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NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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WASHINGTON, October 28: David E. Finley, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announced today that an exhibition of Canadian painting would be on view at the National Gallery from Sunday, October 29 to December 10, 1950. In expressing his appreciation, on behalf of the Trustees and Officers of the Gallery, to the Director and Trustees of the National Gallery of Canada for the loan of the exhibition, Mr. Finley commented on the large number of able and original Canadian painters "who have interpreted their own country, and especially its landscape, with the deep feeling that comes only with a love of one's native land." "The work of many of these artists is widely appreciated in the United States," Mr. Finley continued, "but, with the exception of the exhibitions held recently in Boston and Richmond, there have been few opportunities for the American people to become acquainted with the great body of Canadian painting."

The eighty-seven paintings included in the exhibition have been assembled, from public and private collections, by the National Gallery of Canada. As stated by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, The Rt. Hon. Vincent Massey, the purpose of the exhibition is "to show the main trends in Canadian art during the last fifty years," while it includes "a small group of works from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to serve as an historical background." Eight of the paintings are in this earlier group. The one example from the eighteenth century is a remarkable portrait of a Negro slave, dated 1786, by the Canadian-born but French-trained Francois Beaucourt, who in this portrait reflects Chardin and at the same time foreshadows Gauguin.

The nineteenth-century examples of portraiture are striking witnesses to the parallels between Canadian and American art at this time, parallels which, quite naturally, may be traced with more or less clarity throughout the exhibition. Paintings of scenery, however, because of geographical differences between Canada and the United States, show greater divergence of style. In his illuminating introductory essay to the lavishly illustrated catalogue of the exhibition, R. H. Hubbard, Curator of Canadian Art at the National Gallery of Canada, traces the development of Canadian national expression, particularly in landscape, from its picturesque and romantic phase in the early nineteenth century, through its later realistic and then poetic interpretations, to the variety of modern movements of the present.

A.Y. Jackson, J. E. H. MacDonald, Arthur Lismer, Lawren Harris, F. H. Varley, Franklin Carmichael, and F. H. Johnston - the "Group of Seven" - are cited by Mr. Hubbard as initiators of the first consciously national movement in Canadian painting, a group which held its first joint exhibition in 1920 and is still active and important. Tom Thomson, with his series of spontaneous and brilliant sketches of Algonquin Park, was one of the most remarkable associates of this group until his death in 1917. His painting of The Jack Pine in the present exhibition suggests the influence of Japanese landscape painting on this devotee of Canadian nature. Among the introspective painters of the present day, Lillian Freiman is represented in the exhibition by three interesting examples; there are compositions in abstraction by B. C. Binning and Marian Scott; and contemporary classicism, surrealism, expressionism and "automatism" are all represented in the exhibition by the works of other distinguished Canadian painters.

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