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Alena Buis

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[See table of contents](#)

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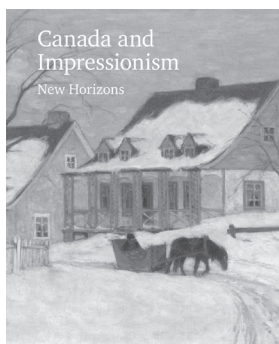
insight, Barad approaches 1492 as “living inside” 1945, linking the settler-colonial control of territory, the Trinity bombing in New Mexico, Nagasaki, and the murder of matter itself within an ongoing continuum of displacement and destruction. This compelling reworking of temporality invites us to unsettle the future by recognizing “the infinite depths of our inhumanity and the infinite possibilities for living and dying otherwise” (329).

The artist projects (sixteen in total) are dispersed between the essays, serving as connective tissue that links and expands the disparate themes explored in the essays. Photography is featured prominently, and, interestingly, there are no paintings included, perhaps reflecting Willem de Kooning’s suggestion that “the light of the atom bomb will change the concept of painting once and for all.”³ Formally, the works range from Mark Ruwedel’s stark documentary photographs of the Diefenbunker, Edward Burtynsky’s toxic sublime, Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge’s photographic tableau of the home of a nuclear plant worker, Kristan Horton’s comic book style drawings, and Public Studio’s geodesic dome at Nuit Blanche 2015. A number of the projects function to bear witness (Katy McCormick’s photographs of “A-bombed trees”) or to collect evidence (Susan Schuppli). The heterogeneous portfolios showcase the multiple ways artists have engaged with the atomic.

An emphasis on settler colonialism runs throughout the book, an important corrective to many earlier histories which obscured the impact of extraction on Indigenous communities. However, given the global history of uranium extraction and refining within atomic culture, a broader geographic scope—say, for example, Shinkolobwe in the Democratic Republic of Congo which supplied uranium for the Manhattan Project under Belgian Colonial rule—would augment the focus on the Americas. However, by

showing the significant role that visual culture played in atomic culture while contributing rich new case studies, both volumes are a significant contribution to the global energy humanities.

With an interdisciplinary focus and with constant attention to environmental themes, *The Bomb in the Wilderness* and *Through Post-Atomic Eyes* bring art history into dialogue with the emerging field of the energy humanities. Both volumes explore the multifaceted role of art in atomic culture to nuance the suspicion that art might only function to aestheticize or anesthetize, revealing how close attention to the visual yields new insights into nuclear culture. While an awareness of nuclear risk defined the second half of the twentieth century, it seemed that global warming had replaced nuclear war as the main existential threat in the



twenty-first century. Accordingly, recent scholarship in the energy humanities has largely focused on petrocultures, which is a necessary correction to the relative cultural invisibility of oil in the twentieth century. However, as Lauzon and O’Brian note in the introduction of *Through Post-Atomic Eyes*, nuclear risk is an ongoing political and environmental problem. The Doomsday Clock, managed by the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, is the closest it has ever been to midnight due to the combined threats of nuclear war, global warming, and disruptive

technologies. As of January 2021, it is only one hundred seconds to midnight. These books broaden the scope through which we assess the nuclear and its aftershocks and show how photography has “haunted the nuclear imagination by disclosing what has been masked” (*The Bomb in the Wilderness*, xix). ¶

Siobhan Angus is currently a Banting Postdoctoral Fellow in the History of Art at Yale University and a visiting scholar at the Yale Center for British Art. She holds a PhD in Art History and Visual Culture from York University. —siobhan.angus@yale.edu

1. Gabrielle Hecht, “Nuclearity,” in *The Nuclear Culture Source Book*, ed. Elle Carpenter (London: Black Dog Publishing 2016), 127.
2. Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).
3. Willem de Kooning, “What Abstract Art Means to Me,” first published in “What Abstract Art Means to Me: Statements by Six American Artists,” *The Museum of Modern Art Bulletin* xviii, no. 3 (Spring 1951): 4.

Rosemary Shipton, ed.
**Canada and Impressionism:
New Horizons**

Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada;
Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Art Publishers,
2019

296 pp. 290 colour illus., 20 b&w
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Alena Buis

This publication accompanied the first major travelling show of Canadian Impressionism in Europe, which opened at the Kunsthalle München in Germany and went on to the Fondation de l’Hermitage in Lausanne, Switzerland and the Musée Fabre in Montpellier, France before returning to the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa in early 2021. Translated into French and German, the publication serves as both exhibition catalogue and stand-alone book.

At first glance, *Canada and Impressionism* has all the trappings of a slick

blockbuster exhibition catalogue: a focus on audience-pleasing Impressionism, an introduction by *The New Yorker's* Adam Gopnik, and a wealth of stunning full-colour illustrations. However, with seven essays by established Canadian scholars, the inclusion of many works normally only seen in private collections, and footnotes that beg for further research, it is not just a coffee table book but also a major contribution to the history of World Impressionism. An important strength of this catalogue is its meticulously researched, fifty-page timeline documenting "Impressionism Abroad and at Home from 1880 to 1930," in which Julie Nash and Krista Broeckx detail significant artists' travel and the appearance of major works, exhibitions, and publications. With this robust chronology and relatively accessible, methodologically diverse essays, the book should be of interest to a broad international audience.

In some ways this book is an extension of previous publications. As early as 1965 the London Regional Art Gallery produced a show and catalogue titled *Canadian Impressionists, 1865–1965*. In 1974 Joan Murray brought *Impressionism in Canada, 1895–1935* to the Art Gallery of Ontario, and in 1995 *Visions of Light and Air: Canadian Impressionism 1885–1920* was held at the America's Society Art Gallery in New York. Other publications on the subject, in addition to a great many scholarly studies of individual artists, include Paul Duval's *Canadian Impressionism* (1990) and, more recently, *Impressionism in Canada: A Journey of Rediscovery* (2015) by A.K. Prakash. In fact, the A.K. Prakash Foundation was the Exhibition Patron of *Canada and Impressionism: New Horizons* and, in his foreword, Prakash expresses a desire to "claim our chapter in the narrative of World Impressionism" (7). This attempt to understand Canadian artists' particular kind of Impressionism in the context of global art history is, as

Tracey Lock states in her essay, one of the key themes of the exhibition and, by extension, this publication.

The dominant twentieth-century narratives of French Impressionism have long been challenged, with critiques from a global perspective going back as far as Norma Broude's *World Impressionism: The International Movement, 1860–1920* (1990), to which Dennis Reid contributed a chapter entitled "Impressionism in Canada." A more thorough review of this previous literature is absent from the introduction, "Rethinking Impressionism in Canada," by curator Katerina Atanassova. Instead, she provides an overview of the exhibition, describing its thematic and chronological progression from the "Academic progressives" of the 1880s to the "pioneers of the avant-garde" of the 1930s (31). Atanassova explains that the show and catalogue reveal the differences between French Impressionism and "the contributions of Canadian artists who adapted its philosophy to a specific time and place, not merely as a nativist extension and an anachronism without an identity but as a force that gave birth to modern painting in their homeland" (31). In her longer essay, "Impressions of France: Canadians in the Countryside," she considers how the French landscapes of James MacDonald Barnsley, Sophie Pemberton, Laura Muntz, Mary A. Bell, Margaret Campbell Macpherson, and others could potentially align with the diverse visions of modernity put forth by Charles Baudelaire, Edmond Duranty, and Émile Zola. Her study fills a gap in scholarship, for aside from research scattered through a handful of monographs,¹ there has been no formal thematic focus on Canadians forays into the French countryside to paint en plein air.

Tobi Bruce's contribution "Canadian Artists Abroad: The Paradox of Paris" offers a fascinating glimpse into the academic training and Parisian studios of artists like Frances Jones, William Blair

Bruce, George A. Reid, and Paul Peel, astutely demonstrating how different the core tenets of Impressionism were from the academic instructional systems that drew Canadian artists to study in France. Although short, Bruce's contribution includes fantastic archival photographs that underscore her discussion of what it was like for these artists to live and work in Paris.

Loren Lerner examines the 1913 painting *Youth and Sunlight* by Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté, and other images of youth, alongside contemporary Canadian writing in relation to Impressionism's expression of modern values. Through thoughtful intertextual analysis she demonstrates how images of children provided a rich social and cultural iconography for nationalistic imagining. This essay is truly a textbook example of how to locate images within a particular cultural context.

With a similar approach to the popular visual culture of the time, Anna Hudson offers a feminist rethinking of Impressionist painting by Canadian women in "Quiet Pursuits: Canadian Impressionists and the 'New Woman.'" She views the production of Florence Carlyle, H. Mabel May, Laura Muntz, and others through their engagement with the image of the "New Woman" and debates over the "Woman Question" emerging in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Laurier Lacroix's essay "A Journey Home: Canadian Impressionists Return" traces the influence of Impressionism on artists once they returned home to Canadian soil. He identifies 1896 as a pivotal year, since Maurice Cullen, James Wilson Morrice, and William Brymner all returned from France that year and extended the influence of Impressionism to Canada via Montreal. Lacroix demonstrates the regional nuances of Canadian Impressionism, including "the use of a light-toned palette that made drawing part of painting," and the "desire to achieve a fusion between motif and technique" (103).

The merging of style and subject is exemplified by the unique suitability of winter scenes for studying the effects of light and the complex atmospheres of urban views.

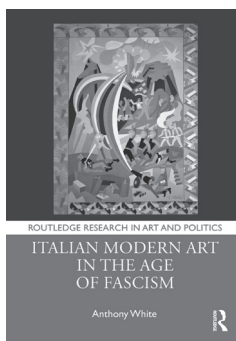
Gerta Moray explores how initial forays into Impressionism by Cullen, Morrice, Suzor-Coté and others laid the groundwork for modernism in Canada by introducing “fundamental modernist imperatives—artists should experiment with pictorial form, create a subjective individual vision, and focus on the experience of modernity” (115). She documents how a following generation of artists (the Group of Seven, members of the Beaver Hall group, Emily Carr and others) would take up “divergent symbolic and epistemological possibilities” including the paradox of modernist anti-modernism (115).

In contrast to these social histories, Sandra Paikowsky contributes a superbly written formal analysis of several Canadian artists’ images of “canals and rivers, bays and beaches,” revealing their reliance on Impressionist processes that, in opposition to popular perceptions of the movement, “demanded considered compositions, articulated pictorial space, objectified viewing points, and poised brush marks of selected colour” (73). She pairs her intimate knowledge of James Wilson Morrice’s oeuvre with careful considerations of Clarence Gagnon’s and Helen McNicoll’s approaches to similar watery themes. By way of conclusion, she deftly summarizes the ways in which Canadians adapted the visual language of French Impressionism while maintaining its central tenet: “the ideal of modernity where the actuality of the present is the impulse for new ways of seeing and responding” (81).

Finally, in the epilogue “New World Impressionism” art historian Tracey Lock of the Art Gallery of South Australia makes a convincing case for Canadian and Australian iterations as being different sides of a World Impressionist coin. Her suggestion of settler colonist

artists raises important points about hybrid spaces of contact, noting, “Accents of this ‘third cultural reality’ can be found in New World Impressionist landscapes,” (132) and calling attention to the ways emerging nations aspired to expanding their frontiers at the expense of Indigenous populations. However, her approach still seems tinged with Eurocentric views of peripheries and margins. Instead of engaging directly with post-colonial theory, she cites interpretations of Bernard Smith and Bronislaw Malinowski as read by Andrew Sayers in “A Half-Century On: The Legacy of European Vision and the South Pacific.”²

My only concern with this publication is Lock’s use of the term “New World.” I wonder if there is a more constructive way to frame the rhizomic spread of Impres-



sionism around the globe than the colonial binary of “New World” versus “Old World.” Furthermore, I am not certain all would agree with her analysis of Emily Carr’s work as demonstrating an “awareness of past ownership” of the land, or of her painting *Gitwangak* (1912) as embracing “recasting of settler relationships with the First Nations peoples of British Columbia” (138). Nevertheless, Lock’s comparative approach is useful, as is her quoting Piotr Piotrowski in advocating for “a transnational horizontal theory of ‘art history that is polyphonic, multi-dimensional and free

of geographic hierarchies” (131). Subtly, in a footnote, Lock alludes to the difficult settler histories that have shaped Impressionism around the world, and she locates this type of study in a larger reappraisal of how “erased cultural histories defined each country’s shift to modernism” (139). ¶

Alena Buis is an Instructor and Chair of the Department of Art History & Religious Studies at snəwəyət̓ lələm-Langara College, Vancouver. —abuis@langara.ca

1. Sylvia Antoniou, *Maurice Cullen, 1866–1934* (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1982); René Boissay, *Clarence Gagnon* (La Prairie: M. Broquet Publishing, 1988); Nicole Cloutier, *James Wilson Morrice, 1865–1924* (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1985); Laurier Lacroix, *Suzor-Coté: Light and Matter* (Montreal: Éditions de l’Homme, 2002).

2. In Jaynie Anderson, Christopher R. Marshall, and Andrew Yip, eds., *The Legacies of Bernard Smith: Essays on Australian Art, History and Cultural Politics* (Sydney: Power Publications, 2016).

Anthony White
Italian Modern Art in the Age of Fascism

New York: Routledge, 2020

206 pp. 8 colour, 51 b/w illus.

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Nicholas Chare

Anthony White’s *Italian Modern Art in the Age of Fascism* examines works of modern art produced in Italy in the time of Benito Mussolini’s fascist dictatorship. Mussolini was Duce of Italian fascism from 1919 until 1945 and leader of all Italy from 1922 to 1943. White consciously rejects offering a comprehensive overview of Italian modern art for this period, suggesting that panoramas render any accompanying analysis superficial. Rather, he structures his study around in-depth readings of the careers of three artists: Fortunato Depero, Scipione (Gino Bonichi), and Mario Radice. These