Shadow of the Year: Poems* (Toronto: Aquilando, 1976).
[108] Florence Wyle, "February Sun," in *The Shadow of the Year: Poems* (1976), unpaginated.
[109] Florence Wyle, "The Dark Pine Bough," in *The Shadow of the Year: Poems* (1976), unpaginated.
[110] Florence Wyle, "Lost," in *Poems* (1959), 8-9.
[111] Florence Wyle, "The Ranges," in *Poems* (1959), 7-8.

analysis of this question remains an elusive project. However, discussions of these topics were abundant in the Toronto art circles in which she moved, and opportunities would have been numerous to enjoy many conversations with artists and poets concerned with the Transcendentalist movement including those inspired by the writings of Ralph W. Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman.[112] Among these included Flora MacDonald Dennison's advocacy of Whitman at Bon Echo Park where she led a project that inscribed a Whitman permanent memorial etching on the park's iconic 100 meter-high rock face.[113] In the Loring-Wyle artist-couple library collection Edward Carpenter's *Angel's Wings* (1923), and some other references to Romantic and Transcendental movements, including those by Coleridge and Ibsen, suggest that these themes were of some concern to her, if not to both artists.[114] In giving personal shape to these subjects in her work, Wyle concentrated on the body's inevitable submission to time over its spiritual fusion with nature. In her sculptures she did not visualize the eroding physical body so referenced in her poetic verse, but rather its youthful and idyllic perfection.

Wyle was seventy-eight years of age, and no doubt well aware of the brevity of her own life left in those few remaining years ahead when she released *Poems* in 1959 as part of the "Poetry Chap Series" published under Lorne Pierce's direction at Toronto's acclaimed Ryerson

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[112] I refer to the Group of Seven and their contemporaries and the American Transcendental and Theosophical movements as studied in: Roald Nasgaard, *The Mystic North: Symbolist Landscape Painting in Northern Europe and North America, 1890-1940* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: Art Gallery of Ontario and University of Toronto Press, 1984); and Ann Davis, *The Logic of Ecstasy: Canadian Mystical Painting, 1920-1940* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

[113] Information on Dennison and Bon Echo is addressed by Robert Stacey and Stan McMullin, *Massanoga: The Art of Bon Echo* (Manotik and Toronto: Penumbra Press and Archives of Canadian Art, 1998).

[114] The Loring and Wyle library was dispersed following the artists' passing and what is known to remain includes a small selection of poetic and philosophical writings including mostly British and northern European authors. The list otherwise concentrates on sculpture as documented in Sybille Pantazzi to Frances Gage, 4 November 1971, File 4.12, Loring and Wyle Fonds.

Press.[115] The collection was gracefully endorsed with a foreword by the respected lawyer, musician and arts patron, Ira Dilworth,[116] and it was the only volume Wyle released during her lifetime.[117] Like *Rivers of America, Poems* was the culmination of many years of thinking and also a later-life achievement. In these writings, Wyle advocated for the same anti-modernist position as she had advanced in her sculpture, and with this point in mind, Dilworth's foreword considered her "a lyric poet" rather than a poet of "modern or experimental" orientation.[118]

Wyle's writings and her concurrent use of poetry and sculpture as forms of creative expression, stood in a sharp contrast to the parallel writing projects of Loring whose works were didactic and educational in focus. Loring authored several "how-to" manuals including the pamphlet, *Wood Carving for Pleasure* and the article, "How to Carve Soap,"[119] and also wrote the short article, "Sculpture in the Garden," all publications which were aimed at building audiences and markets for sculpture appreciation and commissions.[120] In her writings on wood carving and garden sculpture especially, Wyle found Loring to be her strongest advocate by illustrating her work, promoting it to clients, explaining production processes, the value of design, and outlining artist-client relationships.[121] Loring argued: "Sculpture, if used in the garden, should be good and to be good it must be a fine piece of design; a well-balanced arrangement of forms making a harmonious centre for its own particular nook or for the entire

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[115] Other poets in this series included Agnes Maule Machar, Bliss Carman, Charles G.D. Roberts and Alfred Purdy, among some sixty poets as documented in Florence Wyle, *Poems,*(1959), inside back cover. The print run was a small edition of 250 impressions and did not bring her much income.

[116] Ira Dilworth was also the well-known trustee for the Emily Carr estate and his fuller biography is found in www.canadianencyclopedia.ca.

[117] Wyle's second volume of poetry was *The Shadow of the Year: Poems* (Toronto: Aquilando, 1976), 21 pages, with wood engravings by Rosemary Kilbourn.

[118] Ira Dilworth, "Foreword," in Florence Wyle, *Poems* (1959), 3.

[119] Frances Loring's publications are as follows: *Wood Carving for Pleasure* (Toronto: YMCA War Service and Canadian Legion Educational Services, 1942); and "How to Carve Soap," *The Canadian Red Cross Junior* (June 1942): 9-10.

[120] Frances Loring, "Sculpture in the Garden," *Canadian Art,* I, no. II (December-January 1943-44): 64-67. Loring also lectured on garden sculpture at the Women's Art Association with Lorrie Dunnington-Grubb.

[121] Loring used Wyle's *Bain Fountain* as the main illustration and example of fine design in her essay "Sculpture in the Garden," 65.

garden."[122] Wyle, though, did not engage whatsoever in this genre of audience-builder writing, or fold Loring into her writing as subject/muse.

So successfully received was *Rivers of America* that it led to another three-artist commission Wyle shared with Loring and Montreal sculptor, Sylvia Daoust, the *Calvert Festival Drama Trophies* (1958). For this project each artist made separate objects, and Wyle depicted the figure in sumac wood to realize *Dedication, Truth* and *Poetry,* three sculptures which allowed the distinct wood grain to amplify the female form just as she had done in *Rivers of America*.[123] In these respects then, *Rivers of America* had established a conceptual and methodological frame for subsequent works carved in wood that followed. In the *Calvert Drama Festival Trophies* project, as in *Rivers of America*, Wyle's strikingly polished and invitingly-touchable surfaces inferred the erotic potential of the female body, a theme on which Wyle dared not comment in word in puritan Toronto as a female creator depicting female subjects, but which she nonetheless suggested with considerable visual force in her sculpture. Beyond her poetry and those comments on abstraction noted earlier to the press, Wyle only spoke minimally about her art, and sometimes in quite understated terms, leaning as she did towards commentary that secured her views on sound craftsmanship and valorization of the natural world: "I work in sculpture because I hope to create work that may be of value to my fellow humans. I love animals and trees and plants as well and I like to work—manual work such as gardening and carpentry as well as building up figures and carving them in stone."[124]

In *Rivers of America,* as also in her other works of female subjects, the series concentrated on her interest in the female body in a male dominated world. Consonant with her practice more broadly, there were no male subjects included in the *Rivers of America* series or

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[122] Ibid., 67.
[123] Anonymous, *The Calvert Drama Festival Trophies* (Toronto: Sampson Matthews, 1958), unpaginated.
[124] Anonymous, "Florence Wyle, Sculptor," in *The Modern Instructor* (June 1958): 634.

few others beyond her artist-friend portrait busts of Jackson, Varley and Charles Goldhamer. Wyle's commitment to figurative sculpture, unlike Loring, was almost exclusively female and the subject not surprisingly dominated her representation in the 1962 exhibition.[125]

When on exhibition in 1962, *Rivers of America* stood as a significant, if also physically modest body of work that reflected much of what Wyle stood for as sculptor. She finessed aesthetic beauty and privileged the female subject, her life cycle and the brevity of life. The contrast represented by the inclusion of this series in London in 1962, though, could hardly have been a sharper one than when shown alongside Loring's monumental *Goal Keeper* (c. 1935; AGO), [Figure 62]. This hulking monument to masculinity and popular sport, on which Loring used more than one ton of clay just for the knee-pads, was a wildly different figurative work, not only for Loring's turn to the male body as subject.[126]

The contrast of *Rivers of America* and *Goal Keeper* illuminates just how each artist conceptualized their sculptural practices so differently. Neither *Rivers of America* nor *Goal Keeper* had been done with secure prospects of a commissioner and both projects were self-directed despite Loring's speculative eye on owner-president of Maple Leaf Gardens, Conn Smythe, as potential commissioner for *Goal Keeper*. The work was a bluntly frontal object depicting a generic male dressed for the game. *Goal Keeper* stands with his weight equally balanced on both skates and with his goal stick placed across the sculpture's front, visual strategies that further flattened the work's impression. The work turned out to be a high-stake and unsuccessful gamble of her time and effort. She had speculated on Smythe's interest in

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[125] Those few male subjects Wyle did make into portrait busts she rarely sought as commissions. Some of these included: *Vincent Massey* (c.1930: AGO); *Ira Dilworth* (c.1958: AGO); and *Frank Loring* (c. 1928: AGO). Wyle spent more time depicting portrait busts of women, several of whom were her female artist friends including painters *Anne Savage* (1928: CAG), *Isabel McLaughlin* (c.1950: AGO), and *Dorothy Stevens* (c.1928: AGO), and sculptor *Elizabeth Wyn Wood* (c. 1935: AGO).

[126] Reference to the knee pads is made in James Reaney, "The Day the Girls Came to London," *London Free Press*, 1998, in an electronic scan of the article sent from Linda Louwagie-Neyers to Catharine Mastin, 28 October 2009.

realizing the work in marble at a prominent newly constructed site but her pitch arrived at an inopportune time. Maple Leaf Gardens had been opened at the beginnings of the Depression in 1931 and the arrival of Loring's proposal in those challenging economic times was not met with enthusiasm. Smythe's representative phoned the next day: "Get your statue out of here. It's too big. No room for it."[127] After being shown at the Gardens, Loring had the work returned to the church studio and never did find a buyer interested in realizing it in a permanent material but the plaster version afterwards gained an impressive exhibition history, and was included in all three artist-couple exhibitions of the 1960s, if only as a still-unsold work.

The contrasts between the *Rivers of America* and *Goal Keeper* do not end, however, on matters of scale. Had *Goal Keeper* been taken to permanent materials, and been housed in Maple Leaf Gardens, it would have ensured Loring just the kind of public visibility she so enjoyed as sculptor—the large monument placed permanently in a highly public and heavily trafficked location where her reputation and social recognition would be expanded to prospective clients and far exceed the shorter-term visibility offered by the temporary exhibition. *Goal Keeper*, alongside the Lion and Borden monuments, reflected Loring's extraordinary confidence in working on large scales and with weighty materials, her engagement in two of the three works with public and prominent men, and her keen eye on prominent social recognition and the longevity of her work in permanent materials. With *Goal Keeper,* Loring also made an important testament to a then-emerging popular sport. In contrast to Wyle's autobiographical reference to her American lineage in *Rivers of America*, Loring made and banked on a distinctly iconic Canadian subject. When seen in this contrast the two major works further reflected their differing approaches to questions of citizenship.

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[127]As quoted in Sid Adelman, "It was the Salon of Canada's Art World, but time seems to have passed it by," *Toronto Telegram,* February 1, 1969.

Goal Keeper was one of seventeen works representing Loring's practice in the 1962 exhibition.[128] It was among her major works shown and commanded much attention, not only for its towering presence over all other objects by both artists in the exhibition, but also for its strategic placement. As documentary photographs illustrate, room was cleared around *Goal Keeper* to ensure its command of the visitor's attention on their entrance to the exhibition.[129] When shown on an additional supporting base, *Goal Keeper* was almost twice the artist's own height.[130] The massive plaster object had virtually no other competition. Critics responded to its Herculean presence which had been alluded to when Kay Kritzwiser profiled the piece as article cover image for an in-depth profile on the artists.[131] *Goal Keeper* was also source of much publicity on opening day, and when Lenore Crawford photographed Loring and assistant curator Paddy O'Brien beside *Goal Keeper,* its scale was only further amplified.[132] *Goal Keeper* also illuminated how Loring worked with male subjects and what kinds of potential commissions she was drawn to as artist.

Goal Keeper was one of several male subjects Loring made available for the exhibition. Both it and her portrait bust of the famous co-discoverer of insulin, Dr. Frederick Banting (c. 1934: AGO), [Figure 63], were prospective works she engaged in outside a commissioner.

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[128] A listing for Frances Loring's representation in this exhibition can be found in her biography in the NGC Artist File consisting of 17 works as follows: 1. *Eskimo Mother and Child*; 2. *Hound of Heaven;* 3*, Martha;* 4. *Head of a Miner;* 5*, Portrait of Dr. Banting*; 6. *Ash Man*; 7. *Dawn*; 8. *Dusk*; 9. *Refugees;* 10. *The Cloud*; 11. *Decorative Panel*; 12, *Turkey*; 13. *Goal Keeper*; 14. *Head of a Woman*; 15. *SmallModel of the Eskimo*; 16. *Rooster wood relief*; and 17. *Girl with Fish* in terra cotta.

[129] Photo # 267c, File 10.1, Loring and Wyle Fonds.

[130] The illustration "The Goalie" is reproduced in Lenore Crawford, "Exhibit is Tribute to Two Women Sculptors," *Globe and Mail*, November 3, 1962.

[131] Kay Kritzwiser, "Loring and Wyle: The Olympian sculptors talk about their sorrows and their joys," *Globe Magazine* (7 April 1962), 10 pages.

[132] Lenore Crawford, "Exhibit is Tribute to Two Women Sculptors."

Figure 63: Frances Loring, *Portrait of Frederick Banting,* c. 1934, bronze, 62.5 cm (height), Art Gallery of Ontario

Nevertheless, they were also subjects which illuminated her understanding that the depiction of prominent male subjects was also a means of garnering interest, work and income. While she did not find a commissioner for *Goal Keeper*, Loring's plaster bust of Banting was realized in a bronze edition of six and the doctor's untimely death resulted in three sales to major collecting institutions.[133] Illustrations of the bust also accompanied Banting's obituaries in 1941.[134] Loring was not represented with many recent works in 1962 since her output had been virtually halted while bringing the Borden commission to fruition, and thus most works shown were from the 1930s and 1940s. Beyond the obvious contrasts of scale represented by Loring's massive *Goal Keeper* and Wyle's hand-held *Rivers of America*, there were subtler contrasts and differences between the two artists' works in the London exhibition as shown in their representations of women. In understanding the art object as an important form of historical evidence regarding the maker's conceptions of the world, a comparison of Loring and Wyle's

[133] Three of these busts went to McMaster University, University of Toronto and the Art Gallery of Ontario art collections.
[134] Two obituaries on Frederick Banting illustrated Loring's bust—the *Ottawa Citizen*, March 8, 1941, and *Saturday Night*, March 8, 1941. Wyle designed Banting's tombstone but this commission garnered her limited critical interest compared to Loring's portrait bust. Loring included two other male subjects in the 1962 exhibition, the works *Ash Man* and *Miner*, subjects she may have developed in response to time spent with workers at her father, Frank C Loring's silver mining enterprise in Cobalt, Ontario.

sculptural practices in the women and motherhood idioms brings into closer view their respective self-identifications with "woman" and "feminism" and further segregates their two subjectivities.

The remarkable church-home-studio of Loring and Wyle had demonstrated just how serious these women were about asserting their professional status and creative lives outside marriage and motherhood. When it came to representing women and motherhood in sculptural form, however, Loring and Wyle did not so easily separate the lives they lived outside motherhood from visually sanctioning women's roles in motherhood.[135] The artists' interests in these topics were by no means limited to commissions realized at the behest of clients and of income need.[136] Indeed, themes of women, motherhood and maternity were ongoing for both practitioners and central to each artist's self-directed practices produced at their own expense, and they were among those objects they considered their most significant accomplishments.[137] What may loom as a double standard in the contrast of the lives they lived as compared with that represented in sculptural expression is not to denigrate the artists and their work but rather to explore and understand more deeply their respective humanity in sex-gender identity formation in modernist Canada. Each artist's relationship to twentieth-century Imperialist feminism and how the subject "woman" was signified through their art practices is important to understanding this topic.[138] As literary scholarship in women's history and feminism has shown, Loring and

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[135] Further examples of their female mother-subjects include the following works illustrated in Christine Boyanoski, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy*: Loring's *Figural Grouping* and *War Widow and Children* (cats. 31, 35); Loring's *Mother and Children* (not in exhibition, fig. 59); Wyle's *American Family* (cat. 63); Wyle's *Young Mother* (cat. 45); Wyle's *Chicago* (cat. 52); and Wyle's *Indian Mother and Child* (cat. 38).
[136] Some of these commissions included: Wyle's commission for the Canadian Mother-Craft Society documented in photo # 420, Loring and Wyle Fonds. Loring's *Mother and Children*, 1957, fig. 59 in Christine Boyanoski, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy* was designed for the Women's Building at the CNE and depicts a mother with two children.
[137] Imagery of fathers appeared only rarely in Wyle's practice (but not Loring's) in the series she began called *American Family* in which she realized two works, both in AGO collection. In *American Family # 1,* she conceptualized "family" in normative heterosexual terms, comprised of a mother, father and two children (a boy and a girl).
[138] There is a significant corpus of literature on Imperial feminism exploring its varied histories and I use the term in relationship to the eugenics movement as argued for example in Cecily Margaret Devereaux's *Growing a Race:*

Wyle were not alone as author-producers in Anglo-Canadian female literate and creative circles to invoke multiple hierarchies of difference within the categories "woman/ women" and "feminism."

In an important essay on early twentieth century feminist literary writings, Janice Fiamengo has argued that Euro-Canadian literary women's relationships to feminism were by no means homogenous and it was not rare for such "feminist foremothers," as she names them, to invoke complex and contradictory hierarchies of difference within the categories "women and feminism" through class and racial distinction.[139] In her analysis of the writings of Nellie McClung, Sara Jeannette Duncan, Agnes Maule Machar and Flora MacDonald Denison, Fiamengo illustrates how these four women's understandings of race were each constituted differently through their respective emphases on Social Darwinism, Theosophy and Evangelical Christianity, among other belief systems which they integrated with their feminisms. Fiamengo explains that McClung's feminist politics in her writings showed her to be "capable of rethinking racist assumptions when the occasion demanded it…and yet her sympathetic interest in racial Others highlights the progressiveness of her feminism even while she continued to rely on racial and racist discourses to frame her arguments."[140] In advancing their distinct feminisms, these four writers effectively raised the white female subject to a privileged position within the category "woman." It is in this context that the art practices of Loring and Wyle need also be

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Nellie L. McClung and the Fiction of Eugenic Feminism (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005) where white women privileged British procreation over other nations and races. A more recent study on Imperial Feminism is also Clare Midgley's *Feminism and Empire: Women Activists in Imperial Britain, 1790-1865* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007).

[139] Janice Fiamengo, "Rediscovering our Foremothers Again, Racial Ideas of Canada's Early Feminists, 1885-1945," in *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History,* edited by Mona Gleason and Adele Perry (Don Mills: Oxford, 2006), 144-162.

[140] Ibid., 154.

considered since, as Fiamengo contends, "racial difference was central to the thinking of white Canadian feminists but was seldom straightforward."[141]

Wyle's striking and sensuous sculpture *Sunworshipper* (c.1916: NGC), [Figure 60] clearly demonstrated that the aesthetic beauty of the female form was established as core to her practice from the outset. Trained as she was in this academic figurative tradition, the female body was a subject Wyle knew how to depict well, and it remained a constant presence throughout her self-directed and commissioned figurative practices. Her concentration on this subject is worthy of further reflection, however. These headless and limbless "torsos" appeared with regularity in Wyle's practice, as also did her commitment to the full length and three-quarter compositions of the female form. The two versions of the sculpture *Torso* (1930: AGO, plaster 1932: NGC, marble), [Figures 60 and 65] are critically significant in further extrapolating Wyle's interest in the white female body, especially given the alternative title she gave to the original plaster version, *Mother of the Race*.[142] As mentioned earlier, this sculpture was not included in the 1962 exhibition, but this torso type was an ongoing theme, arguably a much larger and ongoing series in Wyle's practice. In the 1962 exhibition, Wyle included another of her equally important torsos, the marble carved *Draped Torso* (1939: AGO), [Figure 65] which was in subject, composition and material, in keeping with the character of *Torso-Mother of the Race* and may be considered a parallel work in Wyle's commitment to torso representation.[143]

[141] Ibid., 145.
[142] The plaster version has been shown under the following titles: *Torso* (1930, CNE and RCA); and *Torso—Woman* (1931, SSC). The marble version has been shown as follows: *Torso of a Woman* (1932, *7th Annual Exhibition of Canadian Art,* NGC); *Torso-Mother of the Race* (1987, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy*); and (2009, *Le nu dans l'art moderne canadien, 1920-1950)*. Christine Boyanoski notes that "Wyle also called the piece *Mother of the Race* in *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy*, 41. The non-white women represented in Wyle's practice include: *Skeena Mother and Child* relief (c. 1927); *Negress* (c.1942); *Head of Eskimo Woman* (c.1940), *Jamaican* (1945), *Japanese Girl* (1948), *Eskimo Girl* (1956), (all AGO collection). Wyle's Skeena River subjects were based on her travels there with Anne Savage in 1927 to study West Coast Aboriginal culture.
[143] I refer to the use of the white subject in contrapposto stance and marble material but note the difference in the addition of the drapery over the model's shoulder in *Draped Torso*.

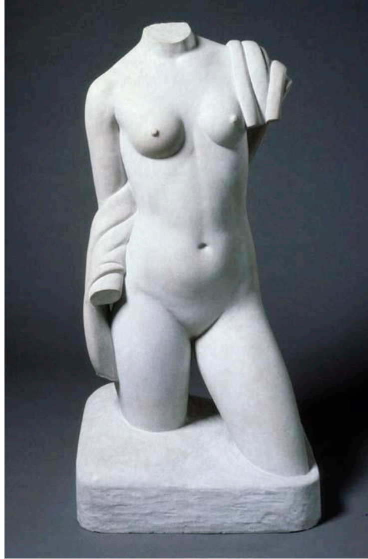

Figure 65: Florence Wyle, *Draped Torso*, 1939, marble, 111.8 cm (height) Art Gallery of Ontario (right)

Throughout Wyle's exploration of the torso and other motherhood sculptures, she remained focused on and privileged the white female body in human reproduction, not only in her self-directed practice but also in commissions. While making these two torsos independent of commissioners, Wyle also realized at least two commissions for the Mothercraft Hospital established at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children, including what appears to be a private commission for its founders, Barbara and Irving Robertson.[144] Formerly Barbara Mackenzie, "Mrs. Irving Robertson" as she was known to Wyle, was a nurse and enthusiast of the Mothercraft movement founded by Dr. Frederick Truby King whose ideas on nursing and childcare had swept through the British Empire and its colonies during the 1920s and 1930s.[145] The Mothercraft society aimed to improve the health of infants and children through

[144] The commissions as listed on Wyle's "Sculpture List" include sculptures of a baby sculpture (n.d.) and one of *St. Francis* (1948-9), and the *Creche* (n.d.) which included four components, Mary and Child, Joseph, a Wise Man and the Three Kings, as documented in Florence Wyle, "Sculptor List," File 3.5.54. There are also two photographs of a mother and child relief (n.d.) and a sculptural monument (n.d.) Wyle worked on for the Mothercraft Society Commission, Photos # 420 and 466, File 9.6, Loring and Wyle Fonds.
[145] There are numerous volumes of Truby King's own writings as well as biographies and critical analysis outlining the details of his work including his *Mothercraft* (Sydney, Melbourne: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd and London: Simpkin, Marshall Ltd. 1934). King was knighted for his work in 1931.

institutionalized education of mothers. However, as Kathryn Arnup has argued, the motherhood education movement so widespread in early twentieth century Canadian medical circles had securely placed the onus on mothers to implement its goals which ideologically stressed the social relegation of women to the private sphere of marriage and motherhood as their social lot.[146] Barbara Roberston championed mid-wifery, set up the "Well-Baby Nursing Training Program" and operated a maternity hospital and community registry and the Mothercraft Centre that she and Irving Robertson had co-founded.[147] Despite the Mothercraft movement's earnest concern for the well-being of children, their initiatives were not easily separated from the eugenics movement.

Angus McLaren's study of eugenics in 1990 revealed that Social Darwinism and Christian Evangelicism, alongside public health systems including birth control management, motherhood education and the Eugenics Society of Canada, were important factors in advancing the concept of a "master race" in Canada. His study also showed that these were prevailing ideologies in Euro-Canadian population management through the first half of the twentieth century.[148] Social Darwinism rationalized and envisioned selective reproduction through evolution theory and Christian Evangelicism played a critical role in dogmatically promoting the idea as part of colonial expansionism.[149] As scholarship on eugenics, motherhood and family history has also explored, these ideas were so sufficiently in circulation in the modern world that

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[146] Katherine Arnup, *Education for Motherhood: Advice for Twentieth-Century Mothers* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

[147] The website,www.mothercraft.ca documents that Barbara Mackenzie and Irving Robertson married in 1931 and they founded the Mothercraft Hospital. Irving Robertson was publisher of the *Toronto Telegram* and then served as Chair of the Board for the Hospital for Sick Children.

[148] Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[149] Reverend Alfred Henry Tyrer,*The New Sex, Marriage and Birth Control* (Toronto: Marriage Welfare Bureau, 1943, first published 1936). This widely circulated book was in its 29th edition by 1943 and advocated birth control use, but as Angus McLaren points out in *Our Own Master Race*, Tyrer's writings enveloped the Eugenics movement into his arguments on population management, 76.

it is challenging to imagine how Wyle could have exempted herself from the prevailing hegemony of these ideologies as subject and artist. Wyle's assignment of the charged title *Mother of the Race* to the plaster version, when understood in these socio-medical contexts sheds much light on her views on motherhood and women as social subjects and the hierarchies of difference among women signified by her sculptures addressing maternal themes.

Wyle did not put into words her thoughts on the title *Torso-Mother of the Race* but the work's strategic place among her female statuary confirms that the work was a major one in her view. There was, for example, some haste on Wyle's part to move the work from plaster to a permanent material at her own expense in the challenging economic years of the Depression between 1930 and 1932.[150] This development further supported the work's public exhibition in Canada and was evidence of her enthusiasm for and self-endorsement of its importance. *Torso-Mother of the Race* was not exhibited outside Canada, but other ones like it did show on the international stage including *Draped Torso* in the 1939 New York World's Fair.[151] It was probably no accident that Wyle chose to realize both torso works in white marble as the permanent material for its blanched opacity and reflectivity was well suited to representing the white female body; indeed she had carefully planned using different materials when representing the bodies of cultural "Others."[152]

As the torso works suggested, to depict motherhood was not necessarily to fall back on the trope of the Madonna and child because, when the torso as subject was combined with

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[150] The plaster version of *Torso-Mother of the Race* was made in 1930 and the marble version in 1932, as documented in Christine Boyanoski, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy,* 97, cat. 48.

[151] *Draped Torso* was one of five works to represent Wyle in the New York World's Fair as documented in the catalogue *New York World's Fair, Canadian Art,* subsections *for The Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour and The Sculptors' Society of Canada* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1939), 21, cat. 29. Other venues for *Draped Torso* included the 1942 four-woman show with Loring, Weschler and Jones cited earlier and also the 1958 SSC exhibition.

[152] Wyle's awareness of colour use in figural sculpture is illustrated in a comparison of these works with her plans to realize the work *Negress* (AGO) in black marble, which she advertised as the available colour for the work in the exhibition *Contemporary Canadian Sculpture* (Ottawa: NGC, 1950), 11, cat. 66.

related titling of the female body as procreative subject, it could be used to infer motherhood themes. Wyle did, however, also make works in the Madonna-child idiom, including the bronze version of *Young Mother* (c.1928: GL), [Figure 66] alternately shown in 1962 under the title *Madonna and Child* in 1962.[153] In keeping with Wyle's larger aesthetic directions, *Young Mother* in its bronze version was highly polished and her modeling at the plaster cast phase had clearly been finessed to achieve these results in bronze casting. The work also reflected Wyle's concentration on idyllic, introspective and serene moods when including the face and head for emotive expression in her statuary; the work was a full-length nude of a mother holding her baby close to the breast. Wyle premiered the work first in an RCA annual exhibition in 1928 and on several more occasions in the years leading to the 1962 London exhibition.[154] This work, like most all of Wyle's female subjects including *Study of a Girl* (c.1926: AGO), [Figure 67] and *Girl with Basin* (n.d.: LU), continued the project of valorizing the white female body.

Figure 66: Florence Wyle, *Young Mothe*r, c.1928, bronze, 86.0 cm (height), Gallery Lambton, alternately titled *Madonna and Child* (left)

Figure 67: Florence Wyle, *Study of a Girl*, c.1931, painted plaster, 135.5 cm (height) Art Gallery of Ontario (right)

[153] "Exhibit is Tribute to Two Women Sculptors," and cat. 18 on the exhibition list "Sculpture by Florence Wyle to be exhibited at London Art Museum,' Loring and Wyle Fonds.
[154] Wyle's exhibition history for *Young Mother* is cited in detail in *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy,* 95, cat 45. Some key exhibitions included the RCA (1928); SSC and CNE (1930); the *5th Annual Exhibition of Canadian Art,* NGC (1930).

Few works were included in the London exhibition which were not in fact like celebrations of the nude female body, and among these were *Sea and Shore* (c.1950: AGO), *Girl with Basin*, and *Study of a Girl*. Her *Study of a Girl* reflected Wyle's exemplary care in modeling and attention to surface polishing and. empathy with the subject's mood and introspection.[155] By 1962, *Study of A Girl* had gained an extensive exhibition history and it was clearly a major and still unsold work which Wyle justly wanted to profile in this career-assessment exhibition.[156] In all, Wyle's portfolio of women (the torsos, the three-quarters figures and the full-length figures) spoke to her valorization of the white female body and its privileged place in a hierarchy of racially distinct reproductive subjects.

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Figures 68a and b: Frances Loring, *Hound of Heaven*, c. 1917, Location Unknown, as illustrated in *Globe and Mail*, November 3, 1962 (left, front angle; right, back angle)

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[155] Exhibit Installation Photograph 269, File 10.1, Loring and Wyle Fonds.

[156] Wyle premiered the work in the 1931 OSA exhibition, followed by two international showings at the Tate Gallery, *A Century of Canadian Art* (1938) and the New York World's Fair (1939). During wartime *Study of a Girl* was shown in the four-woman exhibition at the AGT (1942) and in postwar in the SSC Silver Jubilee Exhibition (1953). As cited in Christine Boyanoski, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy,* 98, cat. 50.

If the two works *Torso-Mother of the Race* and *Young Mother* stand to illustrate critical issues in understanding Wyle's approach to women and motherhood, then the two works by Loring, *Hound of Heaven* (c. 1917: LU), [Figure 68] and *Eskimo Mother and Child* (1938: plaster, AGO), [Figure 69] correlatively serve to further illuminate her position in feminism and self-identification with the category "woman" as expressed in her sculptural practice. In London in 1962, *Hound of Heaven* and *Eskimo Mother and Child* were the key works to represent Loring's explorations with the female subject. They were each quite different works in subject matter and content. *Hound of Heaven* is known now only through photographs (one from the side and one from the back) and is said to have stood some three feet in height. Loring claimed it to be "one of her best works."[157] As the sculpture's title exposes, the work was based on the 182 line poem of the same name by English writer Francis Thompson (1859-1907). The poem was first released in 1890 and then in the author's *Selected Poems* (1893), and was so heartily endorsed that 50,000 copies were released within three years of Thompson's death, releases which were separate from the poem's inclusion in anthologies.[158] Thompson's poem was deeply religious and Christian in content and concerned with God's pursuit of the subject regardless of one's efforts to deviate from a religious life. For Thompson, the poem was a self-portrait of his unsuccessful attempt to escape God's wrath and was so acclaimed in Catholic circles by mid-twentieth century that it was sanctioned by the Vatican as a poem of "spiritual and moral good."[159]

Loring's translation of the poem took up its religious message but changed the gender of its subject by superimposing its religious content onto a female body. In making this sex-gender

[157] As cited in the caption for the photograph of *Hound of Heaven* in "Exhibit is Tribute to Two Women Sculptors," *Globe and Mail,* November 3, 1962.
[158] As documented in Fulton J. Sheen, "The Hound of Heaven," in *The Hound of Heaven: A Commemorative Volume,* edited by G. Krishnamurti (London, The Francis Thompson Society, 1967), 17.
[159] Cardinal's "Messages," in Fulton J. Sheen, *The Hound of Heaven: A Commemorative Volume,* x.

subject switch Loring also exempted herself from the double role of author-subject that Thompson had so occupied in the original writing for the poem. Loring's *Hound of Heaven* was instead realized as a full-length, slow-moving and partially draped female nude realized at her expense in the permanent medium of bronze. In keeping with Thompson's concept of the poem as God's relentless pursuit of the subject, the woman looks up to God and is crouched over in a humble stance: she is attempting to flee from her conscience but is unable. Loring's representation suggests the subject is the fallen woman, an identity Loring removed herself from as Thompson had not done when he made himself subject, object and author of the poem. Loring's appeal to states of emotion in *Hound of Heaven* was in keeping with several other works including *A Dream within a Dream* (c.1917:GPL) and *Grief* (1918; NGC bronze), but the narrative itself ironically pointed to women's duty to the Christian order. Loring's translation of this narrative was in sharp contrast to the life she lived after making the work, where she and Wyle had turned topsy-turvy so many Christian traditions for women in their notorious church-home-studio.

Hound of Heaven was a very different work than Wyle's idyllic torsos and full-length female statuary with its deep religiosity and narrative focus. Whereas for Wyle sensuous surfaces pointed toward the eroticism of the subject, Loring's message and narrative predominated over surface and aesthetic focus and, by contrast, her works downplayed eroticism. *Hound of Heaven* was not fully a nude subject with its draped bodily coverage, and, indeed, Loring often kept her women so clothed in puritan terms as to not really be nudes as Wyle would have them. *Hound of Heaven* signified much about Loring's views on women's social place and her own sanctimonious position outside the life alluded to by the work's female subject, and it illustrated one further important point of difference between Loring and Wyle's two approaches to

sculpture and poetic writings. Whereas Wyle was both sculptor and poet who intersected two art forms on her own terms, Loring used the poetry of another as her point of departure, repurposing Thompson's narrative as a distancing tactic to keep the self out, to position her sex-gender self at remove from the sculpture's intrinsic messaging.

Figure 69: Frances Loring, *Eskimo Mother and Child,* 1938, plaster, 190.0 cm (height), Art Gallery of Ontario (left)

Figure 70: Frances Loring, *Inuit Mother and Child,* 1958, limestone, 193 x 53.3 x 73.7 cm, National Gallery of Canada (right)

The second important work of female subjects to represent Loring in the 1962 exhibition was *Eskimo Mother and Child*. [Figure 69] In Loring's self-assessments of her practice, this work also occupied pride of place in her mind, the work yielding one of her most prominent and thorough-going exhibition histories for a single work in her entire sculptural production. Loring premiered the *Eskimo Mother and Child* in its original plaster version in the exhibition *A Century of Canadian Art* (1938) organized by the Tate Gallery in London (UK), and quickly following this was its inclusion in the Sculpture Society of Canada's section of *Canadian Art* at the New

York World's Fair (1939).[160] On realizing the work in the permanent medium of carved limestone in 1958 [Figure 70], the version she sold to the National Gallery of Canada in 1960, the work was then exhibited in the Venice Biennial in 1962.[161] Echoing almost verbatim her thoughts on *Hound of Heaven,* Loring described this sculpture as "one of her favorite works."[162] The limestone version of the work is now more commonly known by the amended title *Inuit Mother and Child* (1958: NGC) and was Loring's solo testimonial to Aboriginal women. Once again, the sculpture was generated at remove from any real subject through use of photographs taken by topographer, J.R. Cox in 1916, which had been well-circulated in various archaeological and ethnographic publications.[163]

In keeping with most of Loring's representational strategies for depicting the female subject, those in *Hound of Heaven* and *Eskimo Mother and Child* were clothed subjects, a representational gesture that downplayed the bodily eroticism to which Wyle was so drawn. Loring did not realize many more commissions of women and mothers after her work on the commissions of the First World War[164] and there were only a few works of women and motherhood among those few objects comprising her self-directed art practice.[165] As referenced earlier in her attention to male subjects, Loring attended far less to the project of representing women than Wyle. In taking up the subject of an Inuit mother, Loring recognized the diversity of motherhood experience beyond the white subject, but she retained only general reference to the

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[160] *Eskimo Mother and Child* was exhibited in RCA and SSC exhibitions during the interwar years and at Eaton's Art Gallery in 1943 and was included in all four postwar artist-couple exhibitions of 1952, 1962, 1966 and 1969, as cited in Christine Boyanoski, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy,* 108, cat. 67.
[161] Ibid., 108, cat. 67. Boyanoski notes in this catalogue entry that a smaller bronze version of this subject is held in the Art Gallery of Alberta collection.
[162] As cited by Christine Boyanoski, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy,* 52.
[163] Ibid, 51. Boyanoski's research traces the various publications in which it appeared.
[164] Ibid., 88-89. These war commissions included catalogue numbers 31, 33, and 34.
[165] Ibid., The works *Girl with Fish, Beer Making in Greece, Dawn, Head, Fawn, Invocation* (cats 52, 68 .75, 76, 88, and 89), comprise most of her works depicting women after 1918.

subject "Manigurin" who was so identified in the original archeological photograph.[166] In removing the subject's known identity Loring shifted the object's significations from the specific to the generic, such that Manigurin now stood as an archetypal image of Inuit women rather than a named person. Loring had not travelled any farther north towards the Inuit homelands than her father's lucrative silver mine in Cobalt, Ontario, or beyond the Peace River, Alberta when she traveled there with painter A.Y. Jackson in 1952, and she remained largely unfamiliar with histories of Inuit women as both traveler and researcher-artist.

A comparison of these examples of Loring and Wyle's sculptural representations of female subjects (Loring's *Eskimo Mother and Child* and her *Hound of Heaven,* and Wyle's *Torso-Mother of the Race, Draped Torso* and her *Young Girl*) offers enough contrasts to identify salient differences in the two artist's approaches, and it furthers Fiamengo's project of differentiating their two feminisms. Loring portrayed women's social place in circles of female respectability, propriety and religiosity while also remaining distant from the specificity of the subject's experience and identity. Wyle, in contrast, vaunted the white procreative female body in its youthful sensuality and detail and put herself at greater remove from religious dogma. Technically, their works were quite different, with Loring's rougher means of working with her materials as contrasted with Wyle's highly polished and finessed surfaces. Underscoring their two views though was the assumption that, if Sisler was right in calling them both feminists, their feminisms effectively inferred the Imperial female subject's privileged place and they segregated themselves as women within the category "women" from Aboriginal women and from procreating women. Their subject positions as "women," were then facilitated by their middle class educated and professional status in Euro-Canadian society and themes of

[166] Ibid., 51. The woman's name was identified in the photograph title as "Manigurin and her baby Itayuk in coat hood." Loring appears to have undertaken no further research on the subject.

Christianity and Imperialism were not so far in the distance as their radical living scenario in the church-studio might once have suggested. As some of their other commissioned works including the Queen Elizabeth monument indicate, themes of Imperialism appear more deeply etched into the sex-gender subjectivities of Loring and Wyle than have been henceforth recognized.

Loring's embrace of the lion as subject for Queen Elizabeth commission drew upon Britain's long history of using the lion as emblem of strength and power in its royal coat of arms dating back to the 12th century. During Loring's lifetime in the twentieth century, the lion continued to be used as symbol of Empire and notably as *the* graphic emblem for *all* promotional media for the two British Empire Exhibitions held at Wembley Stadium, London, in 1924 and 1925. Loring's conception of this feline creature, resting but ready and powerful, bore much in common with those shown at Wembley by sculptor Benjamin Clemens whose suite of six concrete lions were placed at the entrance to the British Government Pavilion.[167] As mentioned earlier, Loring and Wyle were well represented in both Wembley exhibitions and Wyle had also been the project's only female juror; indeed, their awareness of the events and iconology of the Wembley events and exhibitions was more than a matter of familiarity.

There remains minimal biographical and inter-subjective documentation to further pursue Loring and Wyle's self-identifications with women and feminism as social categories, although more artworks can certainly be interrogated than those included in the 1962 exhibition which have here been the focus. Sources regarding Loring and Wyle's friendship with anarchist and birth control advocate, Emma Goldman (1869-1940) remain elusive. Loring and Wyle had first met Goldman in New York when living in Greenwich Village, and in 1927 when she undertook an extended tour of Canada, Loring and Wyle are said to have arranged for Goldman to teach a

[167] Donald R. Knight and Alan D. Sabey, *The Lion Roars at Wembley: British Empire Exhibition, 60th Anniversary, 1924-1925* (London: Barnard and Westwood, 1984), 18-19, 110.

special drama course.[168] Goldman considered the two sculptors "friends and comrades"[169] but her collapsing of Loring and Wyle's identities through misspellings and first and surname switching offers little to clarify their respective thoughts on Goldman's work, feminism and birth control. Loring and Wyle's more detailed thoughts on the topic of birth control in modern Canada, so problematically interconnected with the eugenics movement for its sterilization of the unfit, however, may well have been useful in further parsing out Loring and Wyle's differences in self-identifying as feminists and women. There was one more significant point of difference in Loring and Wyle's self-identifications with the category "woman" as demonstrated by their bodily adornment on the opening night of their exhibition, and this point contributes further to Vicinus' call for nuanced understandings of women's subjectivities.

In their radical home-studio as female professionals working in a male world, Loring and Wyle had inventively and economically contested women's normative social and procreative paths in "womanhood," while in their female statuary, each artist advanced their less adventurous views on women's social roles. They had already done much to confound traditional notions of masculine and feminine and destabilize the sex-gender categories "girl" and "woman." As Kay Kritzwiser observed; "In her heyday, the late Frances Loring could wield a five-pound mallet the way most women handle a teaspoon. The late Florence Wyle, at her peak could carve a tiny exquisite cat from a hand-span of cherry wood."[170] In her attraction to monumentality, Loring vaunted her female strength and capacity as on par with any male sculptor. In contrast, Wyle was unconcerned with so explicitly contesting such biologically-based forms of sex-gender identity in the physical production of her work. But, their confounding of categories masculine and feminine was evident in their attire on opening night,

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[168] Emma Goldman, *Living My Life* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1931), 990.
[169] Ibid., 992.
[170] Kay Kritzwiser, "The Girls' Show to Foster Young Talent," 15.

November 2, 1962. The evening was the last major occasion to appreciate this aspect of their sex-gender bodily performances in public life and it offered one more example of their respective self-identifications with (or not), the category woman, specifically with tropes of femininity and masculinity. Sisler recalled the details of their appearance that evening: "As so often before, they were unconsciously a major attraction in themselves. Frances was resplendent in black velvet, her bulk regally draped in a scarlet Chinese silk stole. Florence was turned out in the frayed dignity of her old grey suit. It was her first appearance at an opening in several years."[171]

Loring in velvet and a silk stole and Wyle in her grey suit—the contrast was a sharp one when compared with how Toronto photographers Ashley and Crippen had once photographed the two artists soon following their arrival on the Toronto scene. Then, both subjects had contentedly presented themselves in the clothes supplied by the firm for its studio presentation of women's portraiture which followed traditional Victorian modes of feminine deportment—their long hair neatly placed in a bun, and adorned in soft white blouses and dark overdresses with three-quarter sleeves.[172] In public life in the years that followed, Loring carried on wearing generously cut garments like these with bold and showy over-fabrics, placing less effort into revising her sex-gender presence in public life. Wyle had once entertained such traditions of female deportment, as these and other early life photographs of her document, but, as Sisler recalled of Wyle's attire by the 1940s, she was now "deaf to the call of fashion, [and] had ceased making concessions to formal dress. For the next twenty years she found her ancient grey flannel suit quite adequate to any situation."[173] By then, the "grey suit" meant that Wyle had eased into

[171] Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle*, 111, and Lenore Crawford, "Dr. Comfort Opens Show," *London Free Press*, November 2, 1962, where Wyle is shown wearing a men's jacket and shirt with bow tie.
[172] Photographs of Loring and Wyle, by Ashley and Crippen, File 6.3, Loring and Wyle Fonds.
[173] Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle,* 75.

sporting men's ties, shirts, pants and Oxford-style shoes as practical vestments suitable in comfort for the life she led as sculptor, poet and gardener.[174]

In her unapologetic and revised self-presentation after early adulthood, Wyle contradicted another of Freud's arguments regarding the subject's entrance to femininity and womanhood—his conception of woman's "fundamental narcissism" whereby the female subject's phallic absences had apparently led to her excesses in physical vanity. Not so for Wyle who, as Sisler suggests, had effectively given up on appearances by mid-life. Wyle's self-revision of her attire in public and private life contested Freud's assumption that female sex-gender identity was certain and stable once the subject had supposedly arrived at "womanhood." Indeed, Wyle's sex-gender identity as expressed in her adornment had very much been a revisable reality after early adulthood: a photograph documenting her attire on opening night with Loring and Comfort showed her sporting a man's jacket, shirt and bow tie. The outfit was evidence enough of Wyle's confounding of gender-prescribed adornment in public life. Beyond the obvious practicalities, comforts and professional affiliations offered by traditionally male garments, Wyle's motives remain silent in the historical record. But, as Vicinus has argued, "we lack sufficient personal information to generalize with confidence about the many and complicated psycho-social reasons why a woman might have cross-dressed in the past."[175] Alternatively, she suggests that attention be focused on "the polymorphous, even amorphous sexuality of women" as "an invitation to multiple interpretive strategies."[176]

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[174] In Alan Jarvis' *Frances Loring-Florence Wyle* (Toronto Pollock Gallery 1966), unpaginated, a 1958 photograph shows Wyle wearing a men's tie, and in Sisler's, *The Girls*, 56, a photograph shows Wyle wearing a men's shirt with tie. When working in studio Loring also wore pants, as documented in the article, "Sir Robert Comes Back," *Weekend Magazine* 7, no. 11 (1957) Wyle's cross-dress also included combinations of traditional men's and women's clothes and the photograph of Loring and Wyle taken in their studio by Milne Photo Studios shows Wyle combining traditional men's clothes with a skirt, File 7.1, Loring and Wyle Fonds.
[175] Martha Vicinus, "They Wonder to Which Sex I Belong," in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader,* edited by Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale and David M. Halpern (New York: Routledge, 1993), 436-7.
[176] Ibid, 436-7.

Vicinus has argued that there were important historic precedents for women's cross dressing in the visual arts including painter, Rosa Bonheur, who often wore her smock and trousers to sketch. Bonheur recorded in a letter to her sister in 1884 that she was amused over how those observing her would "wonder to which sex I belong."[177] But, as Vicinus has contended, the model of the cross-dressed masculine woman who shared an inner emotional life with another woman was one structural form in which the Boston marriage could be expressed. Wyle's confounding of masculine and feminine vestments was a courageous gesture amidst emergent sexology writings of the twentieth century for this subject position would soon be dubbed "the mannish lesbian" and also the forerunner of the social categories "butch" and "invert."[178]

As Vicinus suggests though, Wyle's vestment crossings are an invitation to pursue multiple interpretive strategies, and the possibility of androgyny is suggested, when her men's jacket and shoes were also worn with a skirt.[179] In comparison with Marion Nicoll who took up the position of androgyny through her art work and production to facilitate such sex-gender crossings, Wyle played up her physical presence to transgress normative lines of female adornment. As artist Wyle did not push the matter of her sex-gender crossing to hide her identity from view for she remained publicly "Florence Wyle" as named artist in exhibitions. Unlike Nicoll, she did not work to keep the self out but rather, quite literally, she *wore* its complexities.

It is also worth entertaining the possibility that Wyle found some pleasure in the play offered by these sex-gender ambiguities in relation to the categories "man and woman." For Monique Wittig, such a subject position would only make sense for the non-heterosexual subject

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[177] As cited by Martha Vicinus in, "They Wonder to Which Sex I Belong," 432.
[178] Ibid., 440.
[179] Photograph of Loring and Wyle in their studio by Milne Studios in Wyle sports the Oxford shoes with a skirt and men's shirt, Photo 7.1, Loring and Wyle Fonds.

and she posits the possibility of the "not-woman, not-man" as a viable one for any female choosing not to inhabit the category "woman." As Wittig argues the point, because "woman" is already a myth and imaginary formation, and a category imposed upon the subject, "to refuse to be a woman…does not mean that one has to become a man."[180] One can effectively be both, neither, and/or also hover between categories. So too, Julia Kristeva has argued, "the belief that 'one is woman' is almost as absurd and obscurantist as the belief that 'one is man.'"[181] Wyle in her grey suit, Loring in her velvet and silk stole on the night of November 2nd—the two women represented a sharp contrast in personal adornment, bodily sex-gender performance, and in their self-identifications, with (or not with) the category "woman." For Wyle's part, her attire denaturalized rigid divisions between categories man and woman to reveal their permeable boundaries and performative possibilities.

Ironically though, in the face of this sex-gender vestment staging, throughout the critical reception to the 1962 exhibition Loring and Wyle were each still contingently held to the category "woman" in critical writing. These included reviews by Kenneth Saltmarche[182] and those featuring commentary by Charles Comfort (1900-1994), then director of the National Gallery of Canada, who had been requested to open the exhibition and whose attendance made for much fanfare by local media.[183] But, with all its contradictions, this sex-gender designation would not be sustained for much longer, and by 1969 Loring and Wyle were permanently

[180] Monique Wittig, "One is Not Born a Woman," in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader,* edited by Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale and David M. Halpern (New York: Routledge, 1993), 103-106.
[181] Julia Kristeva, "Woman Can Never Be Defined," in *New French Feminisms: An Anthology*, edited by Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), 137.
[182] Kenneth Saltmarche was sometime art critic for the Windsor Star as well as director-curator of the Willistead Art Gallery. He wrote in "Sculpture Exhibit," *Windsor Star*, January 12, 1963 that Loring and Wyle were among "a number of women in this country who are active sculptors" but would also note their aberrant place in this category by describing them as the "elder statesmen" of sculpture practice in Canada.
[183] Lenore Crawford, "Dr. Comfort Opens 2-Sculptor Show," *London Free Press*, November 10, 1962. Reference is made in Charles Comfort's *Travel Journal (1962-1964*) to his trip but he only comments on the weather and his transit arrangements and didn't mention his role in opening the exhibition. As his journal records, he arrived at 6:15 pm and he left promptly the next morning. Charles Comfort Fonds, volume 1, 23, Library and Archives of Canada.

returned to the category of "The Girls" following Jack Pollock's two commercial artist-couple exhibitions in 1966 and 1969 featuring Loring and Wyle.

<u>The Social Return of Loring and Wyle as "The Girls" at the Pollock Gallery, 1966 and 1969</u>

As noted earlier, the return of the designation "The Girls" was connected to the re-emergence of the two portrait busts in 1966, but this identity had also been buttressed by Christopher Chapman's 1965 documentary on the artists which, in Sisler's view, had "sympathetically thrust the two sculptors once again into public consciousness. Accolades poured into the church from all sources" and, she noted, that was when Jack Pollock first "approached them for their 'two-man' show."[184] The artists' ill health by the time of 1966 exhibition had made the matter of issuing any further control over their exhibition representation almost impossible, and by 1969, with both artists' deceased, obituaries and reviews of their memorial exhibition had fully secured "The Girls" as Loring and Wyle's dominant sex-gender representation in the public record.[185]

Pollock's two exhibitions did not differ significantly in content from the 1962 showing in London since a great many of the works shown had been exhibited in London and Loring and Wyle had not made much new work in the intervening years.[186] In keeping with the artists previous artist-couple exhibits in non-profit venues, Pollock followed the model of

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[184] Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle*, 114.

[185] As documented by photograph of Wyle with Jack Pollock she attended the opening, but Loring was too ill, photograph 7.3, Loring and Wyle Fonds. Two obituaries as follows used "The Girls" as a tagline: "The Girls," (source unknown); and "The Girls was their designation to the Toronto art world for nearly half a century," *Globe and Mail,* January 15, 1968, These reviews are located in Files 2.1.34 and 2.1.38, Loring and Wyle Fonds.

[186] At Pollock Gallery works shown by Loring included *Goal Keeper, Banting, Ash Man, Eskimo Mother and Child, Dr. John Pearson,* and *Girl with Fish*. Works shown by Wyle included *Harvester, Chicago, War Worker, Study of a Young Girl, Varley, Jackson*. Alan Jarvis, *Frances Loring-Florence Wyle* (Toronto: Pollock Gallery, 1966) where these objects are illustrated and also the two listings "Works Sold," 22 February 1966, File 4.8 ,Loring and Wyle Fonds. These lists include Loring's *Banting, Lune, Head* and *Rooster* as sold objects, and Wyle's *Indian Head, Torso, Varley, Cat*, and *Frog* as among her sales. .Kay Kritzwiser noted that about 100 works were shown in her review, "The Girls' show to foster young talent." Sculptor Frances Gage and Jack Pollock selected works for this exhibition. Gage had been mentored by Loring and Wyle since 1949.

conceptualizing Loring and Wyle as an artist-couple by handling their practices jointly over the four years that comprised the artist-dealer relationship. In both the 1966 and 1969 exhibitions he included numerous photographs of their famous studio and life together as sculptors.[187] The difficulties of Loring and Wyle's earlier relegation as "past contributors" was, however, only further compounded by Pollock's exhibitions. To his credit more published documentation on Loring and Wyle appeared in 1966 than any other exhibit to date, but the introductory statement authored by Alan Hepburn Jarvis (1915-1972) recycled again in 1969, only underscored Loring and Wyle's reputations as "past contributors."[188] As Bice had done, Jarvis too outlined the historical contributions Loring and Wyle had made to sculpture in Canada, focusing on their participation in the social and aesthetic concerns of the Group of Seven, and contrasting their work with recent explorations in contemporary practice.[189] Jarvis was a prominent figure in the Canadian art scene then working on plans for Expo '67 and his early education and interest in sculpture made him a logical choice but his more recent interests lay predominantly in other areas.[190]

The second exhibit of Loring and Wyle's works held at the Pollock Gallery in 1969 combined the artist-couple format with a memorial tribute. Both artists had passed away literally days apart from one another in early 1968.[191] This exhibit followed on Pollock's more immediate

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[187] The Pollock Gallery exhibition included an extensive display of biographical photographs of Loring and Wyle and their life together in the studio. Photograph 7.2 shows Frederick Varley looking at one wall of images and photograph 7.3 shows Pollock and Wyle with another wall of photographs behind them. Photograph Files 7.2 and 7.3, Loring and Wyle Fonds.

[188]Alan Jarvis was a Rhodes Scholar, writer, curator, editor (*Canadian Art magazine*), and Director of the NGC (1955-59). A detailed biography on him is Andrew Horrall's *Bringing Art to Life: A Biography of Alan Jarvis* (Montreal: McGill-Queens, 2009), and also the Alan Hepburn Jarvis Papers, Fond 171, Thomas Fisher Library, University of Toronto.

[189] Alan Jarvis, "Foreword" in *Frances Loring-Florence Wyle* (Toronto: Pollock Gallery, 1966), unpaginated.

[190] Jarvis studied with sculptor Elizabeth Wyn Wood and wrote the following works in chronology: *The Way We See Things: Inside and Out* (Hammondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1947); *David Milne* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1962); *Rodin and His Contemporaries* (Toronto: Rothman's 1965); and *Douglas Duncan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974).

[191] Wyle passed away on 13 January followed by Loring on 3 February 1968.

response to their passing in 1968 when he grouped together in a four-artist exhibition the works of the all-deceased artist-couple Toronto sculptors Loring, Wyle, Elizabeth Wyn Wood and Emmanuel Hahn.[192] With Loring and Wyle's production now final, sales increased and the 1969 exhibition had a much more determined commercial focus. Loring and Wyle had stipulated in their wills that works sold support younger artists working in the sculptural field. Posthumous sales were some three times higher than three years earlier but the artists did not enjoy the proceeds from this inaugural and final commercial venture during their lifetimes.[193] In keeping with previous sales from the studio, their buyers had consistently been comprised of a small circle of friends, artists, collectors and family.[194] Jack Pollock continued to handle their works on behalf of the estate, but a listing from 1969 identifying contents to be returned to the studio initiated what would complete this gallery's representation of Loring and Wyle's work for good.[195]

Conclusion

Throughout the 1960s, the closest access Loring and Wyle each had to the solo exhibition was their artist-couple exhibitions. In these projects their sex-gender identities were continuously

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[192] "Frances Loring Obituary: A Constant Contributor to Sculpture" *Globe and Mail*, February 6, 1968, where reference is made to this exhibition, File 1.2.12, Loring and Wyle Fonds. Wood died in 1966 and her husband Emmanuel Hahn in 1957.

[193] From the 1966 exhibition Loring and Wyle received respectively, $3,700 and $1,682.50. From the 1969 exhibition Loring and Wyle realized total sales of $6,065.24 and $13,875.00 respectively for their work as documented in "Works Sold as of Feb. 22, 1966," and "1969 Exhibition--Works Sold," April 3, 1970, File 4.8, Loring and Wyle Fonds. After the dealer's 25% commission and materials costs sales were not even half of the buyer's costs. The "Works Sold" lists were sent to each artist on 22 February 1966. Their biggest sales were Loring's *Portrait of Banting* (McMaster Univeristy) and Wyle's *Portrait of F.H. Varley.* Loring had fewer sales but commanded a higher price for her Banting portrait. Wyle had more sales but at lower values.

[194] Wyle's nephew purchased the bronze sculpture *Cat* as documented in his letter to Wyle, File 3.7.74, Loring and Wyle Fonds. Sculptor-friend Sophie Hungerford and the artists' lawyer each also bought a work as documented in "Works Sold" File 3.7.74, Loring and Wyle Fonds.

[195] A listing of contents to be returned to the Glenrose address is dated 5 August 1969 by Pollock Gallery. Payments and the return of works were completed by April 1970 when two letters each dated 3 April 1970 for the artists' sales were written to the estate. The estate was then turned over to long-time friend/executor, Frances Gage. The correspondence between the Pollock Gallery and the artists' estate is held in File 4.8, Loring and Wyle Fonds.

cast together and their subjectivities singularized through the conflation of their identities as "The Girls" in exhibitions, critical reception and biographical writings. In exploring the 1962 exhibition in considered depth, however, it remains evident that for all their similarities Loring and Wyle were each very different artists and women and their subjectivities were indeed distinct and separable. They had long worked hard to argue these points themselves when subjected to the persistent interview question of their mutual influences on each other. Whereas Wyle bluntly stated "never," and that, even when modeling side by side and working from the same life-model, the resulting figures would always be completely different interpretations," Loring responded less curtly: "In fact, we influence each other's work in contrary ways. I'd come in and suggest that Florence do this or that, and she always does the opposite…. We don't force our opinions on each other.[196]

The problem of Loring and Wyle's joint exhibition and biography became an increasing concern in their posthumous lives as obituary and memorial exhibit reviews and writers reinstalled "The Girls" as their dominant sex-gender identity in public life. Throughout their exhibition lives, however, Loring and Wyle remained steadfast in their life choices and commitment to professionalism. If Denise Riley was right to observe the possibility of "different densities of a sexed being in operation" then the Loring and Wyle partnership is a poignant one to compare and contrast such densities. Their two lives cannot be leveled together as one, their practices seen as equal in focus, output and purpose. Recall for example the two women's contrasting bodily adornment and aesthetic strategies as sculptors; recall Wyle's emphasis on her self-directed practice and Loring's attraction to the Herculean public monument and commission; recall their differing views on sex-gender as sculptural subjects within the category

[196] As cited in Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls: A Biography of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle,* 13-14.

"woman" and recall their conceptual differences as writers—Wyle the lyricist and Loring the pedagogue.

Judith Butler has argued that there remain numerous complications in navigating the dichotomy of "social sanction and taboo" in the performance of one's sex-gender identity. Loring and Wyle lived their lives between these contradictions: on the one hand, their radical studio as independent women represented their contest with the power of social sanction and taboo and, on the other hand, their privileging of the white body represented their complicity in socially sanctioned female norms. In their lives, Loring and Wyle reworked tropes of masculine and feminine and the categories "woman" and "girl," but in their sculpture they did not attend to women's diverse and complex social roles. In the context of Toronto's visual art history, they performed their sex-gender identities distinctly and there was no other female visual artist couple in that city with whom their story can be compared. Despite the contradictions represented by their life and work, Loring and Wyle's story remains an engaging one in artist-couple studies for their strength as female economic partners and their aesthetic and conceptual differences as artists working within modernist figurative traditions. Their social entrance to, exit from, and return back to, the categories "girls-women-girls," remains concrete evidence of how their companionship story worked among critics and audiences to destabilize false notions of fixed sex-gender identities.

Loring and Wyle's double-artist exclusions from access to solo exhibitions can hardly be understood as coincidental given the facts displayed through their exhibitions. It is timely that the deployment of the artist-couple exhibition to stage their practices in public life be interrogated for its representational collapsing of their work and lives to the singularizing identity that was "The Girls," so grounded as it was on their same-sex partnership and household

economic structure. The very act of leveling their practices as parallel and of “equal” significance remains a signifier of the differences at work in their artist-couple exhibit experiences since, in the heterosexual artist-couple exhibition, this hierarchy usually played out rather differently with the male artist being usually granted (albeit sometimes unjustly) the privileged place of being the “more important” artist.[197] It remains a speculative project in any post-modern analysis to cast either artist in an artist-couple as more or less important and thus the emphasis here has been on Loring and Wyle’s separability and, indeed, it has been a principal goal of this chapter to pry this question open through the exhibition.

To be sure, the difficulties of the joint biography and exhibition deeply affected Loring and Wyle and these have been consistent realities for most women in this study. There remains, however, one more crucial incarnation of structural difference among women to explore in deconstructing some further workings of the artist-couple exhibition. The next chapter on one woman’s “two-man” exhibitions explores the Cape Dorset artist-couple marriage of Kenojuak and Johnniebo Ashevak to illustrate one more variation on the structural complications of difference in representing the female artist—the social construction of Kenojuak’s life and work in contexts of racial difference.

[197] Consider for instance the heterosexual artist-couple histories of Auguste Rodin and Camille Claudel, Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner, Willem de Kooning and Elaine de Kooning, Hans Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp and so on.

Chapter Six

One Woman's "Two-Man" Exhibitions: Kenojuak Ashevak's Artist-Couple Exhibitions with Johnniebo Ashevak, 1967-1970

Introduction

The solo exhibition remained an elusive prospect for Cape Dorset artist Kenojuak Ashevak following her entrance to Canada's public art gallery system in the 1960s.[1] Her exhibitions at the National Library in 1967 and at Expo 70 in Osaka, Japan were both artist-couple showings.[2] It was not until thirteen years after the passing of her first husband Johnniebo Ashevak that she first exhibited solo in the public sector: that occasion was her 1986 retrospective organized by the McMichael Canadian Art Collection.[3] Given that Kenojuak's work prevailed over Johnniebo's on both occasions her confinement to the artist-couple exhibition raises important questions regarding women's access to the solo exhibit at this historic moment.[4]

It is significant that the identity descriptions assigned to Kenojuak as a result of her artist-couple exhibitions included "Eskimo woman artist" and "wife of/married to Johnniebo" and

[1] This analysis is specifically concerned with Kenojuak's representation in non-profit public rather than commercial art gallery exhibitions. Like Wieland, her access to the solo show arrived sooner in the commercial sector but a paucity of data on her two shows held at Isaacs Inuit Gallery (*Kenojuak Drawings,* 1971) and Jerrold Morris Gallery (the undated exhibit, *Kenojuak Stone Cuts, Stencils and Etchings*) has made it impossible to consider these here.
[2] *An Exhibition of Graphic Art by Kenojuak and Her Husband Johnniebo* was held at the National Library, 29 November-5 December 1967 and their mural was shown at the Canadian pavilion at Osaka, 14 March -13 September 1970. My analysis of the Expo 70 exhibition concentrates on the design and production of the mural in Canada before its presentation in Japan in order to focus on its relationship to the ways that Canadian exhibit organizers conceptualized the representation of artists for international exhibition.
[3] Johnniebo passed away from an intestinal blockage in 1972. The exhibition *Kenojuak: A Retrospective* was held in Kleinburg, Ontario, 19 January- 4 May 1986.
[4] There were two more artist-couple exhibitions: *Eskimo Sculpture and Graphic Art by Kenojuak and Johnniebo,* Nova Scotia Technical College, 15 February-2 March 1974; and *The Sculpture of Kenojuak and Joanassie Igui* Feheley Fine Arts in 1988. Igui was Kenojuak's third companion, as documented in the exhibit invitation, Artist's File, National Gallery of Canada Library (NGC), and Kenojuak and Cynthia Cook, "Drawing is Totally the Reverse of the Process of Carving," *Inuit Art Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 23-25.

"man-and-wife art team."[5] The underscoring of her heterosexuality, marriage status and cultural ancestry through these descriptors exposes how the artist-couple exhibition was used to structure hierarchies of difference within the category "woman" in Canada's postwar exhibition system. The arguments presented in this chapter illuminate that Kenojuak's artist-couple showings played a crucial role in asserting her companionship status and Inuit identity and an examination of precisely how she was granted admission to the category "Artist" as defined in the western art tradition illustrates how racial difference was articulated through her exhibition record.

Trained in design and sewing by her grandmother, Sowessa, Kenojuak had been an image-object maker since her youth by applying her designs on handbags, clothing and other objects central to family life and Inuit culture.[6] Yet, her National Library and Expo 70 exhibitions only recognized her as graphic and mural artist and in neither instance was she recognized for her previous sewn works in sealskin which have since become coveted by collectors and curators.[7] [Figures 12a-d] Instead of exhibiting the continuum of her image and object making production, Kenojuak's work was framed to have commenced following the arrival of James Houston (1921-2005) whose foundational role in forming the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative in Cape Dorset has been widely recounted in histories of Inuit art. Kenojuak's participation in this initiative, alongside Houston's much-quoted directive that she

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[5] I use the term "Eskimo" as it appeared in media responses and other publications and "Inuit" in all other instances since this latter term has succeeded the former in current parlance. Reviews so describing Kenojuak include: "Ottawa Show Honours Eskimo Woman Artist," *Northern Sentinel*, December 6, 1967; and "Eskimo Husband-Wife Team Create Mosaic for Expo 70," *Calgary Herald,* July 17, 1969 Copies of these reviews are located in the Kenojuak Artist's File, NGC Library.

[6] Kenojuak also made dolls and artist Harold Pfeiffer collected two that she made while in hospital recovering from tuberculosis during the 1950s. These are excluded from this analysis since my goal is to show the continuities offered for analysis between the imagery and techniques used on her sealskin bags and subsequent drawings and her few known dolls were not made from sealskin. Iillustrations of the dolls known as *Mother and Child* and *A Teenage Girl*, appear in Eva Strickler and Anaoyok Alookee, *Inuit Dolls: Reminders of a Heritage* (Toronto: Canadian State and Arts Publications, 1988), 150-151 and 154-155.

[7] One of Kenojuak's three-known sealskin bags in a private collection was included in the exhibition *Saumik: James Houston's Legacy*, 10 February 2007-8 June 2008, McMichael Canadian Art Collection. Correspondence Janine Butler to Catharine Mastin, 12 August 2010. Otherwise these bags have been excluded from Kenojuak's exhibitions.

begin to draw, were two instrumental factors in the splicing of her art practice into those works produced before and after Houston's arrival.[8]

Figures 12a-d: Kenojuak Ashevak *Untitled Assemblage*, circa 1955-60, sealskin, Private Collection (top left, recto; top right, verso; lower left and right, detailed views verso)

Kenojuak's imagery in sealskin had long-since demonstrated her command of line, control of contour, and ability to shape and define form because she had finessed these skills through her experience handling the *ulu* when cutting sealskin.[9] Her works in this medium had also consolidated her distinctive iconography and aesthetic as a maker of bold imagery depicting

[8] James Houston wrote: "I purposely took a pencil and two rolled sheets of paper…and gave them to Kenojuak asking her to make a drawing of her rabbit eating seaweed," in *Confessions of an Igloo Dweller: The Story of the Man who Brought Inuit Art to the Outside World* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995), 267. Kenojuak recalled, "I will never forget when a bearded man called Saumik approached me to draw on a piece of paper. My heart started to pound like a heavy rock." As cited in Ansgar Walk, *Kenojuak: The Life Story of an Inuit Artist* (Manotik: Penumbra Press, 1999, second English edition), 210, first published Bielefeld: Pendragon Verlag, 1998.
[9] Kenojuak shows how this Inuit knife is used by women to prepare skins in an ink drawing reproduced in Judy Scott Kardosh, *Women of the North: An Exhibition of Art by Inuit Women of the Canadian Arctic* (Vancouver: Marion Scott Gallery, 1992), 22, cat. 41. Kenojuak did not have access to formal art education in the western tradition.

animals, birds, people and the self.[10] The exclusion of these works from exhibition to privilege those made after Houston's arrival thus played an important role in buttressing the post-contact euphoria that framed the print cooperative movement as central to the emergence of a new, yet also "traditional," art form among the Inuit people.[11] Houston explained the history to be "a new and natural development growing out of a sculptural one…causing a renaissance among the Dorset people."[12]

In recognizing only those works Kenojuak made after 1958, her practice soon became representative of the successes of northern colonization by amplifying her achievements as Aboriginal "firsts." The three important events included her nomination as *first* Inuit subject to receive the Order of Canada (coinciding with her 1967 exhibition), her *first* with Johnniebo as an Inuit artist-couple to create "the largest ever Eskimo mural" (her Expo 70 exhibition), and her designation as the *first* Inuit artist to be represented on a Canadian stamp with the image *The Enchanted Owl* (a subject also used in the Expo 70 mural).[13] Kenojuak's firsts are worthy accomplishments in themselves granted to a remarkable and enduring individual but they homogenized her identity to exemplify colonial success in transforming the Inuit people into a

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[10] Kenojuak's works in sealskin are rare but there are three known ones, two of which are reproduced in Jean Blodgett's *Kenojuak* (Toronto: Firefly, 1985), 33, 34. The three known bags confirm that much of the imagery she used on them paralleled that appearing in her drawings.

[11]When describing Inuit culture, I refer to the term "traditional" as it was used in postwar writings, but I do not use it elsewhere to describe Inuit culture since feminist scholars of Aboriginal women agree that "the association of "woman" with "tradition" [has] only redoubled missionary attempts to undermine the power of women." Mary Ellen Kelm and Lorna Townsend, "In the Days of Our Grandmothers: Introduction," in *In the Days of Our Grandmothers: A Reader in Aboriginal Women's History in Canada* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 10.

[12] James Houston, "Eskimo Graphic Art," *Canadian Art 67* XVII, no. 1 (January 1960): 17.

[13] Kenojuak's "firsts" are documented as follows: Christopher McCreery, *The Order of Canada: Its Origins, History and Development* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 142, 325; Eisaku Sato et al. *Expo '70: Official Guide* (Japan: Sunichi Suzuki and the Japan Association for the 1970 World Exposition, 1970), 55 where Kenojuak and Johnniebo were described as creators of "the largest mural ever carved by Eskimos;" and "Kenojuak Ashevak, 2001 Inductee Profile," www.canadaswalkoffame.com (site consulted 10 December 2008) where her 1970 stamp is so acknowledged.

community of artists. The linkage of these firsts to Kenojuak's formative exhibitions was clearly strategic since they made visible her cultural difference.

Kenojuak's Aboriginal achievements were further amplified by her physical presence in the nation's capital which exceeded normative display of the maker's work and invitation to the artist to attend opening night celebrations. Organized by the Houstons, the invitations to Kenojuak and Johnniebo to Ottawa for the National Library and Expo presentations included extended tours and demonstrations of them at work and in attendance at events where they opened and celebrated other projects by Inuit artists: these included promotion of the 1968 Rolph Stone Clark calendar of Inuit art in Montreal and the opening of a group-artist exhibition at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre in Kingston.[14] In both cities, Kenojuak and Johnniebo were photographed and named as "Eskimo" subjects. The Houstons were again hosts for Kenojuak and Johnniebo's stay in Ottawa in the spring of 1969 where the Expo 70 mural was designed and during which time considerable press attention was directed to its assembly.

The extension of Kenojuak and Johnniebo's visibility significantly beyond the display of their work was not an experience shared by the other five women in this study. World Fair exhibition scholars have shown that there had been an historical precedent for the physical exhibition of living Aboriginal subjects as spectacle.[15] World Expositions exploited such differences as physiognomy, culture, class and race, and the presentation of Inuit people in such fairs nearly topped the list, notes Burton Benedict.[16] His study concluded that Arctic peoples,

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[14] As documented in "Eskimo Art-Mechanical Methods," *Montreal Star,* December 6, 1967; and "Eskimo Art at Centre: A Distinguished Visitor," *Kingston Whig Standard*, December 4, 1967.

[15] The "Hottentot Venus" is an often-cited example of how differences of race and physiology were shown in combination for their value as spectacle, for example in Paul Greenhalgh's "Human Showcases," in *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939 (*Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 82-111.

[16] Burton Benedict explores these displays in "Rituals of Representation: Ethnic Stereotypes and Colonized Peoples at World's Fairs," in *Fair Representations: World's Fairs and the Modern World* (Amsterdam: Amerika Instituut, 1994), 28-61.

alongside Algerians and Sengalese, occupied second place among some fifty cultural groups in world expositions between 1867 and 1986.[17] Ideologically, world exposition displays concentrated on confirming the progress and development of colonization and the idea of a universal culture. James Gilbert contends, however, that what such fairs usually accomplished was the staging of a binary opposition of western and non-western subjects.[18] It is not incidental that descriptions of Kenojuak during her 1967 and 1970 exhibitions included her physiology: reviewers described her in diminutive terms as "just a slip of a girl" and her work to be "much bigger than her," for example.[19] For all the challenges Joyce Wieland faced at close to the same height, she did not experience parallel commentary.[20]

Scholars agree that the very concept of race is constructed and "in flux over time, space and place" and that the term cannot contain any cultural group as a monolithic entity exempt from internal differentiation, agency and cross-cultural pollination.[21] Mary Louise Pratt has asserted that the idea of race was among those consequences of colonial encounters, forming multiple contact zones where cultures intersected, blurred and interlocked in complex power

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[17] Benedict's statistical data regarding the "Frequency of Displays of Colonized Peoples at World's Fairs" states that Native Americans and Arctic Peoples of the United States and Canada occupied first and second place, with Native Americans tied for first place with Indians from India. In total there were nine displays of Arctic peoples. As cited in "Rituals of Representation: Ethnic Stereotypes and Colonized Peoples at World's Fairs," 59-60.

[18] James Gilbert, "World Fairs as Historical Events," in *Fair Representations: World's Fairs and the Modern World,* edited by Robert Rydell and Nancy E. Gwinn (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994), 17 and Paul Greenhalgh's chapters, "Origins and Conceptual Development" and "Human Showcases" in *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939*, 3-26, and 82-111.

[19] Robert Ayre, "Kenojuak Just Loves that Medal," *Montreal Star*, December 6, 1967 and Anonymous, "Eskimo Woman's Work Much Bigger than Her," *Halifax Chronicle*, July 10, 1969.

[20] Kenojuak's height is not stated in public documents but I met her on October 21, 2009 and estimate her to be just below five feet. Wieland was about 5'2" and is described in her biography as "not many inches over five feet tall," as documented in Jane Lind, *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire* (Toronto: Lorimer, 2001), 18.

[21] This quotation is from the conference call for papers, *Engaging and Articulating Race*, University of Victoria, June 18-20, 2010. Other scholars concerned with the concept of race as a social construction include those in the anthology *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past,* edited by Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005), and Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

relationships.[22] Yet, in these years when processes of colonization continued to affect northern Aboriginal communities, Kenojuak's work and exhibitions represented just this position, her achievement firsts signifying the transformation of Cape Dorset's populace into a community of economic earners through art making. Kenojuak's Inuit heritage was thus added to her sex-gender identity as another tier of difference on top of the already persistent problems of being female, being married, and being an artist.

Kenojuak and Johnniebo at the National Library of Canada, 1967

Kenojuak and Johnniebo's National Library exhibition introduced their work to southern Canadian audiences and established the precedent of their artist-couple exhibition in public gallery venues. Both artists exhibited graphic imagery but numeric representation of their practices differed significantly with Kenojuak showing forty-five works and Johnniebo showing only five works.[23] Despite her commanding exhibition representation, however, couple photographs appearing in reviews underscored her marital status with Johnniebo's towering presence at her side. [Figure 71]

ONE OF ARCTIC'S LEADING WOMEN ARTISTS

Figure 71: Kenojuak and Johnniebo in Ottawa, as illustrated in the *Ottawa Citizen*, November 30, 1967

[22] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).
[23] Anonymous, "Ottawa Show Honours Eskimo Woman Artist," *Northern Sentinel,* December 6, 1967. His works were referred to as "also on display."

The exhibit was the first time that any significant body of Kenojuak's imagery had been brought together since previously these had only been accessible piecemeal through the annual Cape Dorset catalogues and exhibitions.[24] Detailed analysis of this exhibition reveals that it was not only designed to feature Kenojuak, assert her artist-couple status and demonstrate the success of the colonial art mission; the event also perpetuated histories of Aboriginal subject display as spectacle through its linkage to Canada's Centenary. The organization, location, timing, and duration of the 1967 exhibition reveals much about why and how this exhibition came to be assembled, and press reviews and notices enable partial reconstruction of its relationship to Canada's Centennial celebrations.[25] These documents show that the 1967 exhibition was tied to the fact of Kenojuak's presence in Ottawa when she would receive her medal as Officer of the Order of Canada and the motive behind the exhibition was thus interlinked with nation-state efforts to recognize cultural diversity during Centennial year.

The Order of Canada was established in 1967 and the first investitures were a cornerstone of Canada's Centennial celebrations. The Order was designed to honour the achievements of outstanding Canadians from all regions of the country in all disciplines. The project had been proposed but postponed for more than half a century due to shifting political priorities related to the First and Second World Wars and was finally realized under Lester B. Pearson's Liberal government. Approved by Queen Elizabeth on March 21st in sufficient time for it to take effect for Canada Day celebrations on July 1st, the event was seen as "the crowning touch" of the

[24] The annual Cape Dorset catalogues from 1960 and after were accompanied by exhibitions where the works were for sale. Canadian Arctic Producers formed in 1965 to act as agent and distributor for work to selected dealers who then organized commercial exhibitions.
[25] I have worked with these documents since inquiries for information about this exhibition with Library and Archives of Canada staff between 2008 and 2009 yielded no documentation in the collections or administrative files.

Centennial celebrations.[26] The inaugural appointments to the Order of Canada attempted to recognize the diversity of Canada in 1967: ninety awards were made, thirty-five of which were Companions of the Order and fifty-five of which were Officers of the Order.[27] In future years, fewer Companion awards were bestowed but the backlog of worthy recipients made numbers higher in 1967. Citizens from Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal comprised 74% of the awards although efforts were made to have at least one recipient from each province and territory; only 14% of the awards went to women.[28]

In this inaugural event, Kenojuak stood out as the only Aboriginal subject in any field of accomplishment.[29] In the fields of visual arts and culture, she was joined that year by Vincent Massey, Arthur Lismer, Alfred Pellan, Hugh MacLennan, F.R. Scott, Gabrielle Roy and Alex Colville.[30] She recalled having had mixed emotions regarding the event, that she had been "frightened and nervous before the ceremony but at the moment of presentation…very proud."[31] Her place as Aboriginal subject, though, was clearly more than critical to state efforts to ensure perceptions of national unity in the centennial year of Confederation.

Christopher McCreery explains that, "the founders of the Order of Canada wanted this ceremonial recognition to become a symbol of Canadian identity and unity [and that] it should be neither British nor French, but Canadian."[32] While the terms of the Order's "Canadianness" do not appear to have been specified, it was nonetheless deeply invested in the ideology of national

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[26] Christopher McCreery, *The Order of Canada: Its Origins, History and Development*, 108, 203.
[27] Subjects were first recognized as Officers of the Order of Canada and could later be recommended as Companions of the Order of Canada: after being named an Officer, Kenojuak was designated Companion in 1982.
[28] Christopher McCreery, *The Order of Canada: Its Origins, History and Development*, 142.
[29] Ibid. McCreery names her as the only person so recognized that year from Canada's First Nations in Chapter Six, "Selection and Reaction: the First Honours List,", 142, and in endnote 58, 325.
[30] Alexander Colville was made an Officer of the Order and the others were made Companions.
[31] As quoted in Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak*, 23.
[32] Christopher McCreery, *The Order of Canada: Its Origins, History and Development,* 147.

identity and its formation clearly a direct result of the Centennial.[33] When perceptions of a diverse yet unified confederation were at stake, Kenojuak's presence was more than symbolic. Confederation had been a fractional project and remained so well into the postwar years, with Newfoundland's deferred membership of 1949 being but one important socio-political indicator. Indeed, Secretary of State Judy Lamarsh had been quite right to point out that in the centennial year, "all eyes were on the national capital" as the city from which conceptions and acts of unity would be enunciated and demonstrated, and formation of the Order was a critical proclamation of the nation-state's unity-diversity project.[34]

So too the visual arts held a critical place in the Centennial agenda and efforts to ensure their representation during 1967 were focused on a cluster of exhibitions prepared for the World Exposition held in Montreal, including a major sculptural presentation of Michael Snow's *Walking Woman* series and four survey-style exhibitions produced in various two and three-dimensional media.[35] At this venue, Kenojuak's works were nowhere to be found even though her work could justly have been included in those shows featuring drawing, sculpture and textile art forms. Indeed, art by Inuit people occupied only a marginal place at Expo 67.[36] Representing the Arctic world, a plaster mural had been made for the "Man and His World" exhibition for the

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[33] In describing nation as ideology I am indebted to Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1983) in which he argues that nation is largely imagined, yet the concept persisted among colonized nations of the British Empire and remained a central organizing principle in national pavilions at world fairs and expositions from the Victorian era to the later 20th century.

[34] Judy Lamarsh, *The Centennial and Canadians: A Report of Centennial Activities* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967), 62-64.

[35] Showing in the Canadian Pavilion at Expo '67 in Montreal were these visual arts exhibitions: Barry Lord's *Painting in Canada;* Kathleen Fenwick's *Canadian Prints and Drawings;* Hugo McPherson's *Architecture and Sculpture in Canada;* and Moncrieff Williamson's *Canadian Fine Crafts.* All publications were government issued for Expo '67 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967). There was also the international exhibition, Robert Elie's *Man and His World* but only one Canadian was included in that project. There was no sculpture by Inuit makers in Guy Robert's *International Exhibition of Contemporary Sculpture* (publisher unknown, 1967).

[36] Two sculptures by Elijah Publat and Kumakuluk Saggiak were included in the *Architecture and Sculpture* exhibition curated by Hugo McPherson, 27-28, but art by Inuit was otherwise absent from these Expo 67 visual arts publications.

section “Man and the Polar Regions.”[37] However, the exhibition of the mural on a restaurant wall separated it from other exhibitions and visual arts exhibitors at Expo in spaces dedicated principally to the display of art.[38]

Kenojuak’s exhibition presence in Ottawa had been minimal in 1967.[39] The announcement of her nomination to the Order of Canada in mid-summer had thus left only a small window of opportunity to create an exhibition presence for her in Centennial year.[40] There appears, then, to have been some urgency behind the organization of the National Library exhibition if her recognition was to signify state efforts to articulate the unity-diversity agenda in November when she was to receive her medal.

Kenojuak and Johnnieobo’s exhibition was presented for barely one week in Ottawa. This short presentation when combined with the seeming paucity of curatorial structure and its display at the National Library reveals much regarding the exhibition’s hasty genesis. To show the work for barely a week was in no way consistent with those solo exhibitions in which Pratt, Nicoll, Wieland, Loring and Wyle participated.[41] The National Library building on Wellington Street had only just opened in 1967 (it too was a Centennial project), but to use a foyer for the

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[37] Pierre Dupuy et al. *Expo 67: The Memorial Album of the First Category Universal and International Exhibition* (Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1968), 77.
[38] Robert Fulford mentions this location in *Remember Expo: A Pictorial Record* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968), 115. Two photographs of the mural and one of Barry Lord’s, *Painting in Canada* exhibition illustrate the differences in the two presentations. Pierre Dupuy et al. *Expo 67: The Memorial Album,* 77, 115.
[39] In other Centenary exhibits Kenojuak only appeared with two works *The Enchanted Owl* and *Birds from the Sea,* in *Cape Dorset: A Decade of Eskimo Prints and Recent Sculptures* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1967). This exhibition was realized at the behest of the Canadian Eskimo Art Committee using the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs collection, not that of the National Gallery. As the Director’s “Foreword” stated, the selection of works was made with “the help” of the Gallery’s curator and James Houston authored the introductory essay.
[40] The other three artists who received Order of Canada medals in 1967 exhibited works in either Expo 67 or the other major centennial exhibits. Pellan showed one work in Lord’s *Painting in Canada*, section II, unpaginated, and eight works by Lismer, Pellan and Colville were included in Jean René Ostiguy’s *Three Hundred Years of Canadian Art* (Lismer, 128-29, 132-135; Pellan, 156-59, 170-7; and Colville, 174-5, 186-7). None of the Order of Canada artists, however, were included in the *Man and His World* exhibition which included the work of only one Canadian—Paul Emile Borduas.
[41] The exhibit invitation confirms the dates of 29 November-5 December 1967, Artist’s File, NGC Library. Exhibitions dates for Nicoll, Pratt, Wieland, Loring and Wyle were usually three to six weeks in duration.

display of work by any artist successful enough to be granted a significant exhibition of forty-five works was atypical.[42] The foyer was then, as it remains today, a welcoming space of orientation for visitors but was hardly purpose-built for art exhibitions. The extravagant materials used for its interior—which included a marble staircase, textured walls, decorated glass spatial dividers and railings and split-level flooring—made realizing a cohesive exhibit difficult.[43] For the Library's part, its commitment to art in its new building was focused on in-situ permanent commissions including those murals designed by Alfred Pellan and Charles Comfort for the Reading Rooms.

By presenting Kenojuak's work in the foyer, her exhibition stood outside Canada's much-expanded postwar system of municipal, regional and provincial art galleries—the more usual spaces for the emerging to mid-career artist deserving of an in-depth exhibition.[44] For some years to come the exclusions Kenojuak experienced included showing solo at the National Gallery of Canada[45] and also in those major curated exhibitions representing Canada at home and abroad.[46] Even in the nation's capital in the Centennial year, her exhibition was off to the side of the nation's visual art system proper—in a library foyer, not in an art gallery.[47]

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[42] Reference to the foyer is noted on the exhibit invitation previously cited. There was no other documentation published with this exhibit.
[43] Ian Wees, *The National Library of Canada: Twenty-five Years Later* (Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1978) offers some history of the 1967 building and a photograph of the foyer is on page 21. No mention is made about Kenojuak's or any other foyer exhibits.
[44] Paul Litt explores the history of Massey Commission which saw to the formation and expansion of many civic and regional galleries across Canada in the postwar years in *The Muses, The Masses and the Massey Commission* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).
[45] Kenojuak was finally featured solo at the National Gallery of Canada in the exhibition "Kenojuak Ashevak: To Make Something Beautiful," 5 April–20 October 2002 which included 25 prints and drawings from its collection. Correspondence, Cyndie Campbell to Catharine Mastin, 12 July 2010.
[46] These exhibitions included: *Post Painterly Abstraction* (1964); *Canada 101* (1968); *Eight Artists from Canada* (1970); *Some Canadian Women Artists* (1975); and *14 Canadians: A Critic's Choice* (1977). Because the NGC's *Biennial Exhibitions of Canadian Art* (1955-1968) privileged painting and Kenojuak was not given access to this medium her exclusion from them is not surprising. Kenojuak did some work in sculpture and Inuit art began to be taken seriously by the SSC following Charlie Sheguiapit's nomination to membership in 1958.
[47] Many art galleries in Canada had their beginnings in affiliation with local libraries including the Art Gallery of Windsor and Museum London but most galleries were working to achieve disciplinary autonomy in postwar.

The roles of the National Library and the Order of Canada in organizing this exhibition remain unclear but the Order of Canada was unlikely to have been instrumental in bringing the exhibition together, focused as it was on initiating its own ceremonial procedures.[48] There does not appear to have been any resident curator on the National Library's staff to conceptualize the exhibition to accord with the emerging postwar standards of the public gallery solo exhibit enjoyed by artists discussed in previous chapters.[49] Consistently though, Houston had been active in initiating exhibitions through the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. With the late-day cooperation of that Department and the West Baffin Cooperative it appears that Kenojuak's project was expeditiously tucked into Canada's Confederation celebrations just in time for her Order of Canada recognition.[50] The federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs was the official agency granted the task of opening the exhibition but both agencies of state were important lending sources from which a list of artworks could have been readily facilitated since they each held significant collections of Cape Dorset art.[51] Indeed, Houston was at the centre of both agencies as diplomat and administrator-organizer.[52]

Dorothy Speak's essay "It's Inuit. Where Do You Put It?" *Inuit Art Quarterly* 3:3 (Summer 1988), 4-7, explores some of the conceptual difficulties of how Inuit art was defined in relationship to Canada's public gallery system.

[48] As outlined by McCreery, the inaugural ceremony on 24 November 1967 included medal presentations followed by a formal dinner, *The Order of Canada: Its Origins, History and Development*, 145-146.

[49] As the exhibitions of Pratt, Nicoll and Wieland illustrated in previous chapters, some criteria used to structure solo exhibitions in postwar decades include recent work, surveys and retrospectives but there was no organizing principle for Kenojuak and Johnniebo's show beyond the artist-couple format.

[50] There were additional efforts to link Kenojuak to Centennial year including the publication of six engravings by the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council as a portfolio including these prints: *Animal Kingdom, Two Spirits, Hawk Combatting Spirit*, *Bird with Spirits, Arctic Scene,* and *Composition* as reproduced in Jean Blodgett's *Kenojuak*, plates 52, 59, 60, 61, 63, and 65.

[51] A listing of Cape Dorset holdings in the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs collection is David E. Cromby, *Inuit Art Section: Catalogue of Services and Collections* (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1984). The West Baffin Cooperative collection is on long-term loan to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection. Few works by Kenojuak were in any other Canadian public art collections. The National Gallery of Canada owned three works acquired in 1961: the stone-cut prints *Complex of Birds* (accession # 9576) and *The Enchanted Owl* (accession # 9577); and the drawing *Birds, Animals and Human Forms* (accession # 9732).

[52] Houston moved to the Arctic in 1948 where he lived for fourteen years working as area administrator and Northern Service Officer, respectively for the Canadian Handicrafts Guild and Department of Northern Affairs between 1953 and 1961. The James Houston Fonds at the Library and Archives of Canada contain no information on the 1967 exhibition and concentrate instead on his manuscripts and published writings.

The National Library exhibition presented Kenojuak and Johnniebo's works together as an artist-couple but critics saw the show to be hers, not an equally balanced two-artist exhibition. So sparse was commentary on Johnniebo's work that it is not possible to reconstruct which of his works was shown.[53] Neither are insights on this problem to be gleaned from his exhibition history in which no reference was made to the 1967 exhibition when references abounded to his many group-artist showings and also his only solo exhibition.[54] Two critics described the show as a "representative collection" and "a retrospective" of her work.[55] The exhibition was mostly comprised of her stencil and stone cut prints, but to emphasize these works over her sealskin assemblages, drawings and sculptures was to reinforce the significance of those works sanctioned for printing through the Cooperative's Euro-Canadian endorsement processes.[56] Emphasis on the stone cut and stencil prints also segregated the continuities offered by her practice beginning with the sealskin works.[57]

The early stone cut prints developed from Kenojuak's drawings had garnered her significant acclaim through the early 1960s but, as previous scholarship has considered, her relationship to the printing process was at some remove from her drawings.[58] The translation of her drawings to printed form in the Cooperative's formative years followed other print shop

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[53] Jenny Bergin, "Eskimo art 'imaginative,'" *Ottawa Citizen*, November 30, 1967 makes no reference to Johnniebo's works. His works were not discussed in any of the other known exhibit reviews.
[54] An eight-page exhibition history of Johnniebo's is located in the NGC Artist's File. His solo exhibition was held at the London Public Library and Museum, London, Ontario, 1969.
[55] Robert Ayre, "Kenojuak Just Loves that Medal," and Anonymous, "Une exposition d'oeuvres esquimaudes est ouvertes à la Galerie Nationale," *Le Droit*, November 30, 1967. The reviewer for *Le Droit* explained that the exhibit was actually at the National Library not the National Gallery.
[56] The selection process for images to be made to prints was initially presided over by James Houston and then Terry Ryan and later changed to involve the artists in this process. Blodgett, *Kenojuak*, 53.
[57] There is also the problem of naming the exhibition after her when a carver and printer were also involved. The carver and printer were recognized on the prints themselves with identity markings but not in the exhibition.
[58] In the first few years of the West Baffin Cooperative gender roles were specific for print production with men usually undertaking the carving and printing. Jean Blodgett concluded that there were more than twelve printers involved in Kenojuak's works up to 1985 who include Iyola Kingwatsiak, Lukta Kiakshuk, Eegyvudluk Pootoogook and Kananginak Pootoogook between 1959 and 1964, as outlined in Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak*, 54, 243-244.

models of collaboration in that a block cutter and inker were also involved.[59] After making her drawing, Kenojuak had little to do with the stone cut printing process but to subsequently endorse recommended colours and titles.[60] With the exception of those few copper engravings included in the exhibition in which she did have some production role, the 1967 exhibition thus glossed over important lines of continuity in Kenojuak's practice, not to mention the difficulties in the translation of an aesthetic developed in sealskin to drawing, then to stone, and then to print through the efforts of two more people.[61]

Kenojuak's National Library exhibition consisted of her best-known print imagery made available through the Cape Dorset annual catalogues between 1959 and 1967.[62] As Jean Blodgett identified, her practice in print form was not voluminous and she identified some seventy important stencils, stone cuts and copper-engraved prints from these years.[63] The selection of forty-five prints on exhibition included her well-known images and emphasized the acclaimed works, *Rabbit Eating Seaweed* (1959: MCAC), [Figure 72] and *The Enchanted Owl* (1960: MCAC), [Figure 73].[64] These images, when compared with the sealskin stencil and drawing that

[59] Some histories of print studios in Canada that endorsed these working processes are referenced in Geraldine Davis and Ingrid Jenkner, *Printshops of Canada: Printmaking South of Sixty* (Guelph: MacDonald Stewart Art Centre, 1987).

[60] A discussion of this topic is found in Jean Blodgett's *Kenojuak,* 52-53, where she notes that "decision making in the workshop was directed by James Houston and Terry Ryan. Choices of drawings, the use of colour and texture and the technical procedures were overseen by these two men…Once the printer has a drawing to work on, he is essentially on his own.…Usually the printers are willing to proceed unassisted in the cutting, inking and proofing. The artist is generally not consulted." Kenojuak worked directly on the engraving plate but this too was overseen by Houston and printed by the West Baffin Cooperative.

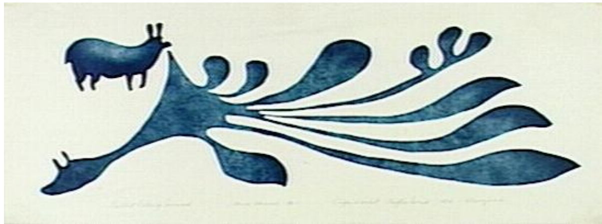
[61] James Houston explained that artists worked directly on the copper plates in "Short History of Eskimo Print-Making at Cape Dorset," 3, Canadian Eskimo Arts Council (CEAC) Fonds, 2164 Q4-6394, Library and Archives of Canada. Kenojuak is known to have followed this practice.

[62] There is no known exhibition list but with her representation through forty-five stone cuts and etchings, it is difficult to imagine that the iconic stone cut prints *Bird Fantasy* (1960), *Woman Who Lives in the Sun* (1960), *Geese Frightened by Fox* (1960), *The Return of the Sun* (1961), and *Arrival of the Sun* (1962) were not included.

[63] Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak*, 79-149, plates 1-70.

[64] Reference to the inclusion of these works is made in the following reviews in the NGC Artist's File, some of which do not reference publication sources: Anonymous, "Ottawa Show Honours Eskimo Woman Artist;" Anonymous, "A Distinguished Visitor:" Anonymous, "Expose ses oeuvres à Ottawa;" "Une exposition d'oeuvres esquimaudes est ouvertes à la Galerie nationale" *Le Droit,* November 30, 1967; Anonymous, "Eskimo Art

preceded them, offer opportunity to consider just how mediated and partial was the 1967 exhibition by representing her so heavily through prints made using these methods.



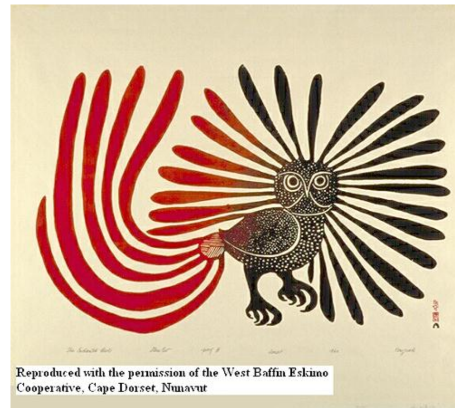


Figure 72: Kenojuak, *Rabbit Eating Seaweed,* 1960, stone cut print, Cape Dorset Art Collection, on loan to McMichael Canadian Art Collection (left)

Figure 73: Kenojuak, *The Enchanted Owl*, 1960, stone cut print, Cape Dorset Art Collection, on loan to McMichael Canadian Art Collection (right)

By 1967 the stencil print *Rabbit Eating Seaweed* was one of Kenojuak's most famous images and justly no Kenojuak exhibition would have been seen complete without it. The print had been included in the 1959 Cape Dorset collection and released in the spring of 1960 to much positive reception. However, its print version differs significantly from other works produced under the auspices of the West Baffin Cooperative since the line of continuity from her sealskin works was, in this case, far more direct than in other examples. The story of making this image into a print was recounted by Houston following Kenojuak's return to Cape Dorset after a family boat trip: "I noticed that she was carrying a sealskin bag on her shoulder. It was not unlike other bags I had seen Inuit carrying, but hers had something on it. I asked Kenojuak to show me. The bag had a dark, scraped outer sealskin image carefully cut and sinew-sewn onto the bag itself."[65]

'imaginative,'" *Ottawa Citizen,* November 30, 1967; "Art Show," *Lakes District News*, December 6, 1967. The stone cut prints *Complex of Birds* and *Bird in My Mind* were also included.

[65] James Houston, *Confessions of an Igloo Dweller: The Story of the Man who Brought Inuit Art to the Outside World*, 266.

After having inquired about the image, it was a few days later that Houston gave Kenojuak pencil and paper and requested that she make drawings. When she returned later with drawings in hand, it was not those objects that intrigued Houston but what they were rolled in for protection—the very piece of sealskin from which she had cut one of the sealskin images of rabbit eating seaweed. As Houston noted, "the images were in two separate pieces" (a positive and a negative).[66] It did not take him long to visualize the possibility of turning the sealskin remnant into a stencil print. Houston described his experiment with the printer Osuitok:

> [We] spread the sealskin out on a table over a piece of my own drawing paper from the school. I had borrowed an unused stencil brush that made a mark about the size of a silver dollar. Then onto a piece of glass I mixed and spread some blue paint. I tapped the brush in it until it picked up the colour, then pounded the bristles of the brush through the sealskin shapes that Kenojuak had made when she had cut out her skin forms to sew on her bag.[67]

The print version of *Rabbit Eating Seaweed* was then done directly from a stencil, a positive image made from the negative of her sewn work with no intermediary drawing. The process differed from how most Cape Dorset prints were afterwards realized through the early 1960s (drawing to stencil to print, or drawing to stone cut carving to print). However, Houston's encounter with *Rabbit Eating Seaweed* was significant for different reasons since it marked the beginnings of what he described as a new art form in the North—the stencil printing process which was a method and force that drove Inuit printmaking throughout the 1960s. He recalled:

> It was in the early spring of 1958 that our printmakers first experimented with stenciled prints. A number of Kinngait women cut bold patterns from sealskins that had been de-haired, [and] then stretched until they were as stiff as parchment. Trying bound brushes of polar bear hair at first and then paint-soaked wads and other successful and unsuccessful devices, the men found ways of printing those

[66] Ibid, 267-268. Jean Blodgett in *Kenojuak*, 32, earlier argued that "Kenojuak's design was traced possibly by Houston himself, and then probably Oshowetuk cut a paper stencil which was printed by Iyola" but Houston's account is the most recently published one and also first-hand. Unfortunately there is no image available of what the original stencil looked like.
[67] Ibid., 268.

> designs cut by the women…….This stencil process was to prove an expanding method of reproduction that grew directly out of an age-old Inuit practice.[68]

Educated in the western art tradition, Houston's ability to envision the stencil process and its potential using Kenojuak's sealskin negative was expedient and the art form was soon introduced to other Arctic print cooperatives.[69] The motive for its spread was not only aesthetic but also economic and a brief review of northern economic history illustrates this point. Arthur Laing (1904-1975), then Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, had spent much of his department's energies during the mid-1960s assessing the challenges of waged employment and income for citizens of the Northwest Territories (including present-day Nunavut), and for ways to foster transitions to a cash-based economy among the Inuit people.[70] His ministry under a Liberal government aimed to grasp an elusive problem that stretched across a diverse geographical region for which there was no simple solution. When his department's report was released in 1965, it concentrated on conceptualizing employment and economic development in conventional terms, using the virtues of corporate industry and mineral extraction as the main viable means of offering stable waged income. Laing conceded, however, that regarding the larger difficulties of mining, this sector had been "granted some of the most lucrative tax

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[68] James Houston, *Confessions of an Igloo Dweller: The Story of the Man who Brought Inuit Art to the Outside World*, 268-269. The economic values of sealskin between 1961 and 1964 jumped from $4.65 to $14.73 and stone consequently became a preferred printing surface as documented in "Appendix X-Sealskins Sold to Traders," in Arthur Laing, *The Northwest Territories Today: A Reference Paper for the Advisory Commission on the Development of Government in the Northwest Territories* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1965), 117.

[69] Houston's formal art studies included Toronto's Northern Vocational School, the Ontario College of Art, and private study with Arthur Lismer in Toronto, William Hanga in Japan and William Hayter in France, as cited in Houston's biography in *A Dictionary of Canadian Artists: Volume 2; G to Jackson* (Ottawa, Canadian Paperbacks, 1975, Reprint, first published 1968), 474-475. A discussion of the spread of printmaking beyond Cape Dorset is Helga Goetz and William E. Taylor, *The Inuit Print* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1977) which discusses the cooperatives at Povungnituk, Holman, Baker Lake and Pangnurtung.

[70] His distinguished political career included leading British Columbia's Liberal Party and an appointment to the Senate of Canada in 1972. Between these positions the Vancouver-based politician was appointed Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs in (1963), Minister of Public Works (1968), and Minister of Veterans' Affairs (1972).

concessions and [was ultimately] a poor source of tax dollars."[71] His report confirmed that government expenditures in the Territories would remain "the principal force sustaining the northern economy" and he lamented that state involvement was virtually inevitable, industrially and otherwise.[72] It was within this socio-economic context that both the Houston project and Kenojuak's engagement with it are historically interconnected.

Laing's commentary specific to the West Baffin Cooperative initiative recognized that it had "brought considerable cash to the area" if only granting a basic sustenance to citizens.[73] As Houston and others argued, government intervention was fundamental to fostering income in the north and establishing an economic base following the collapse of a fur trade market. On more than one occasion Kenojuak recognized the economic imperative driving her image-making relative to living conditions among her family: it was in fact she, not Johnniebo, who emerged in their marriage as cash "breadwinner."[74] Johnniebo had been trained as hunter-provider and he was far less enthusiastic about making art to earn money for survival.[75] In contrast, Kenojuak observed this of her role:

> I was trying my best to say something on a piece of paper that would bring food to the family… Payment was also an incentive and compensated to some extent for the loss of income traditionally derived from hunting and trapping. While payment for individual drawings was low by today's standards, it did make the difference to family income to partake if there was any evidence of talent at all.[76]

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[71] Arthur Laing, *The Northwest Territories Today: A Reference Paper for the Advisory Commission on the Development of Government in the Northwest Territories,* 60.
[72] Ibid., 46.
[73] Ibid., 66.
[74] Johnniebo is quoted as stating, "I'm not really an artist. I'm a hunter" in "Eskimo Husband-Wife Team Create Mosaic for Expo 70," *Calgary Herald,* July 17, 1969.
[75] In studying Kenojuak and Johnniebo's marriage those biographical and autobiographical studies organized by Jean Blodgett and Ansgar Walk cited previously have been crucial. These sources suggest that their gender roles followed what Mary-Ellen Kelm and Lorna Townsend describe as a relationship of "reciprocity and complementarity," where men attended to sourcing food and provisions and women to child care and food preparation as cited in "Introduction," *In the Days of Our Grandmothers: A Reader in Aboriginal Women's History in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 5.
[76] As cited in Leslie Boyd Ryan et al., *Cape Dorset Prints: A Retrospective, Fifty Years of Printmaking at the Kinngait Studios* (San Francisco: Pomegranate, 2007), 47, and Ansgar Walk, *Kenojuak*, 210.

Houston wasted no time in profiling Kenojuak's *Rabbit Eating Seaweed* and the graphic arts in the north in his widely-read essay published in *Canadian Art* in 1960.[77] For him, the printed version and sealskin negative were of greater significance than the image on the bag whereas it had been the opposite for Kenojuak. Her use of the sealskin negative as protective wrapping for her other drawings testified to both her recycling skills and to the secondary status she had given to the remnant that became the print's stencil since it was of no further use to her. The two different understandings of image and image-making processes led, however, to a new problem in rendering visible the continuum of Kenojuak's practice and this reality shifted to her exhibitions when the stencil and stone cut prints were shown.

Houston's privileging of the print image made from the sealskin stencil ultimately led to critical understandings of the sealskin bag as secondary in importance to the print in late-modern Euro-Canadian scholarship on Kenojuak: her sealskin work ceased being understood as a complete object on its own and became a preliminary study and source image for the print.[78] Houston's ranking of the sealskins to privilege the negative from which prints could be made significantly altered the bag's social and cultural significance. Henceforth, Kenojuak was asked to maintain a distanced relationship to future uses of her work when for her the imagery had never been conceptualized as leading to something else. Houston's response to Kenojuak's sealskin bag yields considerable insights into how she had been conditionally granted admission to the category "Artist" after 1958—that is as graphic artist.

In privileging Kenojuak's stencil negative, and in giving her pencil and paper, Houston effectively asked her to replace established working methods with drawing. That her production of works in sealskin appears to have been discontinued after the rabbit eating seaweed encounter

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[77] James Houston, "Eskimo Graphic Art," 13.
[78] Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak*, 31. She states that the image rabbit eating seaweed which appeared on her sealskin bag was "made from the design on one of her sealskin bags" and that this was one of the "sources for her prints."

only reinforces this point. A photograph of the now lost bag [Figure 74], and two others, confirms that her skills as image/object maker moved with relative ease from sealskin to drawing despite the aesthetic results of the two vastly different media. Such works demonstrated her ongoing commitments to line and form and she carried on making imagery concerned with animals, birds, people and the self. However, the larger compositional structure Kenojuak had given to the sealskin bag imagery was lost in translation since Houston had actually isolated one of *two* rabbit eating seaweed images from Kenojuak's fuller composition and changed the orientation of the image. The photograph documents that she had conceptualized the image on the bag as a triptych: there were *two* rabbit eating seaweed images flanking a rectangular design, comprised of two faces, three birds and a fish.

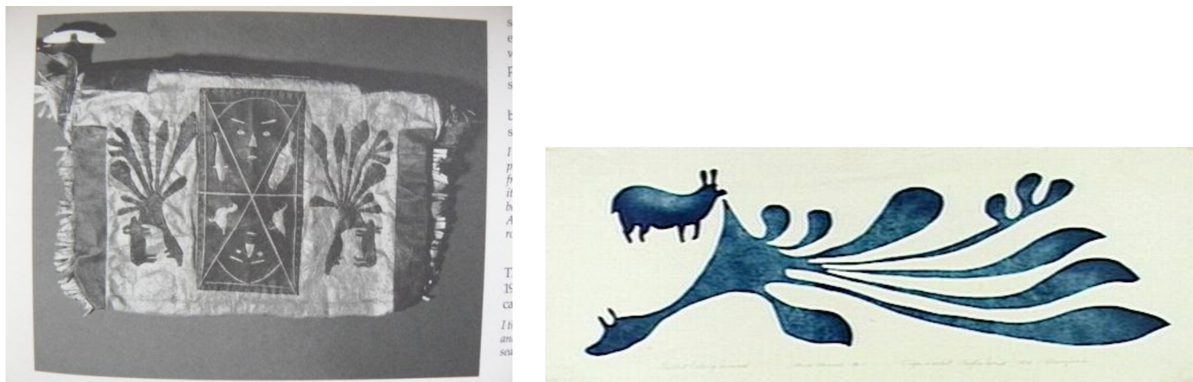

Figure 74: Photograph of Kenojuak's original sealskin assemblage containing the image *Rabbit Eating Seaweed*, from Jean Blodgett, Kenojuak (Toronto: Firefly, 1985), (left)

Figure 72: Kenojuak, *Rabbit Eating Seaweed,* 1960, stone cut print, Cape Dorset Art Collection, on loan to McMichael Canadian Art Collection (right)

A full iconographic analysis of Kenojuak's practice and the bag containing the two rabbit eating seaweed images lies outside the scope of this study but its significance should not be underestimated. As Ruth Phillips and Catherine Berlo contend, iconography on decorated clothing and other objects served more purposes than just bodily protection. They argue that such forms of adornment have "enhanced self-confidence and communicative power [and] for some

sub-Arctic peoples, the proper ritual-artistic treatment of a hide ensured its retention of some of the animal's own abilities. Some thought that the wearer's power came to permeate the garment and could be transferred to another wearer."[79] With reference to seaweed, Kenojuak's depiction of this subject as a food source exemplified her resourcefulness in family life since, as Houston recalled, there was considerable value in seaweed as a food staple in the Inuit diet. He described seaweed as "delicious, shamrock green and the only arctic vegetable we ever knew."[80] To extract and isolate one rabbit eating seaweed image did not yield the same message as two seaweed images supporting the life of a rabbit, fish, birds and the Cape Dorset people, as it had initially appeared on the bag. In excluding Kenojuak's works in sealskin from the exhibition, and in altering the original *Rabbit Eating Seaweed* composition through printmaking, the iconographic possibilities to be read were significantly altered and Kenojuak's cultural and creative identities subverted.

The rabbit eating seaweed image appearing on Kenojuak's bag demonstrated that she was already an experienced image maker and that her skills honed through sealskin design transferred readily to her graphic work. As her drawing for *The Enchanted Owl* (1960: NGC), [Figure 14] demonstrates, her delineation of line and form is assured and that of a hand perfected in managing precision and detail.[81] Kenojuak's shift to the drawing process was not without some challenges, however, since the process ran counter to cultural tradition. She once remarked: "we were told not to do that by our elders when we were growing up."[82] When working with sealskin, her imagery was flatly placed on another supporting surface. However, when working with

[79] Ruth Phillips and Janet Catherine Berlo, *Native North American Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 144.
[80] James Houston, *Confessions of an Igloo Dweller: The Story of the Man who Brought Inuit Art to the Outside World,* 269.
[81] Before arriving at the National Gallery of Canada (accession # 28743), this work was in the collection of Inuit art dealer M.F. Feheley. It was donated in 1984.
[82] "Kenojuak: About Her Life as an Artist and Mother," *Inikitut* (January 1983): 9.

pencil and paper, she encountered new challenges in figure-ground relations since those spaces inside the graphite line were not solid as they were in sealskin cut-outs. Her description of paper being "as thin as the shell of a bird's egg," and her observation that "drawing was the reverse process to carving," suggest that she had been thoughtful about the differences in working with these materials.[83] The drawing for *The Enchanted Owl* illustrates that she deliberated on how to handle the visual field inside the line using shading and decorative designs. Her impatience with the empty field inside a drawn form, such as the owl's plumage in *The Enchanted Owl,* showed through in the rough and uneven surfaces of graphite density used in this image. In preparing this and other drawings, she appears not to have considered using the graphite stick as a blunt tool on its side for faster shading results, focusing her technique instead on using the point of the graphite for shading.[84] Clearly though, this approach taxed her patience as works less resolved than *The Enchanted Owl* demonstrate.[85]

Kenojuak's second strategy of figuration which included decorative designs to fill in forms outlined in pencil worked out far more successfully than the first: the designs demonstrated that the skills she had developed when sewing could be applied to her works on paper. *The Enchanted Owl* included cross hatches and "u/v" marks to delineate the owl's body and tail, and these designs mimicked the sewn stitch appearing and disappearing through the sealskin layers. Kenojuak's emphasis on clearly designed images and her abilities to move the

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[83] Kenojuak made the statement in John Feeney's film, *Eskimo Artist: Kenojuak* (Ottawa: National Film Board, 1963). She made the second statement in Kenojuak and Cynthia Cook, "Drawing is Totally the Reverse of the Process of Carving," *Inuit Art Quarterly* 4 no. 2 (Spring 1989): 23-25.

[84] The large collection of Kenojuak's drawings on long-term loan to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario from the West Baffin Cooperative illustrates these points.

[85] Such works in the McMichael Collection are numbered as follows: MCAC, CD40.1463; CD40.1464; CD40.1465; CD40.320; and CD40.322. In CD.322 she pressed hard on the graphite in places while leaving other areas softer and this technique contradicts Kenojuak's usual emphasis on the flat surface by creating areas of receding and advancing forms. In many places her markings are obviously rushed but she is consistently careful not to allow the shading problem to move outside the contour line.

techniques of sewing to drawing confirm the fluidity of her working processes despite Houston's introduction of a seemingly new aesthetic approach.

Kenojuak's shifting of techniques particular to sewing to her drawings presented other challenges, however, when the designs were moved to print form and involved two more practitioners. In *The Enchanted Owl* her collaborators' handling of the 'u/v' design was not so easily duplicated in stone and the cutter reduced this design to a pock mark. [Figures 14 and 72] Building on the work of the stone carver, the printer could not change the results at this stage of the three-way collaboration. The final printed works on exhibition in 1967 were clearly compromised in translation and two steps removed from the artist's drawings. It was the strength of Kenojuak's bold imagery and subject matter—not the shortfalls of its translation to print form—that made her work so distinct and brought her such acclaim and recognition.

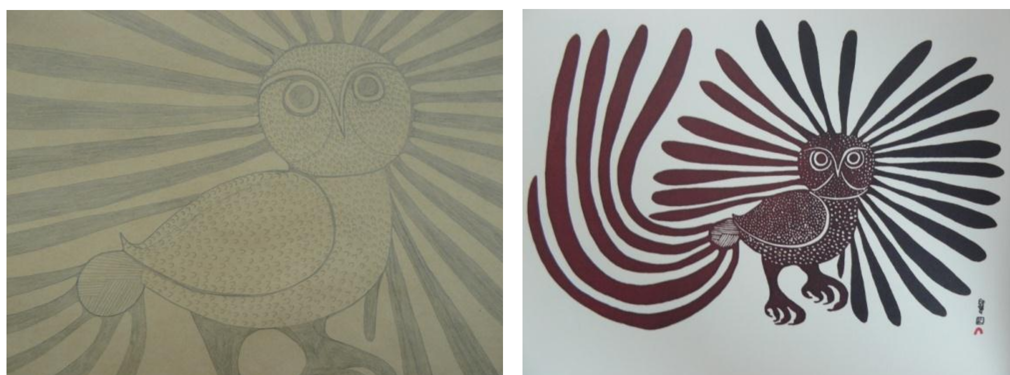

Figure 14: Kenojuak Ashevak, *The Enchanted Owl*, 1960, graphite on paper, National Gallery of Canada (left, detail)

Figure 72: Kenojuak, *Rabbit Eating Seaweed,* 1960, stone cut print, Cape Dorset Art Collection, on loan to McMichael Canadian Art Collection (right)

Between 1960 and the 1980s, *The Enchanted Owl* generated a steady stream of attention through numerous reproduced forms. During the 1967 exhibition one critic went so far as to name the image "one of the greatest works of art to emerge from Cape Dorset."[86] Its inclusion in

[86] Anonymous, "Eskimo Art at Centre: A Distinguished Visitor."

the 1968 Rolph-Stone-Clarke Benallack calendar, in a print run of eighteen thousand copies "to be distributed to banks, industries, and other institutions in various parts of the world," meant the image had wide circulation.[87] In 1970 it was used as the six-cent stamp commemorating the Centennial of the Northwest Territories [Figure 75]. In 1974, it graced the cover of W.T. Larmour's *Inuit: The Art of the Canadian Eskimo* and was also frontispiece and title-page image for Jean Blodgett's 1985 monograph and cover illustration for her 1986 retrospective exhibition brochure.[88] By 1980, the print set an auction record for Kenojuak's work which has twice since been broken.[89] As Walter Benjamin had prophesied regarding the demise of the privileged place of the original in the modern world, the mechanically reproduced versions of *The Enchanted Owl* as stamp, calendar and book illustration far exceeded the exhibition of Kenojuak's drawing.[90]

Figure 75: Kenojuak, Canadian stamp made from the stone-cut print, *The Enchanted Owl* (left)

Figure 14: Kenojuak Ashevak, *The Enchanted Owl*, 1960, graphite on paper, National Gallery of Canada (right)

[87] Robert Ayre, "Kenojuak Just Loves that Medal."
[88] W. T Larmour's *Inuit: The Art of the Canadian Eskimo* (Ottawa: Ministry of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1974).
[89] In 1980 a green version of *The Enchanted Owl* sold for $10,000.00 and a red one for $14,500.00, as cited in Jen Blogett, *Kenojuak*, 73. In November 2007 a green version sold for $52,000.00 at Waddington's Inuit Art setting another record, as cited in "Waddington's Inuit Art Auction Highlights" on the website www.waddingstons.ca, site accessed 30 August 2010.
[90] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations,* edited by Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books 1968, first published, 1955), 217-251. The drawing is housed in the National Gallery of Canada's collection and its exhibition has been limited on account of the object's fragility to light exposure.

Kenojuak's expanding fame was buttressed by one more significant component in the 1967 exhibition—the 1963 film *Eskimo Artist: Kenojuak* directed by New Zealand-born John Feeney who had moved to Canada in 1950s to work at the National Film Board.[91] Between 1964 and 1967 his film on Kenojuak became an acclaimed work garnering thirteen important nominations and awards by the time of its inclusion in the 1967 exhibition.[92] Feeney began making this film having already produced two others that featured the Cape Dorset community and its initiatives.[93]

Given Houston's hegemonic place in Cape Dorset and northern affairs, Feeney did not go far developing this project without his input and once again Houston was at the centre of how Kenojuak was constructed for display. Just as the exhibition had staged her as an example of the successes of colonization through the conversion of Inuit people to artists, so too the film had its specific role in staging the public display of Kenojuak as "Eskimo woman artist," and as Houston's "rare woman artist."[94] As protagonist, she occupied most of the film's imagery and narrative but, consistent with the exhibition, viewers were also reminded of her life as mother and wife with Johnniebo at her side.[95]

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[91] The film was produced in collaboration with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and the West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative and is 19:23 minutes in duration. The obituary for John Feeney published in the *New Zealand Herald*, December 26, 2006, www.nzherald.co.nz, sited accessed 15 June 2010 contains this biographical information.

[92] These awards are listed on the National Film Board website in the awards section accompanying the film's title at www.onf-nfb.gc.ca, site consulted June 15, 2010. They included a British Academy of Film and Television-Best Short Film Award and an Oscar nomination in the Best Documentary Short Subject category from the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

[93] These films were *The Living Stone* (1958) and *Pierres Vives* (1958).

[94] James Houston, "Eskimo Graphic Art," 12.

[95] The reasons why Kenojuak and Johnniebo were chosen over other women artists and families in Cape Dorset are not known. Some others actively making drawings for prints included Lucy Qinnuayuak, Pitseolak Ashoona, and Napachie Pootoogook.

The film recycled predictable tropes of Aboriginal subject representation as staged previously in world fair expositions.[96] Burton Benedict has explained that such displays of the Aboriginal subject could be manifested in three forms: people and their artifacts as curiosities; as artisans with their products; and as trophies or booty.[97] Feeney's film drew on all three modes and Kenojuak was staged as ethnological curiosity, with her work in progress, and as colonized subject representing the success of the Dorset art project. The ideological effect of such world exposition displays framed the Aboriginal subject as *living in* the present *but not of* the present. As Aram Yengoyan explains, "the 'other' was not simply other cultures in other places and in other spaces, but also a past time, now lost, which was part of the historicity of the host cultural system in which the exhibitions took place. Foreign societies were in it, but not of it."[98]

Feeney's film was structured in three parts: firstly, a brief portrait of the family's life on the land; secondly, the transition to settlement; and thirdly, the impending advance of a civil-scientific-modern world on the Cape Dorset community. The first eight minutes show Kenojuak and Johnniebo moving across the land to realize Houston's wish that the film show their "traditional way of life."[99] They are on a dog sled driven by Johnniebo the hunter and accompanied by Kenojuak as mother with their three children. They approach a snow hut and then move to its interior where they struggle to keep warm and make light in the depth of Arctic winter darkness. A voice-over representing Kenojuak speaks of the "old ways," the cold and their life so far from contact with the "outside" world.[100] Inuit belief systems are contrasted against a new order. Soon after the family's move into the shelter of the igloo she is shown

[96] As Burton Benedict explains, the display of people as artisans was used to "emphasize the continuity of ethnic or cultural differences," in "Rituals of Representation: Ethnic Stereotypes and Colonized Peoples at World's Fairs," 30. The filmic "display" of Kenojuak and her community as "artisans with their products" echoed this model.
[97] Burton Benedict, "Rituals of Representation: Ethnic Stereotypes and Colonized Peoples at World's Fairs," 29.
[98] Aram A. Yengoyan,' "Culture, Ideology and World's Fairs," in *Fair Representations: World's Fairs and the Modern World* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994), 66.
[99] Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak*, 22.
[100] There is no credit listing who has narrated the film but it is believed to be Alma Houston's voice.

realizing Houston’s request that she make drawings: there were no sealskin works in progress because they were seen to represent the past.

In the film’s second section, minutes eight to fourteen, the formation of a community of artists in Cape Dorset is portrayed. The cooperative is framed here as a life different from Inuit “old ways” yet one that also “preserves” its past—Yengoyan’s “in but not of the present.” The emphasis on showing the artists working with pencil and paper underscores the colonial effort to shift the Inuit people from oral to pictorial and written communication practices. The next day dawns and Kenojuak and her family are shown travelling back to Kinngait. This is the settlement where they are encouraged to stay and where there is also a print shop, a residential school, a medical station, an Anglican church, permanent housing and snowmobiles.[101] The contrast of this colonial setting is a sharp one when set against the preceding igloo and dog sled scenes.

Figure 76: Kenojuak, *The Arrival of the Sun,* stone cut print, Cape Dorset Art Collection, on loan to McMichael Canadian Art Collection

Kenojuak’s drawing for the stone cut print, *The Arrival of the Sun* (1962: MCAC), [Figure 76] is the film’s main subject for the next six minutes. She is portrayed in a state of

[101] Alma Houston writes about the twentieth century developments in Cape Dorset which included a Hudson’s Bay post built in 1913, completion of the Anglican Church in 1953, and the establishment of a residential school during the 1950s in “Notes on Eskimo Art—Cape Dorset,” 11 pages, CEAC Fonds, Volume 2164, Q4-6394, Library and Archives of Canada.

amazement and the voice-over remarks: "Think, from one of my drawings come fifty prints!"[102] The arrival of the Cooperative in Cape Dorset introduces the third and final section of the film.

The film's last six minutes show Kenojuak's state of "amazement" and expand this emotional state to represent that of a whole community. Onlookers view scenes of the moon and the sun taken from satellite followed by images of crammed urban landscapes: it is a world of concrete towers, roads and automobiles poised in stark contrast to the cold and remote snow-covered lands of moments before. Feeney's craft in narrative control is demonstrated when he switches the film's subject matter from Kenojuak as subject to Kenojuak and her community looking on at the modern world. This subject-viewer switch ensures that the Dorset people are shown to be of the past even as they are in the living present. Kenojuak's voice-over confirms the intended message: "Those people who made the pictures of the sun and the moon, they know the whole world and more. I know the world between here and our camp and that is all I know."[103] The film was an important accompaniment to the 1967 exhibition since, as the film's title makes explicit, Kenojuak was shown performing her Aboriginal firsts as pre-eminent "Eskimo woman artist."

In contrast to Feeney's vision, Kenojuak and Johnniebo's reasons for participation in the film were pragmatic. Work with the film crews occupied about three months of the family's time but it was an important source of income. She observed that "with the money earned from the film-making, Johnniebo was finally able to buy a canoe which had belonged to Lukta. For years Johnniebo had striven to achieve independence and now at last he was able to hunt alone. It seemed like a new beginning for us."[104] In a changing economy which privileged cash as a

[102] As quoted in the film by John Feeney, *Eskimo Artist: Kenojuak* (Ottawa: National Film Board, 1963), at 14:15-14:20 minutes.
[103] Ibid. As quoted in the film at 17:50-18:02 minutes.
[104] As quoted in Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak*, 22.

means of goods exchange, hunting practices were increasingly under strain and income from the film had thus provided at least some sustenance for Kenojuak and Johnniebo's cultural practices and physical survival. For some time, settlement had been encroaching on the Cape Dorset community but they did not commit to this life until 1966. The eastern Arctic had already been an important contact zone through the numerous ill-fated marine expeditions in search of an elusive North West Passage for international trade. By the early 1950s, Kenojuak and Johnniebo had encountered some of colonialism's most serious consequences including her prolonged recovery from tuberculosis. In these important years of cross-cultural contact, Kenojuak and her family straddled the divides and intersections of two world views in the contested contact zone that was Cape Dorset.

Feeney's film was acclaimed in its day for its aesthetic beauty and romanticism, set as it was "against the magnificent backdrop of the Kingnait [sic] hills [and showing] their life on the land and how her magical images came to her as she drew by the light of the traditional stone lamp."[105] Its presence in the 1967 exhibition fed Euro-Canadian desires to know the North better and reassured viewers of colonization's successes. These were important factors in leading to Kenojuak and Johnniebo's participation in the World Exposition of 1970 since their notoriety increased through the film's broad circulation.

Kenojuak and Johnniebo's participation at Osaka, this time as "muralists," further illuminated the conditions of both artists' access to Canada's postwar exhibition market through the artist-couple exhibit. Their three-month stay in Ottawa in 1969 to prepare the work for shipment and exhibition overseas demonstrated how they were once again on display, this time as artisans-at-work. Despite the delimiting terms of this exhibition commission, however,

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[105] Reviews of the day exclaiming the film's aesthetic triumph from which these quotes are extracted include the following: Anonymous, "Kenojuak," *North* (January-February 1968); and "Inuit Women and Their Art," c. 1975, vol. 2191, Q4-6394, CEAC Fonds, Library and Archives of Canada.

Kenojuak again demonstrated her facility in the precise handling of line and form and she persisted in using an iconography that formed a central part of her identity as image maker—that subject was the owl.[106] She proved herself project visionary, designer and manager and, once again, the terms of Johnniebo's inclusion in this artist-couple context are reason for pause.

Kenojuak and the Expo 70 Exhibit Commission

Kenojuak and Johnniebo's production of a twenty-five-panel mural for the World Exposition in Osaka, Japan, 1970 was their second major artist-couple exhibition and their only known artistic collaboration. [Figure 77] The mural was designed for presentation in the Erikson-Massey Canadian pavilion and afterwards placed permanently in the Osaka Museum of Fine Arts.[107] Consistent with the 1967 exhibition much fanfare was made of the artists' physical presence in Ottawa during its preparation between May and July of 1969. Kenojuak's reputation from this exhibition commission again dominated Johnniebo's, yet critics relentlessly referred to her companionship status as wife and mother, describing the couple as "artists who share bed and drawing board," and as "Cape Dorset's man-and-wife art team," for example.[108] Yet, as the story of their mural production in Ottawa reveals, the project clearly bore Kenojuak's distinctive authorial stamp. Before turning to the details of the Ottawa production, however, a brief history of the context in which the mural was planned for exhibition in Japan enhances understandings

[106] Access to the World Expo 1970 government archives was closed to researchers during this study and I was only granted access to four files which contained no information on Kenojuak. Information on the genesis of and rationale for this commission thus remains elusive and this analysis necessarily concentrates on public documents. Canada's role in Expo '70 remains an open field for study but one recent study is Angus Lockyer's "The Logic of Spectacle 1970 "*Art History,* 30, no. 4 (2007), 571-589.
[107] Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak*, 71.
[108] "These artists share bed and drawing board," *Toronto Star Weekly*, June 28, 1969; and "Eskimo Husband-Wife Team Create Mosaic for Expo 70," *Calgary Herald,* July 17, 1969. It is worth noting that the first of these references interchanged the terms man/husband and woman/wife to further subordinate Kenojuak's identity under Johnniebo's as "man" not "husband."

of how Expo organizers had positioned the mural's contribution to the exposition's broader mantra, notably its theme of "progress and harmony for mankind."

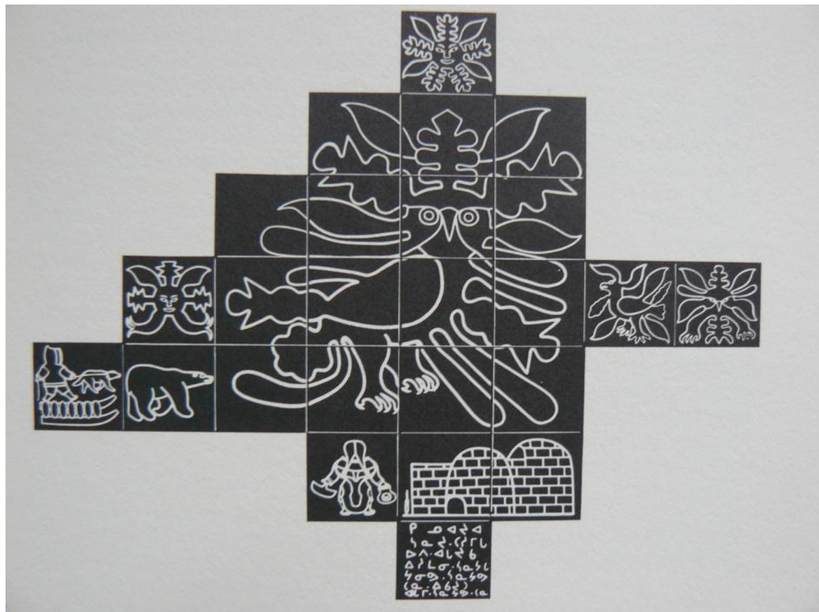

Figure 77: Kenojuak and Johnniebo, *Expo '70 Mural*, documentation from Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak* (Toronto: Firefly, 1985), 70.

Canada was the first nation to accept the invitation of the Japanese government to participate in World Expo 1970 following official approval of Japan as host nation in September 1966.[109] Among the first initiatives on Canadian soil to ensure a strong presence there was the design competition for the Canadian Pavilion, the site where the mural was to be exhibited. A national competition among architect members of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada was won by the Erickson-Massey firm of Vancouver for their pyramid-style structure emphasizing a centralized plan and including a reflective mirrored exterior.[110] This free-standing

[109] As stated in "Statement by Professional Advisor," in Robert H. Winters and Z. Matthew Stankiewicz, *Jury Report: Architectural Competition for the Canadian Government Pavilion as the Japan World Exposition, Osaka, 1970* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967). In January 1965, Japan submitted its application to become the 32nd member nation to host a World Exposition and in September 1966 the application was accepted. Eisaku Sato et al, *Expo 70 Official Guide* (Japan: Association for the 1970 World Exposition, 1970), 307.
[110] History on this competition between 208 architects is reviewed in Robert H. Winters and Z. Matthew Stankiewicz, *Jury Report: Architectural Competition for the Canadian Government Pavilion as the Japan World Exposition, Osaka, 1970.*

high-modernist structure also aimed to meet “the challenges of an exploding world of technological change and global communications.[111]

The architectural references made to modernism were meant for the building’s sympathetic relationship to Expo 70’s central theme. As organizers conceived it, “Progress and Harmony for Mankind” emphasized the place of science and evolution theory as cornerstones to the advance of civilization.[112] Making its debt to this history clear, the official guide included a chronology of the major world expositions from London’s famed Crystal Palace show in 1851 to Montreal’s Expo in 1967. Their sketch traced a growing emphasis on the increasing size, scope, and role of world fairs in long-term urban expansion and the staging of scientific invention, citing for example such themes as Chicago’s “Century of Progress”(1933), the New York World’s Fair’s “World of Tomorrow”(1939), and also Montreal’s “Man and His World” (1967).[113]

Following this history, the Expo 70 official guide was littered with references to ideas of betterment, abundance and advancement. In the wake of longer-standing postwar tensions ensuing from the nuclear attack on Japan during the Second World War, this utopian view recognized that humankind was “afflicted with discord.” Nonetheless, the introductory text exclaimed that “a new era must dawn on the world” and the twentieth century was still seen to be “a period of great progress.”[114] Expo 70 was “expected to contribute significantly to social understanding between the East and West” since Japan was the first nation in the Asian world to host a world exposition in the modern age.[115] Parallel to attendance projections aspired to in preceding expositions, the planning committee anticipated total attendance of 30 million people

[111] Ibid., “Critique Design No. 41,” text statement, unpaginated.
[112] Eisaku Sato et al, *Expo 70: Official Guide,* 12.
[113] Ibid., 296-302.
[114] Ibid., 12-13.
[115] Ibid.

at Expo 70, projections that were more than doubled in actuality with 64.2 million visitors.[116] These numbers were proclamation that this would be no modest event and that visibility would be guaranteed to participating nations and their subjects.

The "Progress and Harmony for Mankind" theme included four subcomponents: fuller enjoyment of life; bountiful fruits from nature; fuller engineering of the human living environment; and a better understanding of each other.[117] Kenojuak and Johnniebo's mural was positioned to contribute to the fourth theme where the arts were framed as a significant communication between peoples. Organizers offered this description:

> The human society has developed from isolated tribes into nations and is now advancing to constitute an international society in many domains. Social systems and customs are indispensable in the organization of human society, but in striving to realize 'Harmony in Progress' in this realm, we should not forget that, apart from the contribution to be expected from social systems contrived by human intellect, there is an important role to be played by the arts which appeal to the human emotion. The urgent necessity of a better understanding between nations and races cannot today be overemphasized.[118]

Canada took up the theme of "Discovery" for its pavilion, a concept said to be "an invitation to discover Canada but also an essential fact, that ever since its discovery Canadians have explored the vast reaches of their land and today bring this quality of adventure to industry, science and art."[119] Kenojuak and Johnniebo's mural was positioned as the "climax" of the last exhibit section, so described to "trace by artifact and product the origins and development of the Canadian people from the original migrants from Asia to the French and English to recent

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[116] As documented in Robert. W. Rydell, "Introduction," in *All the World's A Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 2, where he notes that over 100 million people visited the exhibitions in his study. Expo 70 attendance figures are cited in John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, "Expo 67," in *Cities of Culture: Staging International Festival and the Urban Agenda, 1851-2000* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 106-107.
[117] Eisaku Sato et al. *Expo 70: Official Guide*, 14-17.
[118] Ibid., 17.
[119] Ibid., 55.

arrivals from every part of the world."[120] As had been the case during their National Library exhibition, they were again asked to stand in for the nation-state's unity-diversity project with their mural's contribution to the "tribe" and "nation" paradigm. Their mural was not contextualized as part of the larger visual arts presentation since the Expo official guide made clear that it was in the Expo Museum of Fine Arts display across from Expo Hall that "A priceless collection of the world's masterpieces is displayed."[121] Situated within the Canadian pavilion, their mural alternatively enabled visitors to "Discover Canada's Eskimo."

Back in Canada in the spring of 1969 there had been considerable attention paid to the mural's forthcoming role in Expo 70, notably its production in Ottawa before being shipped overseas for exhibition. With support from Alma and James Houston, Kenojuak, Johnniebo, and their children Pudlo, Pee and Adamie had moved to Ottawa where the couple worked with chief designer for the Canadian Government Participation, Frank Mayrs (1934-1994).[122] The children attended daycare and school so Kenojuak and Johnniebo could work on the mural recalled Kenojuak.[123]

Kenojuak and Johnniebo had not undertaken a work on this scale before but she eased into the lead as the image designer and on the work's physical production. Jean Blodgett's translation of the syllabic text in the lowest panel confirms that the work was "made by Kenojuak as requested in Ottawa and that she was helped by Johnniebo."[124] Kenojuak created the designs, cut them out to produce a stencil, and placed them onto the plaster panels where she

[120] Ibid., 55.
[121] Ibid., 21.
[122] Frank Mayrs was also an artist and exhibited at Here and Now Gallery in 1959. Some of his artworks are held in the National Gallery of Canada and Vancouver Art Gallery collections. A short biography is included in the publication by André de Moor, Pater Calamai and Maurice F. Strong, *Subsidizing Sustainable Development* (San Jose: Earth Council, 1997).
[123] As quoted by Patricia Ryan in "The Autobiography of Kenojuak," in Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak,* 23.
[124] Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak,* 71.

and Johnniebo then carved the corresponding design.[125] Dorothy Eber recalled that Kenojuak made most decisions, conceptually and physically: "When the first section showing the snow house was finished Kenojuak stood back and said, "The lines are too small and she and Johnniebo picked up their chisels and made them wider."[126] Team dynamics between Kenojuak and Johnniebo were not entirely cohesive, however, and Kenojuak found some frustration in Johnniebo's working pace, noting that "there were moments when I thought 'why does he work so slowly?' And I helped him then because I was getting really impatient."[127]

The mural's iconography supports that Kenojuak also took the lead on image content which featured one of Kenojuak's renowned owl designs flanked by imagery of people, other birds, animals and an igloo. But Kenojuak's signature owl image commanded viewer attention since it required sixteen of the twenty-five panels in total. Given her earlier success with *The Enchanted Owl*, combined with the release of the stamp during Expo year, it was no surprise that this imagery resurfaced in this prominent commission. Reception to this subject would have almost certainly been positive given its preceding history as a popular culture image throughout the 1960s. By 1970 the owl had come to represent Kenojuak's image-making even though it was but one of many subjects she considered throughout her oeuvre.[128]

An abundance of interpretations regarding the significance of the owl was not offered by the artist but what remarks Kenojuak did make contextualize at least some of its importance in Inuit culture. She observed that, "In the beginning the world was black and only the raven lived. Then came the owl and with him light, and things moved and men walked upright."[129] Three

[125] Jean Blodgett also describes their working method in *Kenojuak*, 71.
[126] Dorothy Eber, "It's not magic, it's from my mind," *Montreal Star,* July 5, 1969
[127] As cited in Ansgar Walk, *Kenojuak*, 201.
[128] Johnniebo's imagery by contrast tends to focus on men's hunting scenes with large animals including ocean mammals and bears, as for example the image accessions CD41.9, CD41.13 and CD41.17 in the West Baffin Cooperative Collection currently held by McMichael Canadian Art Collection.
[129] Anonymous, "Eskimo Husband-Wife Team Create Mosaic for Expo 70."

years earlier she had commented on the owl's importance in "driving away the darkness"[130] Using these two interpretations, the owl clearly held a significant place for its ability to cut through the depths of darkness and usher in light.

The mural contained more iconography than just the owl and Kenojuak also alluded to gender roles in Inuit culture in the image. In the left-hand panel second row from the bottom, she included an image of a woman holding an *ulu* and handbag, and on the left-hand panel one row up from this image is also a dog-sled scene harkening closely Feeney's representation of this subject in the 1963 film. The inclusion of these elements alluded to important elements of Kenojuak' and Johnniebo's reciprocal and complementary gender roles in marriage. As scholars of Aboriginal culture have asserted, gender roles tended to be structured on these terms and did not parallel the power differences intrinsic to Euro-Canadian heterosexual marriage.[131]

As had been the case in 1967, coverage of this event through press announcements, reviews, interviews and film again recycled strategies of living Aboriginal subject display extracted from previous World Exposition histories as Kenojuak and Johnniebo were literally put on public display while working on the mural and promoting its completion.[132] As one onlooker remarked, "I have come to Ottawa to catch Kenojuak on this rare visit from the Arctic….All afternoon in front of the mural Kenojuak and Johnniebo do make-believe carvings for the film crew on panels that have yet to be put into position."[133] When speaking of the commitments Kenojuak had before completing the mural and returning to Cape Dorset, Dorothy Eber observed

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[130] As quoted in "Eskimo Art at Centre."
[131] Kelm and Townsend explore this point in, "In the Days of Our Grandmothers: Introduction," 5.
[132] Kenojuak and Johnniebo were also asked to do a carving demonstration alongside "other Eskimos" in Japan but the literature is not clear on this topic. In interview with Ansgar Walk Kenojuak recalled that she did travel to Japan but Blodgett does not include this event in her chronology of Kenojuak's travels abroad as documented in Ansgar Walk, *Kenojuak,* 169, and Jean Blodgett, *Kenojuak,* 27-29. Nonetheless, the invitation further supports the value placed on their display as Aboriginal subjects.
[133] Dorothy Eber, "It's Not Magic: It's From My Mind," *Montreal Star,* July 5, 1969.

that “she must not only meet the press but make a movie.”[134] There had been plans initiated by the National Film Board to make another film of Kenojuak and Johnniebo as they were filmed “putting finishing touches to their work.”[135] The production was intended to accompany the exhibition in Osaka but, as it turned out, another program was realized instead.[136] Kenojuak found the prospect of another film quite simply “boring.”[137]

Focus on the mural’s progress to date and its completion attended to illustrating the “artisans-at-work” but reviewers also spent time underscoring their married artist-couple status and photographing them with their mural behind them.[138] The *Montreal Star* article also included a photograph of them with Frank Mayrs while Kenojuak signed a large batch of her prints and drawings and Mayrs looked on approvingly.[139] [Figure 78] Articles published in the *Halifax Chronicle Herald* and the *Calgary Herald* documenting completion of the mural followed in

In front of the huge mural that will decorate the Canadian Pavilion at Osaka are artists Kenojuak and Johnniebo with Frank Mayrs, chief designer for Canadian Government Participation at Expo 70.

Figure 78: News review showing Kenojuak signing prints before the Expo 70 mural as shown in the article, “Eskimo Husband-and-Wife Create Mosaic for Expo 70,” *Calgary Herald,* July 17, 1969.

[134] Ibid.
[135] Dorothy Eber, “Looking for the Artists of Cape Dorset,” *Canadian Forum* LII, no 618-619 (July-August 1972), 12.
[136] Documenting Canada’s presence at Osaka there was alternatively a four part series of Canada’s participation in World Fairs which included Expo 67, Osaka 70, Vancouver 86 and Seville 92, as noted on the NFB website www.nfb.ca under “NFB and Expo,” site accessed, 10 June 2010.
[137] Dorothy Eber, “It’s Not Magic, It’s From My Mind.”
[138] Anonymous, “These Artists Share Bed and Drawing Board.”
[139] “In Front of the Huge Mural,” *Montreal Star*, 5 July 1969.

mid-July. Both emphasized their married artist-couple status and cultural ancestry and press agents again took note of Kenojuak's physical size.[140]

Consistent with the graphic art emphasis in the 1967 exhibition, the Expo project's completion in incised plaster was an important indicator of how Kenojuak and Johnniebo's artist-couple practice had been planned for representation in exhibition. Neither artist had worked in plaster before nor did they again after this commission; thus it may be concluded that the medium was not likely their choice. Given that Kenojuak had planned the work through drawings and stencils is it clear that use of this medium and working process further underscored the act of drawing as sanctioned by the West Baffin Cooperative: effectively, the Expo mural was a drawing in plaster magnified to mural scale, less the limited edition of the usual fifty or so prints. Nonetheless, in managing the circumscribed conditions on which Kenojuak's entrance to Canada's postwar exhibition market were determined during the 1960s as graphic artist and muralist, she created a powerful and iconic image which reflected the continuity of her skills developed initially in sealskin image making and which reflected on gender roles and some parts of her life in Inuit culture.

Conclusion

During the production of the Expo 70 mural, attention was clearly focused on Kenojuak and her work just as had been the case during the 1967 exhibition and, but for some of Johnniebo's technical support, the Expo mural was hers in vision, design and production. In both exhibitions, however, her practice remained confined to the artist-couple format and her companionship

[140] "Eskimo Woman's Work of Art Much Bigger than Her," and "Eskimo Husband and-wife Create Mosaic for Expo 70."

status as married subject was persistently underscored by reviewers. There remains no single explanation as to why Johnniebo's participation was seen as important to either project or why she could not have shown solo on both occasions. The critical emphasis on the couple's apparent compliance to normative heterosexual and monogamous marriage should not be overlooked as an important consideration, however.

Sarah Carter's study of marriage in Western Canada has considered that the ideological conflation of monogamous heterosexual marriage and nation building was central to the marriage landscape of the Canadian Plains despite the practice of numerous marriage models in Aboriginal culture.[141] Studies on Inuit marriage have likewise argued that while monogamous and heterosexual marriage was dominant in Inuit culture it was not the only marriage model considered valid.[142] This chapter has shown that considerable attention was paid to the fact of Kenojuak and Johnniebo's monogamous marriage but it is significant that the details of their two-custom marriage history were not explored in any of the literature surrounding their public lives as exhibiting artists: their marriage was reduced to their seemingly side-by-side exhibition history and procreation with references to their children. In occluding these important details particular to their marriage, their exhibitions can be seen to have buttressed nation-state efforts to harness public representation of Aboriginal marriage towards the ideal of Euro-Canadian monogamy and the nuclear family: once again, no mention was made of the fact that they had also adopted children into and out of their family in accordance with Inuit traditions and that not all of their fourteen children were biologically theirs. Regardless, the artist-couple exhibitions of Kenojuak and Johnniebo cast them as sexually, maritally and pro-creatively abiding Aboriginal

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[141] Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada to 1915* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2008).
[142] Rolf Kjellstrom, *Eskimo Marriage: An Account of Traditional Eskimo Courtship and Marriage* (Stockholm: Nordiska Museet, 1973), and Lee Guemple, *Alliance in Eskimo Society* (Seattle: American Ethnological Society, 1972).

subjects. That both Kenojuak and Johnniebo were seen to be together producing the mural for income also ensured that Kenojuak was not seen to be the principal breadwinner in a postwar economy that worked to restrict women's access to paid labour.

It was some decades yet before Aboriginal women were granted solo exhibitions in Canada's public art gallery system and to send Kenojuak abroad to represent the nation at a world exposition in 1970 without Johnniebo would surely have also been seen to have pushed the boundaries of her sex-gender identity and cultural ancestry too far. Alternatively, Kenojuak and Johnniebo were together to be "discovered" as examples of "Canada's Eskimo," to stand as symbols of "Peace and Harmony for Mankind," and to be seen for their Aboriginal achievement firsts.

The role played by the state was significant for Kenojuak and Johnniebo in its effort to transform them into artists and sanction them as an artist-couple in the western art tradition. As Jo-Anne Fiske has considered in her study of state policy and Aboriginal women's history, however, such forms of state intervention into subject lives were more serious for women than men:

> Indian women have had their lives disrupted by state intervention to a greater degree than other women of Canada and more extensively than their male Aboriginal peers. The very fact of this extensive intervention raises questions about the legacy of colonialism that has left Aboriginal women suffering a double jeopardy of sexist and racist discrimination."[143]

Kenojuak's exhibit experiences during the 1960s remain testimony to Fiske's conclusions that in fact she bore a quadruple, not double, jeopardy of being female, being married, being Inuit, and being an artist, and also with the proviso that her practice be circumscribed as graphic artist and muralist.

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[143] Jo-Anne Fiske, "Political Status of Native Indian Women," in *In the Days of Our Grandmothers: A Reader in Aboriginal Women's History in Canada* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 338.

Kenojuak faced numerous challenges in asserting the continuum of her image and object making practice through her exhibition experiences. She was given two high profile projects in 1967 and 1970 but the terms of her inclusion in them and her exclusion from the wider public art gallery exhibition system remained all too obvious. She benefited from regular sales of her drawings to the West Baffin Cooperative beginning in the late 1950s, an experience that did not parallel those of the other women in this study. Unlike Nicoll and Wieland, who each garnered Senior Artist Canada Council grants, Kenojuak did not have access to this form of nation-state support.[144] Nicoll, Wieland and Pratt enjoyed the flexibility to determine the terms of their art, their medium of execution, their dealers, a formal art education and the types of exhibitions they would participate in, and they had choices in how they defined themselves as artists. Kenojuak simply did not enjoy these same conditions of production.

This chapter has shown that Kenojuak and Johnniebo were cast as spectacles for display in exhibitions and events representing Canada on national and international stages during Confederation in 1967 and in Expo 70. While these events justly celebrated Kenojuak's visual acumen and iconic imagery of owls, the self and Inuit life, they were also clearly aimed at the advancement of nation-state agendas illuminating Canada's commitment to the "unity-diversity" and "tribe-nation" projects and they underscored her subject differences to include race.

In returning to the theoretical materials shaping this study, Judith Butler was asked whether or not the theory of sex-gender performance can be transposed onto matters of race.[145] Her response was to ask instead "what happens to the theory when it tries to come to grips with race?"[146] It was not possible to pose either of these questions to Kenojuak but her two artist-

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[144] Nicoll was awarded her Senior Artist grant in 1966 and Wieland received hers in 1973 although the latter had received a smaller one in 1968 to develop her 1971 exhibition at the NGC.
[145] Judith Butler, "Preface to Gender Trouble," 1999 in *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 2007), xvi.
[146] Ibid.

couple exhibitions show how her identity was produced by and for non-Aboriginal audiences to assert race as among those categories of difference that shaped critical reception to her practice. The persistent display of her life and work in such contexts as the Aboriginal first, the Eskimo woman artist, and marriage partner to Johnniebo became predictable representational tropes. Nonetheless, her command of both exhibitions and her aesthetic strength as image and object maker were enduring and they reflected on gender roles in Inuit culture in important ways. They also offered a bridge back to her sewn objects that enables knowledge of this artist to form altogether different sex-gender configurations exposing both her aesthetic continuum and the social expectations placed on one subject's sex-gender performance in exhibitions. Kenojuak's inaugural exhibitions in the public non-commercial venues during the 1960s reveal that her admission to the category "Artist" was indeed partial and quite conditional.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

When Lucy Lippard named "the artist's wife" as a concern for female artists, she identified the social reality that women's companionship status significantly affected their professional lives. To initiate change, her focus grew to concentrate on exhibiting and writing about women in order to increase their visibility in postwar America. It had not been possible then to consider the role that exhibitions played in shaping the identities of female artists since they were only beginning to be considered seriously for solo showings. A subsequent generation of feminist scholarship deconstructing the category "woman" and the formation of exhibition analysis as a field of study were important developments that allowed this question to be considered. Building on Lippard's work and these scholarship trajectories, this study of six women's art, marriage and companionship histories has revealed how their art practices were shaped in and by Canada's postwar exhibition system.

To analyze the relationships between women's companionship status and their art exhibitions has required that this project bridge the traditionally distinct disciplines of history and art history. For Biddy Martin, the selection of these two fields will not have pushed interdisciplinary feminist scholarship far enough because, she argues, in order "to become curious again, curious about what different disciplinary formations and knowledge can contribute to problems or questions we share," it is the bridging of the social and hard sciences that offers the greatest potential for feminist intervention.[1] Her call for feminist scholarship to intrude on the historically gendered hard sciences may be necessary for future feminist inquiry, but this study

[1] Biddy Martin, "Success and Its Failures," in *Women's Studies on the Edge*, edited by Joan Scott (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008), 172, 175. Martin's definition of the "hard sciences" includes psychology, biology and neurology. Martin suggests that the empirical is useful as a form of evidence to contest forms of essentialism that have formed part of feminism's history.

considers that it may not be wise just yet to leave behind those interdisciplinary questions begun within the social sciences and humanities when scholars have not finished opening them in insightful ways. A great deal of feminism's most important work has historically been mobile across disciplines and taken place outside women's studies and this continues to be an important practice for feminist scholarship. Indeed, it is precisely the possibilities of new knowledge formations offered by such disciplinary mobility which have been at the core of this research. By utilizing the art exhibition as a lens through which to view histories of art and marriage, this study brings into view differently the social conditions of women's art practices. It offers an historical foundation on which to re-shape understandings of women's citizenship and the lived contexts of their art productions, and it writes the female artist's experiences into histories of marriage and exhibitions.

The important arguments made by artists, scholars and curators that emphasize women's art before their sex, if parity is to be realized, has been an important consideration throughout this study.[2] If, however, the social and economic contexts for female creative production and exhibition are to be more fully understood then attention to gender continues to matter. This study has shown how six women were represented in their exhibitions as "the artist's wife," "kitchen artist," "the Girls" and "Eskimo wife." The exhibition histories of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle demonstrate that once an identity was written into the public record it could persist well beyond an artist's lifetime. For Wieland, Pratt and Kenojuak, the designations "kitchen artist" and "Eskimo wife" created additional hierarchies of difference to the already problematic one named "the artist's wife." While Marion Nicoll remained able to issue some

[2] There have been many female artists who prefer to be recognized as "artist first, woman second" as Cindy Sherman succinctly put it. Anne Wagner's important study *Three Artists (three women): Modernism and the Art of Hesse, Krasner and O'Keeffe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) is among those writings in art history that also asserts this view.

control over her exhibition record during the 1960s, she exhibited solo but worked privately in a difficult marital context only to be returned in her final years to the artist-couple exhibition when she had worked her lifetime to establish an independent art practice. These women's experiences offer cautionary evidence to artists entering exhibition markets that women's identities proved recalcitrant to change once having entered the public record. In reviewing some examples following the temporal scope of this study, the practice of female artist identity construction in exhibitions appears not to have abated.[3]

Some historians writing about artist-couples have concentrated their research on the intersection of intimacy and creative forms of expression.[4] However, pursuit of this question proved elusive in this study given the partial historic records through which to explore the affective contours of relationships and also the subjectivities involved in doing so: Frances Loring and Florence Wyle left no personal correspondence whatsoever; Wieland ceased diary writing about intimacy in the 1950s; Pratt and Nicoll only rarely alluded to their experiences; and Kenojuak mostly referred to her children when speaking of her marriage and private life. Alternatively, the emphasis here has been placed on exploring the significance of women's companionship status and their exhibitions to show how the exhibition was used to install powerful social norms including state-sanctioned heterosexual and monogamous marriage.

Nicoll, Wieland, Pratt, Loring, Wyle and Kenojuak all experienced challenges in Canada's postwar exhibition market but their access to it was also clearly policed to reinforce larger structural disparities relative to women's companionships status, sexuality and cultural

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[3] The problem of women being cast "first living other" has persisted for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal subjects. Consider for example Wieland's emergence in the 1987 as Canada's "first living other" when her retrospective exhibition was staged at the Art Gallery of Ontario and Daphne Odjig's 2009 exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada where she became the first living Aboriginal artist to have a retrospective exhibition at that venue. Loring and Wyle's 2007 double biography recycling "The Girls" as their collapsed identity is another example.
[4] Irving and Suzanne Sarnoff, *Intimate Creativity: Partners in Love and Art* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002).

ancestry. For Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale, women's social visibility has been a complex web of relationships because, "in Canada, white women were both powerful and powerless. Their power rested in their whiteness, but they were constrained by patriarchy."[5] More importantly, she contends, "it is imperative that historians not lose sight of the power relations that constitute, and are constituted by, gender."[6] As Mary-Ellen Kelm has commented, there are multiple points of causality in women's social subordination that are "political and social, as well as biological and cultural."[7]

Study of women's solo exhibition experiences has entailed parallel analysis of the artist-couple exhibition in order to demonstrate important hierarchies of difference in subject recognition. For all involved, the artist-couple exhibit was used to articulate multiple meanings. Regarding her exhibition history, Kay Sage once observed that she and her husband Yves Tanguy "refuse to exhibit together because we are not a team of artists" and Mary and Christopher Pratt consciously dodged this exhibition format for virtually the same reason.[8] However, in their public sector exhibitions in particular, Loring, Wyle and Kenojuak did not have the option of doing so if they desired any in-depth consideration of their art practices. At the outset of her exhibition practice, Wieland's two artist-couple showings brought her some visibility but at the price of being cast in Michael Snow's shadow. Her experiences, however, differed significantly from those of Kenojuak who was also circumscribed by her marriage, cultural ancestry, and her symbolic role in representing the successes of northern colonization. For Loring and Wyle, the artist-couple exhibition effectively underscored these two women's

[5] Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale, *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2005), 2.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Mary-Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-1950* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press 1998), 177.
[8] Kay Sage, "Separate Studios: Kay Sage and Yves Tanguy" in *Significant Others: Creativity and Intimate Partnership* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993, second edition, 1996), 144.

non-compliance to normative heterosexual marriage. Even though all six women occupied liminal places in Canada's postwar exhibition system their experiences nevertheless demonstrated that abiding female subjects remained privileged in an exhibition system ripe with sex-gender disparities between women.

Women's solo and artist-couple exhibitions were nonetheless important social spaces for their public intervention, self-definition and the development of their economic strength, and they offered opportunities for the enactment and self-revision of identities. Wieland and Pratt came to understand the value of their female identities in marriage as resources for their art practices and as viable means through which to strengthen their economic capacities. These themes were made visible in both their artwork and their exhibitions as Wieland formed Corrective Films from her New York studio and Pratt pursued subject matter commenting on her daily life in marriage, art and motherhood in a remote coastal setting. With the exception of Kenojuak, the income generated from sales and commissions earned through these women's professional recognition in exhibitions was important to eventually financing their own professional studio spaces where they could make their work and present a professional face to the world.[9]

The art included in women's exhibitions presented important aspects of these women's creative and personal identities but exhibitions were not necessarily occasions where artists retained control over important aspects of their representation. Kenojuak and Nicoll learned quickly that one's art practice could readily be spliced by medium and processes of object making to signify larger social themes including the colonization of subjects and the gendering of abstract painting: for different reasons both artists were subject to the exclusion of their so-

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[9] Wieland, Pratt, Nicoll, Loring and Wyle each put their economic resources towards formation of private studios at various points in their lives.

called "craft works" from exhibitions. From the extended display of Kenojuak beyond her exhibits to the androgynous gestures of Marion Nicoll, the social casting of women's identities in exhibitions revealed much about how they were expected to perform their identities in public life.

This study has embraced what Judith M. Bennett has described as the often-used "Holy Trinity" of "race-class-gender" as analytical criteria in recent feminist scholarship.[10] It has done so, however, to also raise region and generation as important analytical criteria enabling fuller understandings of sex-gender difference in women's lives. Joyce Wieland and Marion Nicoll both worked concurrently in urban environs painting abstractions but the differences in both their age as women and their places of residence when doing so yielded diverse experiences: whereas painting abstracts represented the culmination of Marion Nicoll's art practice, it was only a point of departure for Joyce Wieland; and whereas Nicoll alone confronted an antagonistic reception to her abstractions in Calgary, Wieland was surrounded by many artists in Toronto making work in this genre including female and male members of Painters Eleven.

When Wieland and Nicoll exhibited in the National Gallery of Canada biennial exhibitions of Canadian Art during the 1960s, their inclusion was made possible by their access to painting materials and their contemporary knowledge of abstraction. For Kenojuak, however, inclusion in these prominent exhibitions was not feasible because of the terms on which she had been admitted to the category "Artist" which had pre-determined her practice as graphic.[11] While living in the remote community of St Mary's Bay during her marriage, Mary Pratt was isolated from women's professional communities and female support networks in contrast to those living

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[10] Judith M. Bennett, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 25.

[11] The cold temperatures of the Arctic climate made using paint nearly impossible. Nonetheless, Kenojuak's exclusion from access to this material to make imagery excluded her from these exhibitions which privileged both painting and abstraction.

in urban environs such as Frances Loring and Florence Wyle who actively participated in women's organizations.

Arguably too, as region and generation affected women's experiences, so too did the idea of nation. Throughout the 1960s, and on the occasion of her exhibition *True Patriot Love*, being "Canadian" had grown to occupy a pivotal place in Wieland's art practice.[12] For Kenojuak, however, being Canadian was a non-starter even when she was representing Canada internationally at Expo 70. Her iconic owl and family imagery for the Expo mural alternatively asserted the continued presence of her identity as framed by her Inuit marriage and cultural ancestry. Mary Pratt's story reveals that her Canada was grounded in provincial experience in New Brunswick and was disrupted by her move to Newfoundland. Frances Loring's account of her "Canadianness" represented yet another variation on what nation meant to her. Despite her father's upper hand in the matter, the American-born sculptor later recognized how moving to Canada and taking up Canadian citizenship had improved her visibility. She explained:

> I started my artistic career in New York but I prefer to be a big fish in a small pool so I came to Canada.…My father's activities as a pioneer mining engineer and his vision of Canada's future was probably a great influence upon my faith in the possibilities of Canada's growth artistically, also in my preference to be part of the development of a young country.[13]

This study has shown that borders and national identities were permeable and contested territories for artists and that no consensus surrounding the elusive notion of a cohesive national identity can be easily determined. Rather than crafting such a narrative of Canadian women artists in artist-couples, this study demonstrates how the experiences of female artists showing in Canada can enhance histories of the artist-couple, the exhibition, and marriage and companionship. These six women's exhibitions in postwar Canada show this geo-political arena

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[12] The artist's book-exhibition catalogue by Joyce Wieland and Pierre Théberge, *True Patriot Love* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1971) documents some aspects of this project.
[13] Edna Usher, "We're All Indebted To These Women," *The Telegram*, April 25, 1959.

to be a rich one for the study of female experience and enable the diversities to be found in the category "woman" to be further amplified.

Early chapters of this dissertation illustrated that women's companionship was an important factor shaping young women's personal and professional lives and that there were significant pressures on women to become abiding subjects by following state-sanctioned heterosexual marriage norms. Regardless, women embraced various marriage models and revised the concept of marriage to meet their needs and the results included considerable diversity in each marriage arrangement. From Mary Pratt's Canada-Newfoundland marriage, to Kenojuak's two-custom marriage, to Joyce Wieland's strategic artist-couple marriage, to Marion Nicoll's marriage of role reversals and to Loring and Wyle's same-sex companionship of two sculptors, no marriage was straightforward. Consistent with the findings of other histories on Canada's marriage landscape, including those written about the Canadian Plains and Canada's legal marriage and divorce regimes, the companionship histories among these six women were both diverse and contested.[14]

It has not been among the goals of this study to evaluate the successes or failures of any of these marriages or marriage models, or to suggest that the any one of these arrangements was preferable over another. Neither has this study pursued the notion of an egalitarian artist-couple marriage because there are significant challenges in establishing the criteria for such a companionship arrangement if one exists at all.[15] In focusing on the social importance placed on

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[14] Sarah Carter's *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada to 1915* (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 2008) and James Snell's *In the Shadow of the Law: Divorce in Canada 1900-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) have been cited throughout this study and to these I add Constance Backhouse's *Petticoats and Prejudice: Women and Law in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: Osgoode Society, Women's Press, 1991).

[15] Joan Perkin explores these points in her study *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth Century England* (London: Routledge, 1989). She considers the difficulties of defining equality in the nineteenth century because of women's economic dependence and gender roles in marriage as well as the elusive problem of comparing intellectual acumen between partners in the subsection "Towards Equality in Marriage," in Chapter 12: A Life of One's Own, 264-273.

women's marriage and how it affected their public identities as exhibiting artists, this study has alternatively revealed important nuances in women's companionship experiences and art production, such as how the husband's traditional control over residential place of settlement in marriage affected heterosexual women. Patriarchal control over place of settlement was not exclusive to heterosexual women in marriage, however, as the example of Frank Loring forcing his daughter's return to Toronto, based on his economic control over her New York studio, clearly demonstrated: this economic and familial reality in two women's lives meant that Florence Wyle followed Frances Loring to Toronto in 1913.

The evolution of this dissertation has been complex and changed at many turns. From the outset, the study centered on artist-couple relationships but it was not until later in the research that it grew to focus on the inter-relationships of women's artist-couple companionship to their exhibitions in the postwar years. These focal points were crucial because they enabled detailed analysis of the exhibition's function in subject representation and identity construction. In prioritizing these criteria this project has left open for future scholarship several areas of inquiry. Single women's experiences accessing the postwar solo exhibition such as Doris McCarthy and Isabel McLaughlin offer much opportunity for future scholarship.[16] The subject of motherhood in the artist-couple relationship has only been introduced with reference to Kenojuak and Pratt.[17] There are also many artist-couple marriages formed in the 1970s and afterwards that have not been explored because of the temporal scope of this study. The artist-couple premise has also

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[16] McCarthy lived alone for much of her life supporting herself through teaching and art sales. She also invested in property in Toronto where she had her home and studio and in Georgian Bay where she painted regularly as documented in Doris McCarthy's autobiographic trilogy: *A Fool in Paradise: An Artist's Early Life* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter and Ross, 1990); *The Good Wine: An Artist Comes of Age, Doris McCarthy* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter and Ross, 1991); and *Doris McCarthy: Ninety Years Wise* (Toronto: Second Story Press, 2004). McLaughlin inherited economic means thanks to her father's wealth, Colonel Robert S. McLaughlin of General Motors. The exhibition histories of these two women have not as yet been studied.

[17] The sculptor Elizabeth Wyn Wood was mother and widow after her husband Emmanuel Hahn passed away but it was not possible to include her experiences in this study because her archival fonds were closed to researchers during the writing of this study.

meant that study of heterosexual women's marriages to non-artists, like that of Pegi Nicol MacLeod, has also been excluded.[18] There are thus several areas for scholarship regarding women's companionship status and its relationship to the solo exhibition. For this project, it was necessary to establish focused parameters in order to make a distinct contribution to the fields of artist-couple literature, marriage history and the exhibition. The study has shown that women's experiences in accessing such cultural systems as the solo exhibition have illuminated how they were simultaneously enabled and disabled by the opportunities that opened to them in postwar Canada.[19]

These six women's experiences demonstrate that they were and are much more than artists' wives. They were mentors to many, companions, partners, parents, teachers, contributors to family income and artists, and their contributions opened many possibilities for generations following them. Wieland grew to be a role model for women's art and feminism in Canada and Nicoll's teaching made her a mentor for many.[20] Loring and Wyle laid claim to women's place in the traditionally masculine field of sculpture and they mentored younger female artists.[21] As artists and exhibitors, women's marriage and companionship status stayed with them in complex ways beyond the scope of this study, even in the event of dissolving and dissolved marriages. During her production of the paintings depicting Donna Meaney and slung carcasses of raw meat, Mary Pratt signed two works that included her maiden name, Mary West Pratt.[22] The gesture can be seen to have marked a moment of questioning the fact of her having embraced

[18] Laura Brandon, *Pegi By Herself: the Life and Art of Pegi Nicol MacLeod* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005).
[19] The idea of "cultural systems" is extracted from Ellen Messer-Davidow and Laura L. Doan's "Introduction" in *Old Maids to Radical Spinsters: Unmarried Women in the Twentieth Century Novel* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 7-8.
[20] Kathryn Elder's anthology *The Films of Joyce Wielan*d (Toronto: Toronto International Film Festival, 199) includes numerous examples of women who have considered her a mentor and role model. The women Marion Nicoll mentored included Carol Moppett , Janet Mitchell and Katie Ohe and were referenced in Chapter Two.
[21] These included Rebecca Sisler and Frances Gage.
[22] The works *Girl in a Wicker Chair*, 1978 and *Service Station*, 1978, are both signed Mary West Pratt.

Christopher's surname in 1957 for she had not done this before in her signatory practices. Yet, on her final divorce and remarriage to another partner, she retained the surname from her first marriage because, by then, she had already established her creative identity with that name and to change again would only have confounded the public record of her creative production: as artist, she knew she would always be known as Mary Pratt.[23] By the later 1980s, Joyce Wieland returned to the medium of painting which she had left behind in the 1963 to create an anxious body of figurative imagery which has been interpreted to reflect the difficulties of her separation and divorce from Snow.[24] She had not changed her name on marriage but public affiliation of her with Snow persisted, albeit differently as the former marriage partner.

All six women enjoyed the benefits of expanding forms of recognition for their work and most participated in mid-career and retrospective exhibitions during the 1970s and 1980s—Nicoll in 1975 and 1986, Pratt in 1981, Kenojuak in 1985, Loring and Wyle in 1987 and Wieland with three major shows between 1968 and 1987.[25] The results suggest the possibility of a steady momentum gained for recognition of the female artist's exhibition in the decades ahead. As this analysis of women's postwar exhibitions has shown, however, women's visibility was conditional and to assume that subsequent decades were necessarily improved ones for women makes for a risky claim.[26] A shift in descriptors from the "one-man" to the "one-woman" exhibition in the 1970s, for example, did not remove the implicit hierarchies of difference and

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[23] Mary Pratt, Interview with Catharine Mastin, 17 October 2009.

[24] Jane Lind, *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire*, 264-267.

[25] The exhibitions were as follows: *Marion Nicoll: A Retrospective, 1959-1971* (Edmonton: Edmonton Art Gallery, 1975; *Marion Nicoll: Art and Influences* (Calgary: Glenbow Museum and Art Gallery 1986); *Mary Pratt* (London: London Regional Art Gallery, 1981); *Kenojuak* (Kleinburg: McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1985); *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1987); *Joyce Wieland: A Retrospective, 1957-1967* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1968); *Joyce Wieland, True Patriot Love* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1971); and *Joyce Wieland* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1987).

[26] A detailed analysis of this cluster of women's retrospectives is needed to assert any claims to this effect. Marriage themes and experiences continued to make an appearance in the works of Pratt and Wieland during these decades, namely Wieland's feature film *The Far Shore,* her post-divorce figurative paintings of the 1980s and Pratt's wedding paintings of her daughters, such as *Barby and the Dress She Made for Herself*, 1986 and *Wedding Dress,* 1975.

sexism staged in women's exhibitions since the language of essentialist sexual difference remained operative.

This project has not been concerned with representing anyone's marriage in whole or in part because, as Joan Perkin has wisely proclaimed, "no one really knows the inside of anyone else's marriage."[27] Alternatively, the focused parameters of this study of selected women's postwar art exhibitions have demonstrated that their companionship status mattered much more than has been historically understood. Their exhibitions have provided opportunity also to reflect on curatorial practices and institutional subject representation in significant ways: these include the important finding that the solo exhibition cannot be fully separated from the artist-couple exhibition when studying the female artist's exhibition history because of its interlinked relationship to the subject's companionship status, sexuality and cultural ancestry. These exhibitions have also made visible that gender and female artist identities, including the category "woman artist," matter when studying the female artist in postwar North American art and marriage histories if the social conditions of women's art production are to be fully understood.

[27]Joan Perkin, *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England*, 316.

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Appendix 1

National Gallery of Canada,
Canadian Biennial Art and Painting Exhibitions—1955-1968

Date of Exhibition	Total Artist Count	Male Artists	Female Artists	Percentage Male	Percentage Female
1955	62	56	6	90%	10%
1957	68	64	4	94%	6%
1959	55	45	10	81%	19%
1961	81	75	6	93%	7%
1963	78	70	8	90%	10%
1965	90	79	11	88%	12%
1968	71	64	7	90%	10%

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