Yulia Biriukova and The Lumberman in the National Vision of Canada in the 1930s

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Abstract

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This thesis is dedicated to the artistic legacy of a little-known Russian-born Canadian painter and drawer, Yulia Biriukova (1895-1972), active in Toronto primarily during the 1930s. Using her painting *The Riverman, Frenchy Renaud* (1935) from the Art Gallery of Hamilton, I seek to reassess the problematic of Canadian portraiture of the interwar period through such notions as national symbols and typology. Being an individual who came to Canada as an experienced artist, Biriukova reflected the Canadian world that she saw. As a descendant of a highly educated and aristocratic family, she quickly integrated into the *beau-monde* of the Torontonian public and delved into the details of nationalist concerns that gained momentum in Canada after World War I. The figure of the lumberjack that she chose to paint embodies a carefully orchestrated philosophy of national unity and prosperity that this thesis offers the reader to discover.

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Introduction

It is a well-known aspect of Canadian art history that many of the nation's artists went to Europe to pursue artistic training at the beginning of the twentieth century. Less frequently remembered is the movement that occurred in the other direction. Pushed by political turmoil at home, some European artists were coming to Canada. How were such artists received within the context of the nationalist fervour that swept the Canadian art world in the early decades of the twentieth century, and what did they contribute to its development?

Canadian nationalism was not always a strictly home-grown affair. For example, recent research shows that Great Britain itself was responsible for fostering a rhetoric of local pride and artistic distinctiveness amongst its colonies.[1] And even the Group of Seven, that pinnacle of aesthetic nationalism, was shaped by those who were not Canadian by birth. Three of the first seven members of the Group (Arthur Lismer, J. E. H. MacDonald and Frederick Varley) were born in the United Kingdom. Being members of one of the nation's founding settler societies, such British migrants were easily incorporated into Canadian society, many of whose leading cultural figures were of British ancestry. It is interesting to inquire: what happened with those migrants whose ethnic background more clearly positioned them as *immigrants*? Were they, too, brought into the nationalist fold? And how did their contributions to it help to shape the emergent discourse of Canadian society?

Some immigrant artists, like Paraskeva Clark, produced political art that sought to change Canadian society. Others, however, felt closer to the Canadian establishment and sought to contribute to its vision. Among the latter was the painter Yulia Biriukova and her sister architect Alexandra, who arrived in Canada in 1929, already experienced professionals. Yulia Biriukova

[1] Christine Boyanoski, "Selective memory: The British Empire Exhibition and national histories of art," in *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa*, ed. Annie E. Coombes (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 156.

(1895-1972) was an active but a lesser-known painter of the Toronto art scene in the 1930s. In my thesis I assemble the extant information about her life and work in order to create the first comprehensive research dedicated to Biriukova's artistic heritage and her contribution to Canadian historical art. In her time, Biriukova was considered as a gifted portraitist. She took a studio in Lawren Harris' Studio Building where she worked until 1950 and befriended such Canadian artists as J.E.H. and Thoreau Macdonald, Carl Schaefer, A.Y. Jackson, and Harris himself. Several of these colleagues, along with their family members, became the subjects of her portraits.[2] This close involvement with some of the most famous Canadian artists, whose primary artistic concern was building and celebrating Canadian culture through the prism of nationalism, will be a clue to understanding Biriukova's works. Specifically, Biriukova created a number of paintings that directly borrowed from the practice of the famous vanguard Canadian painters, notably Edwin Holgate, who, having united portraiture and landscape, gave a more prominent place to representation of the Canadian populace than had been the case in the preceding decade.

In my thesis I will show that with her canvas *The Riverman, Frenchy Renaud* (1935), housed at the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Biriukova engaged in the social and aesthetic discourses that were prevalent in Toronto at the time and contributed to the creation of a character that embodied the image of a strong nation (fig. 1). *The Riverman*, which was gifted to the gallery by the artist's friend Thoreau MacDonald, portrays a working man in a particularly lofty manner. His self-assured pose and calm face are reminiscent of classical sculptures, strangely echoing the style of representations of workers in socialist countries. Painted with bold and colourful brushstrokes, the painting shares much of the modernist aesthetic of its time. Behind the figure of *The Riverman*

[2] Specifically, Yulia was the author of a portrait of A.Y. Jackson (private collection), of J.E.H. MacDonald (1930, Art Gallery of Hamilton), of Bess Harris (1930, AGO), and of Mrs. Carl Shaefer (1933, AGO). At the same time, her sister Alexandra participated designed a house for Harris in Toronto's Forest Hill neighbourhood. Yulia Biriukova – UCC Art Teacher 1942-63, Upper Canada College Archives – Yulia Biriukova's file, and Alla Myzelev, "Living the Art Deco: Alexandra Biriukova's House for Lawren Harris" in *Architecture, Design and Craft in Toronto 1900-1940: Creating Modern Living* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2016).

is a landscape that illustrates the sitter's occupation and symbolizes unity with nature – a formula that is frequently used in Canadian portraiture throughout the 1920s and 1930s.[3] As to the sitter, little is known, but a reference to a "Frenchy" Renaud from Toronto appears in *The Bridgemen's Magazine*, where he is listed as engaged in a job erected by "Local No.4" of the International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers for the Westinghouse, Church, & Kerr Company at Lindsay, Ontario.[4] If the two "Frenchies" represent the same individual, Biriukova's model may have been a Toronto resident working in the construction field. The sitter's identity, however, does not bear significant importance for the present research focuses on the painting as the representation of a type, rather than an individual.

In her discussion of a similar canvas, *The Prospector*, also at the Art Gallery of Hamilton, curator Tobi Bruce noted that Biriukova fits into a pictorial tradition of distinguishing "different human types'' in Canadian painting.[5] Intrigued by this notion, which appears only in passing in the academic literature, I aim to investigate whether and how the division of the Canadian populace into types played a role in the Canadian art scene's ongoing relation to discourses of nationalism. In particular, I will evaluate the importance of the working type, exemplified by *The Riverman*, in regards to the dominant social formation in Canada during the interwar period and its relation to the idea of nationhood. By doing so, I hope that my analysis of *The Riverman* will contribute to our developing historical understanding of images of workers in Canadian artistic culture in the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s.

The Riverman represents an important fraction of people that worked for the Canadian economy. As a key figure within resource extraction, the lumberjack was central to the processes

[3] The only contemporary press coverage of the painting seems to be Regina Haggo's article "From Russia with a love of art," dedicated to Biriukova's life journey after settling in Toronto. See Regina Haggo, "From Russia with a love of art," *The Hamilton Spectator*, February 24, 2017, accessed May 15, 2018, https://www.thespec.com/whatson-story/7154029-regina-haggo-from-russia-with-a-love-of-art/.
[4] *The Bridgemen's Magazine*, 17 (1917): 101.
[5] Tobi Bruce, "The Prospector," in *Lasting Impressions: Celebrated Works from the Art Gallery of Hamilton*, ed. Tobi Bruce (Hamilton: Art Gallery of Hamilton, 2014), 148.

of claiming land and building economic prosperity that were crucial to the formation and development of Canada as a settler nation state. The lumberjack acted as one of the key figures that would unite the multicultural Canadian nation and inspire confidence in its future thriving during the very troublesome time of the Great Depression. Focussing on the iconography of lumbering in the post-World War I tradition in Canada, I show how the lumberjack as a nationalist type played a role in symbolizing the country's economic stability and accomplishments.

Legends about the strong and dexterous Canadian lumberjack were longstanding. In the early decades of the twentieth century, journals, magazines and novels further spurred interest in the Canadian lumbermen by publishing stories that sometimes reinforced the existing stereotype, and at other times developed new patterns of looking at his image. These literary works encouraged the rhetoric of national pride, providing a solid ground for constructing another national narrative – about national unity. This thesis will show how exactly the lumberjack served as a connecting link between the founding nations, unveiling the distribution of power within Canadian society.

This thesis is organised in two main sections: first a biographical discussion of Biriukova, and then a section that thoroughly examines *The Riverman* as a symbol of national prosperity and national unity, exploring the phenomenon of typological thinking in Canadian painting. In section one, I review Biriukova's artistic and teaching philosophies, aesthetic influences and friendships in order to remedy the lack of information about her. To do so, I examine the existing material about Biriukova in the archives of the Art Gallery of Hamilton, the AGO, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Thornhill and Vaughn Archives, the Upper Canada College Archives and the Central Technical School Archives where she taught, as well as the Thoreau MacDonald fonds at the City of Vaughn Archives (Yulia Biriukova was a great friend to Thoreau Macdonald), and the Weaver Collection (a private, family collection) in Thornhill, where Biriukova lived. The catalogues of the

exhibitions of various prominent Canadian artistic associations allowed me to trace her exhibition history, find out details about some of her paintings and reveal discrepancies that surround her professional biography. Another resource that shed light on Biriukova's life after her arrival to Canada was newspapers and magazines, primarily *Saturday Night*, the *Globe and Mail* and *Maclean's.*

In section two, I review sources that help us to understand the iconography of the lumberjack in Canadian culture more broadly, paying special attention to questions of nation-building. From there, I move on to examine the working type in Canadian art and the incentives for its creation and development (liberal versus leftist perspectives). For this purpose, I have considered artistic precedents for typological representations and their relation to local communities.[6] To support my argument, I refer to antecedent examples from other countries, while also constructing a comparison to other, non-typological ways of representing labourers in Canadian painting of the time (for example, the paintings of Leonard Hutchinson). My goal is to argue that Biriuokva's paintings of labouring types meshed well with the nation-building aim of the Toronto cultural context that she was a part of, and offered a liberal way of thinking about the place of labour within the nation – one that supported existing social structures and organizations at a time when these were being challenged by emerging socialist movements.

Both of these sections constitute original contributions to scholarship. To date, there has been no study that critically analyzes the life of Yulia Biriukova and her place within the nation's cultural production. Similarly, there is surprisingly little work on the cultural significance of the

[6] These include works by Eugen Fischer, August Sander, and Helmar Lerski, which Kathryn Alice Steinbock has described in detail as part of her investigation of the "'classification mania' of the 1920's and 1930s." See Kathryn Alice Steinbock, "Crisis and Classification: Photographic Portrait Typologies in Early 20th- Century Germany" (PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 2011). Literary scholars have also identified similar tropes in French and German literature from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. See, for instance, Pauline de Tholozany, *Social Types in Nineteenth-Century French Literature and Journalism: The (Un)Making of National Identity in France* (London: Taylor Francis Group, 2017) and Ernest Kohn Bramsted, *Aristocracy and the middle-classes in Germany; social types in German literature, 1830-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

lumberjack as a Canadian cultural icon, and none which assesses his image through the ideology of labour in the liberal thinking of Canadian society during the depression. Bringing these two subjects together, my thesis offers a new perspective on Canadian painting in the 1930s.

Section 1: Who was Yulia Biriukova?

When Yulia Biriukova painted *The Riverman* in 1935 she was at the height of her artistic career, ensconced in the heart of Toronto's arts community and actively contributing to the nation's premiere annual exhibitions. Renting a studio in the Studio Building at 25 Severn Street, Toronto, and being friends with many members of the Group of Seven, Biriukova was familiar with and actively contributed to the creation of a distinctly Canadian art.[7] The media showed a keen interest in her persona, artistic life and authority as an experienced European painter.[8] The artist's path to that position had been neither straightforward nor predictable however, and tracing the artist's biography provides a first layer of context for understanding *The Riverman*, helping to reconstruct her worldview and providing a deeper insight into the incentive behind the portrait.

Yulia Biriukova was born in Russia in the 1890s to Dmitri Biriukov (fig. 2), a "hereditary nobleman" with much academic training and ambition, and Julia Glass, a daughter of Ludwig Glass, a merchant of the second guild from the Vilna province, now Lithuania.[9] During her childhood, Yulia and her sisters Alexandra and Maria accompanied their father during his work on the Trans-Siberian Railway and on other missions related to railroad construction and maintenance works across Russia (fig. 3). Later, the sisters shared memories with their descendants about growing up in

[7] The Studio Building was designated a national historic site of Canada in 2004. Among the reasons for designation were its being "the earliest purpose-built artist studio in Canada representing the visions of a young generation of Canadian artists who would have a professional venue and gathering place to develop a distinctly Canadian art." Andrew Waldron, "The Studio Building, 25 Severn Street, Toronto, Ontario," *Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada* 31, no. 1 (2006): 65-80.

[8] For example, Biriukova's name often appeared in the *Toronto Daily Star*, accompanied by epithets like "talented" and "charming." Such articles also represented the artist as a reputable person in the artistic environment. In one them Biriukova gave her opinion regarding whether or not it was appropriate to exhibit paintings of nudes: "all the academies in Europe teach painting from nude [and] all the great artists painted from the nude. <…> I think that most of these controversies on the nude are silly, but like the nude itself, they seem to be a tradition." See "Morality Men Don't Object to 'Ex' Nudes," *Toronto Daily Star*, August 18, 1932, 3.

[9] In 1887 Dmitri Biriukov graduated from the physico-mathematical faculty of the Imperial University of St. Vladimir in Kiev with a doctorate of mathematical sciences. Later he received a degree from the St. Petersburg University of Railway Engineers. See A.A. Lisitsyn, "Builders of Railways of the Far East: Dmitri Pavlovich Biryukov," *Proceedings of the 56th scientific conference of professors and graduate students of the Far Eastern State University of Humanities*, section 'Actual problems of the history of the Far East of Russia,' Khabarovsk (January 2010): 81-90.

train cars during that time.[10] It is tempting to speculate that during this period of her life, being indirectly close to the working process, Biriukova started to build an understanding of the role of labouring people in the functioning of the country's economy, and that this may have shaped her interest in related themes in the future. Certainly by the time she attended art school at the age of 22, compassionate interest in Russian workers had become widespread. Such attitudes stemmed from aristocratic circles at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and by its second half had started to be endorsed by some cultural institutions in Russia. One such institution was the Fine Arts Academy in Saint-Petersburg, where Biriukova studied briefly before the revolution broke out.[11] The Academy was a platform for a group of painters, called "The Wanderers" or Peredvizhniki, who developed sympathetic imagery of workers (at that time represented by peasants).[12] This movement was also widely supported by the educated elite of Russia, and as the daughter of a nobleman, Biriukova could not have been unaware of such attitudes.

Once the revolution had begun, such sympathies did not protect the lifestyles and livelihoods of those nobles who held them, and the literature of the time reveals the nobility's great distrust of the "masses." It was due to the uprising of the working class that Biriukova's father lost his job, to be restored in his position only when then tsarist regime once more took power in the far east of the country.[13] As a result, as soon as life in St. Petersburg, now Petrograd, had become too unstable, the Biriukov family moved to the eastern city of Khabarovsk, an oasis of the old order

[10] Personal correspondence with James Manson, Yulia Biriukova's great-grandnephew, May 2017.
[11] "Dedication of the Yulia Biriukova Gallery," unidentified newspaper clipping (1968) from Yulia Biriukova file, Upper Canada College archives.
[12] In their activities, the Wanderers (1870s-1923) were inspired by populist ideas. Organizing traveling exhibitions, they carried out important educational work. The educated elite, on its end, supported them financially through purchasing their oeuvres. For example, Pavel Tretyakov was one of the most renowned patrons of this movement. See Alla Vereshchagina, "The Academy of Arts and the 'Wanderers'," *The Tretyakov Gallery* 14, no. 1 (2007): 6-21, accessed November 30, 2017, http://www.tg-m.ru/img/mag/2007/1/006-005.pdf.
[13] Moreover, in the understanding of the privileged classes, it was the "masses" that were creating the anarchy in the country and threatening the educated elite's leading the nation to a better future. The play *The Days of the Turbins* by Mikhail Bulgakov, based upon his novel *The White Guard* (1925), is an exemplary work that shows the process of destruction of the world of the Russian intelligentsia by telling a story of a family of Russian intellectuals and their friends who are experiencing the social cataclysm of the civil war.

controlled by the White Army, and an area familiar to the father from his work on the railway. In April 1920, however, Japanese invaders started firing on Khabarovsk from cannons, an event now known as part of the Nikolayevsk incident.[14] As a result, many civilians were killed and many houses destroyed. That same year the Biriukovs fled to Hong Kong. In China, Yulia worked until 1922 and was employed by the British embassy.[15] According to Biriukova's family members, the embassy offered a ticket to anywhere in the world and she and her parents decided to visit her sister Maria, then married and living in Canada. While the parents told Canadian customs that they intended to stay in Canada permanently, they left the country only a few months later, settling in Rome with Yulia and Alexandra. [16]

For about six years the Biriukov family lived in the Italian capital. There, Yulia Biriukova studied for four years at an institute of higher education, probably the Academy of Fine Arts of Rome (Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma), while her sister studied architecture at the same institution. Yulia graduated with a degree of a "Professoressa" (an Italian name for a teacher).[17] Later that degree would prove useful to her, when Biriukova would decide to combine the career of an artist with that of an art teacher. While living in Rome, Yulia started to take portrait commissions.[18] There she also worked on scenery at the Opera.[19] Most of her work from that period is lost, but according to her close friend and fellow artist Thoreau MacDonald, two charcoal drawings, *Boy in Overalls* (1927) and *Little Girl with Geranium Pots* (1927), predate her arrival in

[14] A.A. Lisitsyn, "Builders of Railways of the Far East Dmitri Pavlovich Biryukov," Proceedings of the 56th scientific conference of professors and graduate students of the Far Eastern State University of Humanities, section 'Actual problems of the history of the Far East of Russia,' Khabarovsk (January 2010): 87.
[15] Interview with Julia Hampton, Biriukova's niece, August 2017.
[16] Ocean Arrivals, Form 30A, 1919-1924. Library and Archives Canada, accessed November 30, 2017, http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/microform-digitization/006003-119.01-e.php?PHPSESSID=gasppvsfvaj1edpise9fodi125&sqn=1064&q2=5&q3=517&tt=4778.
[17] The narrative of Biriukova's biography in various artist files mentions that in Rome she studied at the "Royal Academy of Art in Rome," probably the Fine Arts Academy of Rome.
[18] "Russian Portrait Painter Comes to Live in Toronto," *Toronto Daily Star*, December 14, 1929, 26.
[19] *Old Times* (Winter 1973), accessed March 10, 2018, https://archive.org/stream/oldtimeswin1973ucco/oldtimeswin1973ucco_djvu.txt.

Canada (figs. 4-5). The former was later reproduced in the *Canadian Forum* along with another undated drawing, *Louisette* (fig. 6).[20]

The Italian period is instrumental in learning about Yulia's early artistic experience and in understanding the most crucial aspects of many of her later works done in Canada. Specifically, the three charcoal drawings show that Biriukova was already combining portrait and landscape prior to her arrival in Canada. It would be interesting to point out that already while living in Italy in the 1920s, Biriukova was by far not the only one to merge the portrait and the landscape genres. For example, a famous English painter of the interwar period, Gerald Brockhurst, also painted his portraits with a landscape background (fig. 7).[21] Another example is a Hungarian painter from the same time, Erzsébet Korb, whose portraits were regarded as "neo-classical" and "renaissance-inspired" (fig. 8).[22] This similarity is not surprising, given that many painters studied in Italy and were influenced by the multitude of Renaissance portraits painted against landscapes with a low horizon line (for example, by Andrea Solari, Raffaello Sanzio, Leonardo da Vinci and others). When Biriukova moved to Canada, she was to find that this tradition of representing portraiture was thriving in a way that accurately coincided with her artistic tastes, which brought a modernist approach to realistic painting. Indeed, some of her most accomplished works like *Louisette* and

[20] The three works are now housed at the Art Gallery of Ontario, all being gifts of a Canadian artist and a friend the Group of Seven, Doris H. Speirs. Thoreau MacDonald. See Thoreau MacDonald, *A Boy All Spirit: Thoreau MacDonald in the 1920s*, ed. John. W. Sabean (Manotick, ON: Penumbra Press, 2002), 250. In February 1930, the first reproduction of her charcoal drawing, *In the Country*, appeared in *Canadian Forum*. Her second drawing, *Louisette*, was published in October 1930. See Yulia Biriukova, "In The Country," *Canadian Forum* 10, no. 113 (February 1930): 167, and Yulia Biriukova, "Louisette," *Canadian Forum* 9, no. 121 (October 1930): 19.

[21] Brockhurst's painting *Ireland* was one of his many Renaissance-inspired portraits with a landscape background, while his similar painting, *Dorette*, 1933, created a sensation at a 1933 London Royal Academy exhibition, which suggests that Biriukova might have heard about Brockhurst's art. See "'Jeunesse Dorée' 1934, by Gerald Leslie Brockhurst," National Museums Liverpool, accessed May 18, 2018, http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/picture-of-month/displaypicture.aspx?id=162.

[22] Tamás Kieselbach, *Modern Hungarian Painting: 1919-1964* (Budapest: Tamás Kieselbach, 2003), 2: 17.

The Riverman, bear comparison with those of Prudence Heward or Lilias Torrance Newton (figs. 9-10).[23]

Paula Nuttall, a specialist in the impact of the Netherlandish painting in fifteenth-century Florence, gives an accurate description of the Renaissance pictorial scheme that also fits the approach portraitists of the twentieth century adhered to, depicting "a balanced counterpoint between top and bottom, foreground and background: the head offset by the neutral expanse of sky, and the neutral area of the shoulders enlivened by the landscape detail beyond."[24] Biriukova strictly followed that scheme in the drawings *Louisette* and *Little Girl with Geranium Pots* but not so strictly in *Boy in Overalls*, where the horizon line is a little elevated. Overall, that Renaissance technique allowed for a greater immersion of the subject in the landscape – a method that she would also use in *The Riverman*.

The Canadian adventure started well for both Yulia and Alexandra Biriukova. Following the death of their parents and fleeing an unstable political situation in Italy, the two sisters came to Canada (figs. 11-12).[25] Despite the fact that many immigrants experienced a deep nostalgia for their homeland, returning to Russia after the civil war had ended would have exposed the sisters to accusations of collaborationism, aggravated by the fact of being family members of a tsarist engineer. She never took the risk. Immediately upon her arrival in Canada, Yulia was able to rent a studio in Lawren Harris' Studio Building. There, she had an opportunity to meet many Canadian artists, and she established good relationships with J.E.H. and Thoreau MacDonald, Carl Schaefer

[23] To see the similarity, one can compare *Louisette* with *Nonnie* by Lilias Torrance Newton (c. 1920) or with *Farmer's Daughter* by Prudence Heward (c. 1938), both housed at the National Gallery of Ottawa.
[24] Paula Nuttall, "Memling and the European Renaissance Portrait," in *Memling's Portraits*, ed. T.H. Borchert, 68-91 (New York, NY: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 78.
[25] Grave of Dmitri Pavlovich Biriukov, Campo Cestio Rome, Città Metropolitana di Roma Capitale, Lazio, Italy. photo taken by travellers, accessed November 30, 2017, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/62547330/biryukov.

and A.Y. Jackson.[26] In his interview with Charles Hill, the painter Charles Comfort recollected that the MacDonalds introduced the Biriukova sisters to that circle, "got them to the Studio Building, and spoke to Lawren."[27] The two sisters quickly gained respect, being, in Comfort's words, "two charming people."[28] Another example of the Biriukovas' closeness to the Group of Seven was Alexandra's commission to design a home for Lawren Harris on Ava Crescent in Forest Hill in 1931, owing to which she is often said to be one of the first women architects in Canada (figs. 13-14).[29]

Reconstructing Yulia's career from sparse archival documents, the picture that emerges is of a woman who worked hard throughout the 1930s to implicate herself in the Canadian arts community, as well as with the Toronto *beau monde* who might be her patrons (fig. 15). The flattering descriptions that one finds in the Canadian press suggests, on the one hand, that Biriukova wanted to present herself in the most favourable light as an exceptionally experienced artist and, on the other hand, that the press helped to promote a new painter by stimulating a keen interest in its readership. For example, an October 1929 article in the *Toronto Daily Star* highlighted Biriukova's life of "turmoil and danger" and her artistic training coming from nearly all corners of Eurasia and beyond, that is, from "China, Japan, Italy and England" (fig. 16).[30] The

[26] Charles Comfort, "Interview with Charles and Louise Comfort," interview by Charles Hill, Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, October 3, 1973, 84, accessed November 30, 2017, http://cybermuse.gallery.ca/cybermuse/servlet/imageserver?src=DO99-1000&ext=x.pdf.
[27] Comfort, "Interview with Charles and Louise Comfort," interview by Charles Hill, 84.
[28] Comfort, "Interview with Charles and Louise Comfort," interview by Charles Hill, 84.
[29] Alexandra also pursued her professional education in Rome by getting a degree from the Royal Superior School of Architecture, later working with the Roman architect Arnaldo Foschini. Despite the successfully accomplished commission, she could not easily practice her profession, as she had to undergo a long architectural training in Canada to re-confirm her degree. In either way, Alexandra Biriukova chose to become a nurse in her later years. See Myzelev, 179.
[30] "Toronto's Art Colony Gets Talented Recruit," *Toronto Daily Star*, October 22, 1929, 30. CWAHI archives, Concordia University, Montreal.

article also mentioned her strengths as children's portraitist, thus highlighting a potential clientele for the artist.[31]

To promote her work and to reach a wider public, Biriukova organized private viewings of her paintings, which she advertised in Toronto newspapers.[32] In December 1929 the *Toronto Daily Star* published two portraits by Biriukova done in Italy: of Dr. Pierre Vieli, first secretary of the Swiss embassy in Rome, and another of Marquise Bisleti (fig. 17), further informing readers about the private viewing of her "beautiful oil and pastel portraits at her studio in the Lawren Harris studio building" that Biriukova was holding.[33] Apart from the circle of the Group of Seven, who also sat for her, her models were countess Fersen (possibly countess Sophie Fersen, daughter of the countess Marie Golenistchev-Koutouzoff, heralded as "one of the prettiest women in Petrograd"),[34] Miss Diana Boon(e), a "popular Toronto society girl," (fig. 18),[35] the now-unidentified *Madame G.*, whose pastel portrait appeared at the Royal Canadian Academy (fig. 19), and Maria Ildegarda Ambrosi, the wife of the Italian ambassador in Canada (fig. 20).[36]

In 1932 she exhibited at the Canadian National Exhibition with a "modernistic presentation" of the Anglican priest and theology professor Charles Venn Pilcher and fellow artist Mildred Vallery Thornton,[37] while her study of the Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen, Canadian politician

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[31] "Toronto's Art Colony Gets Talented Recruit," 30.

[32] For example, an advertisement in the *Toronto Daily Star* informed the readers that mademoiselle Yulia Biriukova had sent out cards for a private view of oil and pastel portrait and landscape studies to be held at the Studio Building. See "Social and Personal," *Toronto Daily Star*, December 9, 1929, 28. Another time the *Toronto Daily Star* announced "the University Women's club gathered for tea in honor of miss Yulia Biriukova, of whose several portraits were on loan in the clubhouse." See *Toronto Daily Star*, March 10, 1937, 26.

[33] "Russian Portrait Painter Comes to Live in Toronto," *Toronto Daily Star*, December 14, 1929, 26. CWAHI archives, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada.

[34] A Russian, *Russian Court Memoirs, 1914-16, with some account of court, social and political life in Petrograd before and since the war* (London: Herbert Jenkins Ltd., 1917), 282, accessed November 30, 2017, http://scans.library.utoronto.ca/pdf/9/4/russiancourtmemo00lond/russiancourtmemo00lond.pdf.

[35] "Diana Boone Weds Anthony Guinness: Popular Toronto Society Girl to Live in London," *The Globe and Mail*, June 16, 1938, 11.

[36] According to an article in the *Toronto Daily Star*, Madame Ambrosi was wife of the former Italian consul. See "Miss Y.Biriukova is Guest at Tea," *Toronto Daily Star*, March 10, 1937, 26.

[37] Mildred Valley Thornton was a Canadian painter famous for the portraits of the First Nations people.

who served as the ninth Prime Minister of Canada, has been considered as his best portrait.[38] In addition, Yulia tried to maintain contact with influential people of the Canadian artistic community. For example, she painted a Christmas card addressed to Harry Orr McCurry and his spouse Dorothy Jenkins McCurry.[39] McCurry was the Assistant Director of the National Gallery of Canada from 1919 until 1939 and its Director from 1939 to 1955.

Just as Biriukova wanted to be part of educated circles in Canada, she also sought to show that she had enjoyed a similar status back in Russia. Thus, it was important for her to indicate to the National Gallery of Canada that the Imperial Academy of Arts in Petrograd was the only educational institution she received her artistic training from.[40] Her decision was not surprising, considering the curiosity that the Toronto public showed for cultured Russian émigrés (seen in the newspaper articles about her);[41] apart from being one of the most acclaimed fine art institutions in the tsarist Russia, the Imperial Academy also represented the legacy of the old and culturally elevated monarchical regime.

Biriukova's efforts brought her to building a circle of like-minded people. Through J.E.H. MacDonald, the artist became particularly close to his son Thoreau MacDonald, though the nature of their relationship remains uncertain. While Charles Comfort described it as "a perfectly platonic

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See Alison K. Brown, *First Nations, Museums, Narrations: Stories of the 1929 Franklin Motor Expedition to the Canadian Prairies* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), 169.

[38] "Russell Study Shows 'Toronto After Dark'," *Toronto Daily Star*, August 16, 1932, 9.

[39] Yulia Biriukova, "Christmas Card MIKAN no. 2979686." Such cards were part of a large collection of hand-made Christmas Cards sent by different Canadian artists and personalities to H.O. McCurry between 1937 and 1954. Other artists who created such cards included: Louis Muhlstock; W.P. Weston; A.J. Casson; F. Brandtner; W.J. Phillips; B. Bobak; George Swinton; Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald; Robert La Palme; Norman McLaren, and others, accessed 30 November, 2017, ttps://www.gallery.ca/english/library/biblio/ngc021.html.

[40] In the National Gallery of Canada information form, Biriukova indicated "Imperial Academy of Arts" as the art institution from which she received her artistic training. Some sources, like the artist biographies in the AGO and the UCC, mention that Biriukova would attend the art school at the age of 22, which would be around 1917. See National Gallery of Canada artist information form, Yulia Biriukova file, CWAHI archives, Concordia University, Montreal. The form was completed by Biriukova herself.

[41] For example, a passage in the *Toronto Daily Star* in 1935 invited the readers to a garden party in "Oaklands" with the words: "Want to go Russian with the Russians?" with the Russian nobility, food and costumes, where Yulia Biriukova, portrait painter, "lent her artistic eye to decorating the booths." See "Russian Garden Party," *Toronto Daily Star*, June 5 1935, 24. Another similar article was "Toronto Russian Colony Hold Dance and Concert: Benefit Russian Invalids of Great War" in *Toronto Daily Star*, 18 November 18 1929, 33.

arrangement,"[42] Biriukova's family recalls that Thoreau "would have proposed to Yulia if he were better off."[43] In any case, theirs was a lifelong friendship. The two exchanged artworks and undertook shared creative projects.[44] Together with Thoreau and the Orthodox community of Toronto the Biriukova sisters helped ornate a Russian Orthodox Church of Christ the Saviour on Glen Morris Street, recently transformed from a Lutheran sanctuary (fig. 21).[45] The project might have appealed to MacDonald, an ardent nature lover and conservationist, for its anti-modernism.[46] An article in the *Toronto Star Weekly* recounted that Alexandra provided the design and the interior architectural plan of the church, while MacDonald carved medallions representing symbols from the Orthodox liturgy and to Yulia "went the distinction of having donated the icons."[47] As a prolific Canadian illustrator, it was MacDonald who facilitated the connections that saw her charcoal drawings published in *Canadian Forum*.

Biriukova's extant works also bear witness to her active involvement in the Toronto arts community. There are portraits of J.E.H. MacDonald (fig. 22), A.Y. Jackson (fig. 23), Mrs. Carl Schaefer (the wife of the painter Carl F. Schaefer, fig. 24), Doris H. Speirs (Canadian ornithologist, artist, poet and a friend the Group of Seven), and Bess Housser (later wife of Lawren Harris, fig. 25). Notably, however, she does not appear to have had ties with the city's other major Russian-born artist, Paraskeva Clark. Moreover, Clark had a deep antipathy for Biriukova.[48] In

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[42] Comfort, "Interview with Charles and Louise Comfort," 84.
[43] E-mail correspondence with James Manson, Yulia Biriukova's great-grandnephew, May 2017.
[44] The lyrical drawings of nature showing geese in flight, with MacDonald's initials "T.M.," hang in the home of the descendants of Birukova's sister Maria, while MacDonald's ownership of her painting *The Prospector, Peter Swanson* (fig. 65) and *The Riverman, Frenchy Renaud*, also testify to an artistic exchange between the two artists. Thoreau MacDonald presented *The Prospector, Peter Swanson* as a gift to the Art Gallery of Hamilton in 1973.
[45] "History of our parish and our temple," Russian Orthodox Christ the Savior Cathedral Website, accessed November 30, 2017, http://www.christthesavioursobor.com/?q=en/node/141.
[46] "Thoreau MacDonald, 1901-1989," University of Toronto, accessed November 30, 2017, http://forestry.utoronto.ca/thoreau-macdonald-1901-1989/.
[47] Jehanne Bietry Salinger, "Russian Exiles Find Zeal Moves Mountains," *Toronto Star Weekly Saturday*, November 1, 1930, Yulia Biriukova file, CWAHI archives, Concordia University, Montreal.
[48] Paraskeva Clark, "Interview with Paraskeva Clark," interview by Charles Hill, Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, October 18, 1973, 15, accessed November 30, 2017, http://cybermuse.shopngc.ca/cybermuse/servlet/imageserver?src=DO98-1000&ext=x.pdf.

view of the difference in the two women's political sympathies, it is not surprizing. Clark spoke very openly about her left-wing views, whereas Biriukova's family background and support for the Russian Orthodox Church (a major pillar of Russian imperialism) suggest a far more conservative political outlook, which aligns well with the fact that she would teach for decades at Upper Canada College, a bastion of the Canadian elite, while Pushkin celebrations and other high culture receptions of the Russian and Canadian communities were among some of her foremost interests.[49]

The antipathy between Biriukova and Clark was part of a broader, politically-driven confrontation around the role of landscape painting that Clark was very involved in. Robert Stacey has captured the discussion between Clark and a Group of Seven supporter, the sculptor Elizabeth Wyn Wood, in his essay "Coming Out from Behind the Pre-Cambrian Shield: The Search for 'the Canadian Face' from War to War." There, he cites Clark who wrote in 1937 that "The … Artist of the pre-Cambrian Shield … twenty, perhaps even ten years ago might have been performing a valuable function in arousing … people to a sense of their country's beauty. But … it is time to … come out from behind your pre-Cambrian Shield and dirty your gown in the mud and sweat of conflict."[50] That statement was in a sharp conflict with Wood's vision of the Canadian art scene, which, having not experienced Europe's political upheaval, could not follow Clark's ideas for such turmoil did not represent authentic stimuli to the Canadian artist.[51] Briukova's idealised works that focused on portraiture and aimed to interact with the immediate circle of the Group of Seven and the Russian aristocracy thus did not resonate at all with the calls to be a militant activist and a flag-bearer for the desperate folk in Europe.

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[49] "Miss Y.Biriukova is Guest at Tea," *Toronto Daily Star*, March 10, 1937, 26.
[50] Paraskeva Clark, "Come Out From Behind the Pre-Cambrian Shield," *New Frontier* 1, no. 12 (April 1937): 16-17; quoted in Robert Stacey, "Coming Out from behind the Pre-Cambrian Shield: The Search for "the Canadian Face" from War to War / Sortir de derrière le bouclier précambrien: La recherche du «visage canadien» d'une guerre à l'autre," National Gallery of Canada Review 8 (June 2017): 192, https://doi.org/10.3138/ngcr.8.008.
[51] Elizabeth Wyn Wood, "Art and the Pre-Cambrian Shield," *Canadian Forum* 16, no. 193 (February 1937): 13-15.

In order to help integrate herself within her chosen communities, Biriukova also made minor adjustments to the truth in her self-presentations. Namely, she made herself younger than she was at a time when youth was emphasized. The information provided to immigration officials on her first visit to Canada, in 1923, indicates that she was 28 years old, suggesting an 1895 birthdate. Later information provided by the artist would claim a younger age, however. For example, in the information form that she filled out for the National Gallery of Canada she wrote "February 21st, 1897" as her birthdate.[52] However, a 1929 Canadian passenger list, completed on the occasion of her permanent immigration to the country, also suggests that Yulia was born in 1895.[53]

The artist also made another adjustment to her biography, stating she was born in the cultural capital when customs documents reveal otherwise. In the aforementioned passenger lists, Biriukova indicated twice (in 1923 and in 1929) that she was born in the uttermost point of South-Eastern Russia, the city of Vladivostock. While the artist listed Vladivostock as her birthplace each time she entered Canada, by the time she was describing herself for the National Gallery of Canada, she preferred to give her birthplace as the nation's cultural capital, Petrograd (formerly St. Petersburg).

Biriukova may also have adjusted the truth in statements about her artistic qualifications, although it is difficult to know exactly where the errors in the record crept in. According to Speirs, Biriukova was a member of the Paris Association of Independent artists (Société des artistes indépendants), but since she did not exhibit in the *Salon des Indépendants* this was clearly not the case.[54] Some sources mention that Biriukova studied at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, but

[52] National Gallery of Canada artist information form, Yulia Biriukova file, CWAHI archives, Concordia University, Montreal.

[53] A brief article in the *Toronto Star*, which introduced the artist to the city, mentioned that she was "still a young woman." This can suggest that one of the important criteria of a woman at that time was her youth and that it might have been behind the artist's decision to represent herself a few years younger than her actual age. See "Toronto's Art Colony Gets Talented Recruit," *Toronto Daily Star*, October 22, 1929, 30.

[54] Doris H. Speirs indicated this when filling out the information form for donating Biriukova's charcoal drawings to the AGO. See Biriukova's artist file, AGO, Toronto, Ontario and Jean Monneret, *Catalogue raisonné du Salon des Indépendants 1884-2000: Les Indépendants dans l'histoire de l'art*, ed. E. Koehler (Paris: Salon des Indépendants, 2000), 296, 277.

the Academy's archives have no record of her attendance.[55] Biriukova herself would state, in 1923, that she joined the International Artists Association in Rome, and although I have not been able to verify this claim, the fact that she did live in Rome makes it far more likely to have been true.[56]

In Canada, Biriukova quickly started exhibiting with the Ontario Society of Artists (1930-1938), the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (1930-1937), and the Canadian Group of Painters (1933). During the same years, she also presented at the Woman's Art Association, also showing portraits.[57] She was not, however, elected to membership in any of these associations, which testifies that despite her efforts, she was not fully integrated into the Canadian artistic community.[58] Nevertheless, the artist was often given short but positive reviews in the newspapers. Taking a look at some of these can allow one not only to assess the degree of her popularity and activity but also to get some insight into artistic tendencies of the time.

Newspaper exhibition reviews were very short in the 1930s, introducing readers to as many artists as possible, and thus did not allow for a larger discussion of the works presented. At best, they were limited to short judgments about painterly qualities like composition, combination and application of colors, and "atmosphere." However, the scarcity of such analyses makes every mention of Biriukova even more valuable. For example, in March 1930 C.C. MacKay wrote in

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[55] "BIRIUKOVA, Yulia," Canadian Women Artists History Initiative, accessed December 30, 2017. https://cwahi.concordia.ca/sources/artists/displayArtist.php?ID_artist=3586, and e-mail correspondence with Andrew Potter, Research Assistant Royal Academy Library Collections Department, July 2017.

[56] National Gallery of Canada artist information form, Yulia Biriukova file, CWAHI archives, Concordia University, Montreal.

[57] David F. Ritchie, *Ritchie's: The Inside Story: Insights of a Toronto Auctioneer, 1968-1995* (Victoria: Friesen Press, 2016), 177.

[58] See the Yulia Biriukova file, the library of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Québec. Waldron (72) claims that Biriukova was a member of the Canadian Group of Painters, and the *Catalogue of the Fifty-third exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts* (1932) lists her as both an Associate of the Royal Canadian Academy and a member of the Ontario Society of Artists. These mentions are erroneous. See: Alicia Bouilier, *A Vital Force: The Canadian Group of Painters* (Kingston, ON: Agnes Ethington Art Centre, 2013); Evelyn de R. McMann, *Royal Canadian Academy of Arts/Académie royale des arts du Canada: exhibitions and members, 1880-1979* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981); and "Deceased OSA members," Ontario Society of Artists Website, accessed 30 July 2018, https://ontariosocietyofartists.org/membership/deceased-osa-members/.

Saturday Night that it was unusual that portraits provided the most interesting aspect of a Canadian picture exhibit, noting that Yulia Biriukova's portrait of Mrs. Housser was one of the excellent examples of a greater "delicacy of effect" that was refreshing to see after becoming used to the "rather putty-like color of even the best of the landscape painters."[59] Another similar review spoke about Biriukova's participation at the Royal Canadian Academy Annual Exhibition in 1930 with her portraits of Countess Fersen and a portrait of Madame G., stating that the two works were "distinctly personal in their treatment – a combination of modernism tinged with the accuracy of draughtsmanship one finds in the classic school."[60]

Biriukova's critical fortunes were closely tied to her perceived connections to the Group of Seven. In March 1936, Biriukova decided to exhibit a portrait of the Russian-Canadian ballet dancer and choreographer Boris Volkoff at the O.S.A., which the critic Augustus Bridle described as "impressively ugly" (fig. 27).[61] Bridle considered her style to be modern and this placed her within the sphere of the Group of Seven, which he vigorously opposed." But other critics, like

[59] Constance C. Mackay, "O.S.A. Exhibit," Ontario Society of Artists Annual Exhibition, *Toronto Saturday Night*, March 15, 1930, 39.

[60] John M. Lyle, "Fifty-First Annual Exhibition Royal Canadian Academy of Arts," *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada* 8, no. 1 (January 1931): 4-10. Two years after, in November 1933, Biriukova again exhibited in Montreal, at the Royal Canadian Academy Annual Exhibition at the Art Association of Montreal. The *Montreal Star* praised its freshness and a greater diversity of subject than in other recent exhibitions. However, the exhibition review did not specify Biriukova's subject this time, only briefly mentioning that it was a "large outstanding pastel portrait." The same year she submitted a portrait of Mrs. C. Schaefer to the 61st Annual Exhibition of O.S.A. in Toronto. For the full list of exhibitions she participated in and works exhibited, see Appendix I. Some reviews were rather neutral and seldom negative. For example, in March 1931 Biriukova exhibited a "conventional" portrait of A.Y. Jackson with a background that "imitated or interpreted his style," as well as a portrait of a young girl that she titled "A Mountain Study." Interestingly, from the mentioned reviews one can conclude that picturing children had a curious occurrence that seems to have been a trend of the time and that Ms. Biriukova was not alone who was fond of favouring that subject. See Frederick Griffin, "Heming's New Line in Art Striking Feature of Exhibit. Dorothy Stevens Presents Challenging Picture at Ontario Artists's Display," *Toronto Star*, March 5, 1931, 43. See "Royal Canadian Academy's 54th Exhibition," *Montreal Star* November 22, 1933, 15. In other feedbacks critics only mentioned her participation amongst many others. In 1937 Yulia Biriukova exhibited at the O.S.A. for the last time with the canvas Ontario Farmer that showed a portrait of Ed Seager, Biriukova's neighbour in Thornhill.

[61] See Charles Hill, "Bold statements in colour: the cityscapes of Lawren Harris," *National Gallery of Canada Magazine*, 28 June 2018, accessed June 30, 2018, https://www.gallery.ca/magazine/your-collection/at-the-ngc/bold-statements-in-colour-the-cityscapes-of-lawren-harris and Augustus Bridle, "O.S.A's Exhibition Blazes High Color. Landscapes, Portraits, Figures, But No Action Pictures in Show," *Toronto Star*, March 07, 1936,18, and Michael Crabb, "Boris Volkoff," The Canadian Encyclopedia, accessed November 30, 2017, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/boris-vladimirovich-volkoff/.

Graham McInnes, a Group supporter, wrote about Yulia Biriukova's portraits at the same exhibition as being "worth a second glance."[62] A review of the 1934 Annual Exhibition of the Ontario Society of Artists by pseudonymous Lucy Van Gogh (Nancy Phillips Pyper) showed that the critic was tiring of the Group but saw Biriukova as offering something different. While Van Gogh dismissed those contributors who "belonged to the fringe of the Group" as having "nothing to say that the Group had not said very noisily already," she praised Biriukova's portrait of Peter Swanson, as showing the same "passionate sense of life, pulsing blood and tense muscle" that was associated with the influence of the "Central European element" in the Canadian art community.[63]

Research revealed that apart from taking private commissions, Biriukova also made illustrations for magazines.[64] However, as for many artists, Biriukova's exhibiting career and occasional paid illustrations for periodicals during the 1930s necessitated a job on the side. During this time, the artist started working at the Central Technical School, a high school in Toronto, to supplement her income, where she instructed students in subjects like Antique drawing and Still Life to supplement her income.[65] Then, in 1942, she began her career as an art teacher at Upper Canada College (UCC), "instilling a love and appreciation of art in hundreds of students." (figs. 28-29)[66] The archives of the College specify that apart from teaching, Biriukova also supervised the design, painting and construction of many bold and colourful sets for the UCC Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. She was also responsible for a number of paintings, which for many years hung in the Gallery dedicated to Biriukova, just outside the dining hall. These works, by Biriukova and

[62] G. Campbell McInnes, "World of Art," *Toronto Saturday Night* March 21, 1936, 10.
[63] Lucy Van Gogh, "Art World," *Toronto Saturday Night*, March 10, 1934, 9.
[64] See, for example, a story "Dear Julia Knows Best," published in Maclean's in 1930 (fig. 26)
[65] Biriukova is listed as an "evening and occasional instructor" of "antique drawing and still life" in the Toronto school board's annual reports for 1932 to 1935. Subsequent reports do not list evening or occasional instructors but it is likely that she continued teaching occasionally at the Central Technical School until she began teaching at UCC. Correspondence with Marie Passerino, the administrative assistant at Toronto District School Board. See also Doris Fitzgerald, "Honor Yulia Biriukova: Dedicate Art Gallery at Upper Canada College," *Richmond Hill Liberal*, December 12, 1968.
[66] Fitzgerald, "Honor Yulia Biriukova: Dedicate Art Gallery at Upper Canada College."

other prominent Canadian artists, were purchased for the College as leaving class gifts.[67] Unfortunately, most of the works were sold in 2005 when the College experienced financial difficulties. Luckily, some of Biriukova's works, including portraits of the UCC teachers and its principal, a portrait of an Ontario farmer (fig. 30), and one work dedicated to nature, remain in the possession of the College.[68]

A few articles allow one to construct a better understanding of Biriukova as a teacher and a person. For example, a 1968 article in the *Richmond Hill Liberal* cited one of her students, who described Biriukova's teaching philosophy. "Never," he said, "would her hand guide the young artist's brush, but rather she inspired its stroke and clearly criticized the finished canvas without dampening awakening talent."[69] The article also gives a further insight into her teaching methods, stating that Biriukova organised sketching trips to the college property at Norval in Southern Ontario. Many years later, in 2007, John Carson cited one of Biriukova's students who recalled her as a fairly strict and strong character – the only characterization that has remained of her personality in print.[70] Carson also added that Biriukova gave some of her works to her students as presents, which attests to the warm emotional relationship between the teacher and her students.

Biriukova's work at the college secured her financial stability. In 1945, she purchased about two acres of land at 141 Centre Street in Thornhill, next door to Thoreau MacDonald, which became her permanent home. Having stopped the active pattern of exhibiting that had characterized her career in the 1930s, she focused on teaching until her retirement in 1963. When

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[67] Fitzgerald, "Honor Yulia Biriukova: Dedicate Art Gallery at Upper Canada College."
[67] Fitzgerald, "Honor Yulia Biriukova: Dedicate Art Gallery at Upper Canada College."
[68] Marian Spence, former UCC archivist, made a list of paintings that remained in the Gallery's possession after its recent closure and selling in 2005. Among those works were paintings by William Abernathy Ogilvie, Goodridge Roberts, C. H. Comfort, Carl Schaefer, David Milne, Tom Thomson, J. E. H. MacDonald, Thoreau MacDonald, Albert Cloutier, Lawren Harris, Arthur Lismer, A. J. Casson and A. Y. Jackson. Communication with Jill Spellman, Upper Canada College archivist, 2018. See also "Leaving Class Gifts 1939-1964," UCCA Ephemeral 1968/9 item "Dedication of the Yukia Biriukova Gallery, UCCA 80-0006/009 (190), Upper Canada College Archives.
[69] Fitzgerald, "Honor Yulia Biriukova: Dedicate Art Gallery at Upper Canada College."
[70] John Carson, "Canvassing Opinion," *Old Time*s (summer/fall 2007): 15.

her health started to fail, she moved in with Thoreau so that he could take care of her.[71] She passed away on 26 September 1972.[72]

There is currently no published list of all of Yulia Biriukova's works. My thesis provides a first step towards redressing this situation by illustrating all works where images were available to me. Appendix 1 further lists works that were included in displays of the major Canadian exhibiting societies (some illustrated, others now unlocated), while Appendix 2 lists other unlocated works, or those where I was not able to secure images. About some of her works one learns only from auction results, for example, about a very unusual (for Biriukova) portrait of Walter Adamovitch (*A violin maker*), 1938, which is almost a genre painting of a man at work (fig. 31). Land and seascape backdrops appear in many, if not in most of her known works: for example, in a portrait of a *Cape Breton Islander*, 1937, with a seascape background (fig. 32), in another portrait of a river man, undated (fig. 33), in a portrait of *Rory Cullen*, 1937 (fig. 34) and in *Young Girl With A Cat By A Window*, *Winter's Day* (undated, fig. 35). Some works show that Biriukova was interested in creating Russian-themed, almost folkloric portraits, like *A Young Woman with Floral Shawl in Sunflower Patch*, 1936 (fig. 36).[73] Furthermore, some of Yulia Biriukova's drawings are in private collections, including those of her family members, which attest to her excellence in the portraits of children (figs. 37-38), and some are mentioned only in newspaper articles.[74]

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[71] Phileen Dickinson, "The Biriukova Sisters and Thoreau MacDonald," *The Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill Newsletter* (November 2010), Thornhill archives.
[72] Dickinson, "The Biriukova Sisters," and *Old Times* (Winter 1973), https://archive.org/stream/oldtimeswin1973ucco/oldtimeswin1973ucco_djvu.txt.
[73] Ritchie's *Canadian Art* Auction, June 2, 1992, 288.
[74] Biriukova was said to bring to Toronto a portrait of the little Count Nicholas Phersen and Marchese Bistete, both painted in Rome, the latter exhibited at the salon in the "Eternal City." "A talented refugee," *Toronto Daily Star*, October 26, 1929, 10. Also, Biriukova's family members possess portraits of her younger relatives (*Portrait of Cecil Dickinson* and *Portait of Julia Hampton*, as well as a *Portrait of Maria Ildegarda Ambrosi*, and a drawing of Yulia's house in Thornhill, Ontario, the last one done either by Biriukova or by Thoreau MacDonald).

Section 2: The Riverman

In the second part of my thesis I want to come back to *The Riverman* to talk in more detail about the tasks this canvas carried out. Using this painting, created in 1935, as a case study, I will argue that it served to further the ideas of national prosperity and unity promoted by the Canadian establishment and supported by the Toronto community of artists that Biriukova was closely involved with during the 1930s.

The influence of the artistic environment of Toronto and the authority of the Group of Seven members who befriended the artist is most immediately visible in Biriukova's adoption of the "figure-in-the-landscape" genre popular in the early 1930s. By then, public opinion about the Group's landscape painting, described as the "first national movement" in Canadian art,[75] had started to cool under the pressure of artists and critics who wanted to bring the Canadian populace into the image of Canada that the Group had so successfully cultivated. Canadian portraiture, once mainly reserved for the social elite, began to show a large spectrum of individuals from farmers to intellectuals. Reviews of the annual exhibition of the Ontario Society of Artists published in *Toronto Saturday Night* featured comments that ranged from "we can paint Northern Ontario in our sleep" to expressions of delight regarding the portraiture exhibited.[76]

The motif of the "figure-in-the-landscape" was the Group of Seven's solution to this change of opinion – a solution achieved largely through the efforts of Edwin Holgate, who was invited to join the group in 1930. Holgate's early efforts to make room for portraiture in the Group's vision had not always been positively received, however. Fred Varley, for example, had previously objected to a submission of Holgate's portrait *The Cellist* for a show in the US because

[75] Dennis Reid, "Introduction to The Group of Seven," in *Beyond Wilderness: The Group of Seven, Canadian Identity, and Contemporary Art*, ed. John O'Brian and Peter White (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 102.
[76] Rosalind Pepall and Brian Foss, *Edwin Holgate* (Montréal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 2005), 44.

it did not represent specifically Canadian themes.[77] Holgate responded to such criticism by turning to the figure of the lumberjack in a series of prints that include *Head of a Lumberjack* (1925, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa), *The Lumberjack* or *The Log Driver* (1924, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa), *Man with Axe* (1925, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa) and others (figs. 39-42). It was his 1924 painting *The Lumberjack*, however, that best demonstrated the potential of the "figure-in-a-landscape" to serve as an acceptable visual embodiment of Canadian national identity (fig. 43). Indeed, by the time that the Group had expanded into the Canadian Group of Painters, in 1933, it was championing the marriage of landscape and portraiture as a significant development: "hitherto it [Canadian art] has been a landscape art … but here and there figures and portraits have been slowly added to the subject matter, strengthening and occupying the background of landscape."[78] Over the course of the next twenty years, Holgate's *The Lumberjack* was repeatedly selected to represent Canadian art in national and international exhibitions, acting as an extremely important precedent for Biriukova's *Riverman*, which showcased the same painterly formula that combined a popular character with a figure in the landscape.[79] As much as this formula, however, it was the specific subject of the lumberjack that captured the Canadian imagination at this moment.

What, then, was the meaning of depicting lumberjacks and how did they serve as a Canadian symbol? I think that the answer in the case of Biriukova's painting has two parts. In the first place, the lumberjack was a symbol of national prosperity and national pride. In the second, it served as a symbol of national unity in a country that liked to imagine itself as the union of two founding peoples: French and English. We will look at each factor in turn.

[77] Pepall and Foss, 44.
[78] Charles C. Hill, *Canadian painting in the thirties* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1975), 24.
[79] Pepall and Foss, 44.

The lumberjack and national prosperity

Lumbering had been the staple of Canadian trade for much of the nineteenth century and continued to be important through the twentieth century. Trade periodicals like *Canada Lumberman* and the *Canadian Forestry Journal* informed their publics about the forest resources in various regions of Canada, and, as their titles clearly indicated, they linked lumbering with national identity. Articles in popular newspapers like *Saturday Night*, *Maclean's* and *The Canadian Magazine* performed similar work for a broader audience, emphasizing the importance of lumbering in Canada and the utility this industry bore for Canada's waterways.

Such attention was not surprising, given the importance of the trade for the social and financial life of Canada since the colonial period. The economic development of Canada was directly tied to the timber trade, first with Great Britain, and then with the USA. In the twentieth century, the growth of pulp and paper production advanced the formation of corporations, while technological innovations further stimulated the development of the industry. Moreover, the time span of the lumbering industry made it a fundamental part of Canadian social history; over the centuries, the timber trade attracted a work force from abroad, changing the ethnic composition of Canada and giving hope to people pushed by poverty to the more economically and politically stable country (for example, Irish, Chinese, Russians and many other ethnic groups).[80]

As much as the industry was important to Canadian economic prosperity, its labourers also offered potent symbols for Canadian pride. In the December 15th, 1930 issue of Maclean's magazine, for example, Canadian artist and author Arthur Heming published a romanticized account of the rivermen who transported the logs once they had been cut. "Toiling long hours in wet clothes, risking their lives on slippery logs in seething, roaring rivers – such was the life of the old time raftsmen," recounted Heming, whose illustrations for the story also evoked the reader's

[80] Graeme Wynn, "Timber Trade History," The Canadian Encyclopedia online, accessed March 10, 2018, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/timber-trade-history/.

sympathy towards the workers of the wood, casting them as the adventure heroes of the nation (fig. 44).[81] More recently, scholars such as Donald McKay and Jean Claude Dupont, have collected traditional stories and logging lore, and their works also help us to understand the mythical character of a lumberjack, who was always featured as modest, religious, humble, brave and extremely strong.[82] Such stories suggested, for example, that Lumbermen could walk long distances ("one year and one day") to find the perfect life partner for themselves. When Biriukova embraced the figure in *The Riverman*, then, she was participating in a very popular vision of the labourer as an idealised national resource. Perhaps, this was part of the reason why she priced *The Riverman* higher than any of her other paintings.[83]

The likelihood that Biriukova, a Russian, was fully familiar with the romantic role of the lumberman in the Canadian national imaginary becomes virtually a certainty when we consider that her friend Thoreau MacDonald illustrated the 1938 edition of *Maria Chapdelaine*, an exemplary novel by Louis Hémon that revolved around the life of a lumberjack. Already with the illustrations of the first English edition of *Maria Chapdelaine*, dated to 1921, a clear pattern of representing the lumberjack had been established. Their simple compositions, focussed on the characters' interaction and not on portraiture, established the main features for representations of log drivers: the "riverman" with a pike-pole, his main attribute, a pile of logs taking up a great part of the picture, a river, and a forest thicket in the background (figs. 45-46). All would be maintained in the creation of Biriukova's *The Riverman*.

There are differences amongst the various pictorial treatments of the theme, however, and the main one is probably the degree of romanticizing idealism they embrace. Thus, Holgate's

[81] Arthur Heming, "The Gang," *MacLean's Magazine*, December15, 1930, 13.
[82] See Michael Edmonds, *Out of the Northwoods: The Many Lives of Paul Bunyan, With More than 100 Logging Camp Tales* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2009), and Jean-Claude Dupont, *Contes de bûcherons* (Montréal: Éditions Quinze: 1976).
[83] The price of *A Riverman*, exhibited at the Canadian National Exhibition at the Art Gallery of Toronto in 1935, was 700 CAD, whereas the cost of her other works did not surpass 500 CAD. See Appendix I for more details.

painting *The Lumberjack* aims to convey the sense of an honest representation of a man who is shown as if just stopped for a while to pose for the artist. The naturalistic palette, the plein air lighting, and the roughness of the brush stroke, coupled with the sitter's straightforward gaze, create a strong air of immediacy and authenticity. Biriukova's *Riverman* is, on the contrary, a far more staged representation, with dramatic lighting and a much more pretentious and philosophical look. For the artist it was important to show that her character possessed a great deal of force in his hands, unlike for Holgate, who appears to have wanted to emphasize not so much the strength as the skill of the lumberjack, manifested in the dashing way he kept the pike-pole in his hands. For Biriukova it was also important to follow the classical unabridged composition of the figure within the frame, leaving free space on both sides of the figure. This technique, used in classical art traditions, gives an affirmative and timeless sensibility to the subject. Biriukova takes off a characteristic attribute, a wide brimmed hat with the pointy end, that loggers usually wore, adding to a less specific representation of the *Riverman*.

Despite the fact that Holgate's portrait of the lumberjack can be considered as a more naturalistic one than Biriukova's riverman, they both share a life-affirming character. Their tranquil faces and relaxed postures inspire calmness and confidence. Biriukova and Holgate both belong to an artistic tradition that depicted the working population as strong and robust symbols of humanity. Given the nationalist preoccupations of the environment in which they worked, moreover, their chosen subjects can also be regarded as symbols of Canadian labour, land and industries. Indeed, it is important to acknowledge that Canada had, since the end of the nineteenth century, been building itself, its economy and its infrastructure through an industrializing process that was part of the mainstream race towards industrial development in Europe and North

America.[84] This process so drastically affected the way so many people lived and worked in Canada that it stimulated new visual typologies.[85] In this regard, Holgate's and Biriukova's lumberjacks embody the characteristics that would also be carried out by other hegemonic representations of workers, similarly linked to the notion of a prosperous nation.

This hegemonic imagery of the worker can be seen in the Canadian National Exhibition posters that show how he was glorified and ennobled during the interwar period through figural representations that mimicked sculptures of Michelangelo. Perhaps the two most eloquent examples are the 1920 poster and programme cover created by a founding member of the Group of Seven, Franklin Carmichael, and the 1937 poster by Eric Aldwinckle (figs. 47-48). As a visualisation of this idea the artist chose to depict a young and strong man, holding a sledgehammer over his head to make a blow; despite the hard work, his face reveals no trace of effort. The CNE poster by Eric Aldwinckle is a more austere interpretation of an earlier work by Carmichael. Bringing forward the slogan of the period – "Prosperity is achieved through hard work" – the posters aimed at promoting a utopian vision of Canada as a place with abundant land and resources where anybody willing to work was bound to prosper. Such rhetoric can be traced to the establishment of the Dominion of Canada and Canadian government in 1867, when the governing bodies were putting down the ideological ground for the country's economic and social development.[86] Stylistically, the CNE posters of the interwar period might seem similar to Soviet or German sculpture of that time (figs. 49-51), but the individualistic ideology expressed in the

[84] Dmitrty Anastakis,"Industrialization in Canada," The Canadian Encyclopedia online, accessed 15 March 2017, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/industrialization/.
[85] With an immense surplus of natural products and development of new industries, Canada saw a rapid acceleration of industrial change the decade following the First World War. It was only by the 1980s that most Canadians had become city dwellers with the majority of workers engaged in "white-collar jobs." See Ian M. Drummond, "Economic History," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, accessed 15 March 2017, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/economic-history/.
[86] Rosemary Donegan, *Industrial Images/Images industrielles* (Hamilton: Art Gallery of Hamilton, 1988), 23, and Eric W. Sager, "Reform Movements from the 1870s to the 1980s" in *Canadian History: Post-Confederation* by John Douglas Belshaw, BC Open Textbooks, assessed 30 December 2017, https://opentextbc.ca/postconfederation/chapter/poverty-1867-1945/.

slogan "Work and prosper" served the liberal ideal of maximising one's own gain for the ultimate wealth of a society, which was different from socialism or communism.

The classical features of the characters in the posters were meant to give a heroic cast to the subject, and a similar visual aesthetic in *The Riverman* leads us to conclude that for Biriukova a young and strong lumberjack like Frenchy Renaud represented a quintessence of the classical idea of an eternal hero. His character was as noble as a human being can be, with a relaxed posture and firm gaze that convey a humanist conception of an ideal man. Biriukova's choice to depict him from slightly below, looking upwards, was meant to emphasize the grandeur of his figure and spirit, resulting in a lofty and idealised worker.

In other countries, similar imagery implied different connotations. In the United States, the image of a muscled worker was often associated with New Deal art and functioned as a symbol of a reworked American democracy.[87] In the Soviet Union, the image of a worker embodied the theme of the country's reconstruction, exemplified by a young and energetic man who came from a village, and whose portrait could inspire the joy of life and "the will to work, fight and win" in the viewer.[88] Speaking about the Canadian context, art historian Anna Hudson links such "positive" imagery to the establishment of a Liberal government in 1935. The Liberal government itself endorsed the image of the new "emancipated" worker. In this regard, a very eloquent and much studied canvas by Charles Comfort *Romance of Nickel* (1937, National Gallery of Canada), painted for the Canadian Pavilion at the 1937 *Exposition internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne* in Paris, offers a paradigmatic image of the worker as a subject of a government-approved public work of art that positioned Canada as a modern nation in both technical and

[87] Anna Victoria Hudson, "Art and Social Progress: The Toronto community of Painters, 1933-1950" (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1997), 137.
[88] M. Dashevsky, "About the style of the Soviet photo," *Soviet photo* 4 (April 1935): 5.

humanistic terms.[89] Though all three artists had very different artistic approaches – Comfort's art deco and Holgate's and Biriukova's more conservative modernist styles – they did have much in common in their subject matters. While neither Biriukova's *Riverman* nor Holgate's *Lumberjack* was likely to have been seen as overtly political, unlike the role of the Comfort's painting, the persistence of imagery that extolled the worker in a positive way during and after the Great Depression decade can and should be situated in an international context where young governments, like the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, were also promoting the image of a strong and healthy youth as a symbol of the great potential of the people and of the future prosperity.

Biriukova's identity as a White Russian means that her sympathies with a socialist agenda were almost certainly limited. Nonetheless, to her as an educated daughter of a tsarist engineer who grew up during a turning point in the Western history of labour, painting a worker could well have symbolised an adherence to the liberal and humanist intellectual heritage of Russia and Europe, which had long cultivated an increasingly sympathetic attitude towards this subject. In addition to the Peredvizhniki movement ("The Wanderers," mentioned in the biographical section of this thesis), the piercing feeling of compassion for the poor working conditions of labourers became a widespread literary phenomenon in nineteenth-century Europe, when such classics of literature as *London Labour and the London Poor* by Henry Mayhew (1851), paralleled painterly ones like Gustav Courbet's famous canvas *The Stonebreakers* (1849). The latter sparked the creation of a chain of still more sharply critical works throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, such as the novel *Germinal* by Émile Zola (1885) and *The Return of the Coal Miners* by Constantin Meunier (1880s).

Looking to Canadian representations of labour it becomes clear that subject matter is the only element that links works produced from two utterly different ideological positions: liberal and

[89] Hudson, 137.

socialist. The distinctive feature of the liberal way of representing the labouring type was to show the image of a strong and healthy worker who symbolized national industry. The socialist approach, on the other hand, was characterized by a more psychological treatment of the subject, drawing out the suffering engendered by unfair working conditions and the social inequalities experienced by workings in relation to other segments of the population.

The place of Holgate's lumberjack and Biriukova's riverman within this context appears clearer when compared to the works of their fellow compatriot artists from the same decade: Leonard Hutchinson, Louis Muhlstock, Fritz Brandtner and Dorothy Stevens. Their paintings, drawings and etchings provide very good examples of a labouring man but with a distinctively different impact. Hamiltonian artist Leonard Hutchinson was a socialist whose portraits of farmers are limited to facial representations exclusively and absolutely discard the smoothing effect of the modernist aesthetic in favour of accentuating the harshness of life and the struggles of farm and industry workers (for example, *Old Farmer*, *Tobacco worker*, *Woman Farm Worker*, figs. 52-54). The engravings of Hutchinson were so explicit that "exhibition juries sometimes rejected them because of their perceived revolutionary message."[90] By contrast, the painting of Frenchy Renaud is upbeat and positive, showing the Canadian worker as a vigorous, youthful and healthy representative of a prosperous nation. According to Hudson, such a different representation was partly due to the fact that, in Toronto, artists had a greater risk of being charged with political propaganda than in other Canadian centers, which compelled them to be very prudent and,

[90] Alejandro Anreus, Diana L. Linden and Jonathan Weinberg, ed. *The Social and the Real: Political Art of the 1930s in the Western Hemisphere* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 339. Socialist artists from New Brunswick strove to introduce their art to a wider public. Notably, in the 30s the New Brunswick painters exhibited at the Art Gallery of Ontario (1936, 1937), National Gallery of Canada (1938) and the New York World's Fair (1939). In 1940 they presented their works at the Art Association of Montreal. See Kirk Niergarth, *The Dignity of Every Human Being: New Brunswick Artists and Canadian Culture between the Great Depression and the Cold War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 123.

perhaps, a little conservative when choosing what to paint.[91] In the case of Biriukova, however, her family history suggests a different reason for steering shy of revolutionary politics.

The socialist press of the day certainly understood the Canadian art world to be reactionary. As an article in *Masses* about the 1933 Ontario Society of Artists exhibition observed: "Little rural houses on still suburban streets, rural churches on barren country hills…Is this Canada? Is this industrialism, depression, bankruptcy, oppression and struggle? Or is it the mediaeval peace of a mythical Quebec village?"[92] Even less politically radical observers noticed the gap between aesthetic orthodoxy and the feeling of the day. André Biéler, a close friend of Edwin Holgate, wrote about the 1942 annual exhibition of the Canadian Group of Painters that "crowding galleries with pictures showing only the untainted beauty of our land does not leave room for the expression of that deep uneasiness and sorrow that is in our souls."[93] These expressions of the interwar mood support the conclusion that mainstream Canadian painting of the day was anything but radical in its political ideology. Instead, the Great Depression had created a need for images of prosperity through labour. If individual labourers were not experiencing that prosperity, the ideal of the young and increasingly prosperous nation that they belonged to could be mobilized in its stead.

Thus, in Canada, there was a significant discourse around labour that was not socialist but which focussed on *national* prosperity. Both *The Riverman* and *The Lumberjack* fit comfortably within the "Work and Prosper" message familiar to Canadians. Such uplifting visual representations of the worker were part of a broader context in which imagery was used to

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[91] Hudson, iii. For Holgate, Heward and some other members of the Beaver Hall Group, painting a labourer entailed comparatively brief encounters with working-class sitters. Their circle of their common models – friends, family and visitors – expanded to those people that artists met during their travels in search of remarkable characters, whose lifestyle and background sparked an interest in them. Pepall and Foss observe that Holgate and Heward painted some of their subjects from the people that they met on trips to Charlevoix county, seeking what they took to be the survival of pre-modern Québécois rural life and traditions. See Pepall and Foss, 39. Biriukova painted *The Prospector* from a visitor to the Studio Building, Peter Swanson, who "was actively prospecting northern Ontario and Quebec in search of mining opportunities and fortunes." See Tobi Bruce, ed., *Lasting Impressions: Celebrated Works from the Art Gallery of Hamilton* (Hamilton: Art Gallery of Hamilton, 2014), 148.

[92] Barry Lord, *The History of Painting in Canada: Toward a People's Art* (Raleigh: NC Press, 1974), 89.

[93] Niergarth, 162.

demonstrate the success of government and of industry in implementing their shared economic policies and practices at a time when the actual successes of those policies were being called into question by economic crisis.

The lumberjack and national unity

The second way in which the lumberjack could serve as a national symbol was as an epitome of national unity, and *The Riverman, Frenchy Renaud* is an exemplary work that shows this important priority – both in the country's national policy and the ambitions of its dominant cultural practitioners. The key here is the lumberjack's ties with Quebec. While lumbering was one of the staple industries across Canada, it was dominated by French-Canadians. As Hémon's novel makes clear, it was also closely tied to Quebec's role within the Canadian economy: "The shanties, the drive, these are the two chief heads of the great lumbering industry, even of greater importance for the Province of Quebec than is farming."[94] For decades, French-Canadian lumberjacks were the subject of general interest and legends. Such famous lumberjacks as Joseph Montferrand, Julius Neville, Louis Cyr, and Napoleon La Rue were all of French-Canadian origin. Canadian businesses traded on the image of the rugged French Canadian who ensured the quality of their products. According to the officials of one of the most successful lumber and paper-processing companies in Canada, the Brown Company, French Canadians were of a "hardy type, accustomed to the work in the bush, such as portaging, running rapids, etc., ... [and were] as a rule, pretty high-grade men."[95] During the Great Depression many lumberjacks emigrated from Canada to the USA, spreading their legends and contributing to the strengthening of this ethnic-based stereotype. By the 1920s, American scholar Alfred Donaldson was spreading the claim that French people "seemed naturally endowed with the agility, recklessness, and immunity to exposure that must combine to make them expert in logging" and that "they have always predominated as a race in the lumbering operations."[96]

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[94] See Louis Hémon, *Maria Chapdelaine: A Story of French Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1921), 60, and Anastakis,"Industrialization in Canada."
[95] Jason L. Newton, "'These French Canadian of the Woods are Half-Wild Folk': Wilderness, Whiteness, and Work in North America, 1840–1955," *Labour/Le Travail* 77 (2016): 121.
[96] Newton, 121.

A range of English-language literature popular in the time of Biriukova further reinforced the stereotype of a strong French-Canadian lumberjack. "The big French-Canadian filled the doorway … His teeth gleamed cheerfully from under his black moustache," began the *Maclean's* "Black Ice" fiction story by Lloyd Roberts, published in 1923.[97] Furthermore, the full title of *The Riverman* suggests that Biriukova was familiar with these views, as Frenchy seems to signal a nickname given to a French-Canadian logger by his English-speaking pals. His surname, Renaud, is also of French origin.

In French Canada, the lumberman was a subject of national pride that was more locally understood. There the lumberjack's nationalism was firmly centered on Quebec, where he stood as a figure of land-based identity and opposition to the English bosses who were taking over Quebec's natural resources. Two novels, *Maria Chapdelaine* and *The Master of the River* are iconic examples of these manifestations of French-Canadian national pride.

In *Maria Chapdelaine*, the traditional values of French-Canada are affirmed and rooted in the Quebec soil. The story, revolving around the family of the lumberjack Samuel Chapdelaine, is imbued with patriotic lyricism that focuses, among other things, on self-sacrifice that ensured community survival. Hémon provided a brief description of the steps of logging: "From October till April the axes never cease falling, while industry horses draw the logs over the snow to the banks of the frozen rivers; and, when spring comes, the piles melt one after another into the rising waters and begin a long adventurous journey through the rapids."[98] Then, he continues by discussing the river-drivers – "strong, nimble and practiced at the dangerous work" -- who work at every abrupt turn, at every fall, where logs jam and pile, "aiding with ax and pike-poles the free descent of this moving forest."[99] The main character, Samuel Chapdelaine, is motivated by a noble

[97] Lloyd Roberts, "Black Ice," *Maclean's Magazine*, July 15, 1923, 12-13, 49-51.
[98] Hémon, 58
[99] Hémon, 59.

spirituality and a deep attachment to the land that he works, and his lofty speeches praise the labour of logging. The novel also comprises splendid descriptions of the animated environment, like "nature rejoicing that winter was past" (p. 172), "the oppression of frozen earth and gloomy forest" (p. 136), "the struggle against the savagery of nature, their triumph of the day" (p. 53) and others. As steady sales of the novel attest, such language created interest and feeling amongst urban readers.

For Hémon, a true "Canadian" was still – as it had been throughout the nineteenth century – a *French* Canadian. For example, as one character in the novel observes: "I used to say to him, Samuel, 'We Canadians are always better off among Canadians'. When the French Canadian speaks of himself, it is invariably and simply as a 'Canadian,' whereas for all the other races that followed in his footsteps and peopled the country across to the Pacific, he keeps the name of origin: English, Irish, Polish, Prussian." Such passages defend the idea that Canada was founded by the French who remained its "true" core, associated with the "heroic days of the forefathers," when "three hundred years ago we came and we remained," for French-Canadians "are of a race that knows not how to perish."[100] Hémon, a Parisian himself, found the behaviour of the Quebecois very striking, inspiring respect, and embodying a strong national idea that was filled with history.

The second novel, *The Master of the River* (in French, *Menaud, maître-draveur*), written in 1937 by Félix-Antoine Savard, is a still-more politicized sequel to Hémon's novel, in which the lumberjack serves as a symbol of opposition to "the English foreigners."[101] Its main character was a log driver named Menaud. Unlike *Maria Chapdelaine*, Savard's novel showed the fierce opposition between the English and the French populations of Canada, and brought out the inner

[100] Hémon, 63, 171.

[101] The strong clergy actively fostered creation of the rural novels, and the form that sentiment took place was such a strong literary phenomenon that it remained popular in the French Quebec literature as a genre during a one hundred-year span from the second half of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth.
See Caroline Desbiens, *Power from the North: Territory, Identity, and the Culture of Hydroelectricity in Quebec* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013), 94 and William J Berg, *Literature and painting in Quebec: from imagery to identity*. Toronto: University Of Toronto Press, 2013.

social conflicts in Canada. Despite that nowadays "the foreign barbarian" who came and took over the lands of Quebeckers is read as a metaphor for a universal phenomenon of exploitation and of a lack of respect towards the culture and economics of others, the first edition of *Menaud* sparked controversy that persisted through the century.[102]

In view of such sentiments, it is fascinating that the Toronto public nevertheless found a way of incorporating these nationalistic moods into their own national narrative. Thus, the English translation of *Maria Chapdelaine* by William Hume Blake was described as "Canada's most lasting contribution to *English* romantic literature" (italics mine).[103] The work was said to reflect "the very core and marrow of Canada" that "grew out of an informed consciousness of Canada, a great pride in its past, and an utter devotion to the beauty and bewitchment of its changing seasons," and Thoreau MacDonald as its illustrator earned the moniker of one of the "real makers of Canada."[104] While French Canadians were focussing on fierce opposition between French and English and saw the lumberjack as distinctively French-Canadian, the English were thus trying to make room for the French Canadian within their more dominant vision of Canadian society.[105]

The appropriation of a French-Canadian novel into English literature that happened with *Maria Chapdelaine* was facilitated by the increasingly popular discourse of Canada's "national mosaic" – an idea which offered a convenient justification for using Quebec's national literature as part of the universal and all-embracing national narrative developing in English Canada. The

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[102] See Roger Le Moine, Jules Tessier, *Relecture de l'oeuvre de Félix-Antoine Savard: Communicaton et témoignages présentés dans le cadre du colloque tenu à l'Université d'Ottawa, les 24 et 25 octobre 1996* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Fides, 1999), 118, and J.-L. Roux, "Lettre à Félix-Antoine Savard," *Le Quartier Latin*, January 28, 1944 and William Johnson, "Anglophobie Made in Quebec" (Montreal: Les editions internationales Alain Stanke, 1991), 123-125.

[103] William Hume Blake, preface to Louis Hémon's *Maria Chapdelaine: A Story of French Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1921), 7.

[104] Lorne Pierce, *Thoreau MacDonald, being a talk on the artist given in Hart House, University of Toronto, upon the occasion of the Warden's exhibition of drawings for "Maria Chapdelaine," Feb. 9, 1942* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1942).

[105] Their interest in the roman du terroir thus acted as an early example of the "politics of recognition" that is now discussed in relation to Indigenous identity. See Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

Canadian populace was not officially recognised as multicultural until 1960s but the censuses of the first quarter of the twentieth century revealed that there were more than 60 ethnicities of other than British or French descent living within its territory. The preoccupation with an increasingly fractured population gave rise to the idea of this mosaic.

The mosaic concept of Canadian society first became prominent in the early 1920s. The 1921 book *Our Canadian Mosaic* by Kate A. Foster demonstrates the concerns that the English-Canadian government had at the time regarding assimilation of the foreign-born and their children (fig. 55). Such integration was the main idea behind many religious, national, educational and social organisations that aimed at forging the loyal Canadian by teaching him or her "proper Canadian values." According to Foster, work on the land, in mines, lumber camps, in factories and in new public works was "the business of building a national structure," and the engagement of immigrants in it provided a resource for its thriving.[106]

In 1938 John Murray Gibbon, the organizer of Canadian Pacific Railway CPR Folk Festivals from 1928 to 1931, wrote a book *Canadian Mosaic: The Making of a Northern Nation* where, similarly to Foster, he argued that old Canadians should inform themselves about the background of new Canadians (fig. 56-57). However, instead of the aim of having to transform the newcomer into a "proper Canadian," Gibbon focuses on "moulding a new nation" based on acknowledging the value of each nationality's culture. Thus, he demonstrated a very broad, at times erroneous, knowledge of Greek, German, Italian, Czech and other European histories and mores. Interestingly, each of his chapter features portraits of "types," specifically produced for his book: Italian-Canadian type, Hebrew-Canadian type, Russian-Canadian type, Magyar-Canadian type, Ukranian-Canadian type, Polish-Canadian type, Finnish-Canadian type, Swedish-Canadian type, Norwegian-Canadian type, and German-Canadian type. Welsh-Canadians, Irish-Canadians,

[106] Kate A. Foster, *Our Canadian Mosaic* (Toronto: Dominion Council Y.W.C.A. 1926), 56.

Scots-Canadians, English-Canadians and French-Canadians crowned the list as "races" comprising the largest bulk of the population and being the oldest settler-nations in Canada. The idea of representing foreigners as a distinctive part of society was manifested not only in book illustrations but also in paintings, for example, by Emily Coonan in her work *Italian Girl* (1921) or Prudence Heward in *Sisters of rural Quebec* (1930). For Biriukova, such an idea would have been appealing for its similarity with the multicultural Russian environment, where ethnic Russians were, just like the Anglo-Saxons in English-Canada, considered to be the so-called titular nation who got to bring different pieces of the national mosaic together.

Gibbon also emphasized that social and political distress forced the immigration of those for whom Canada became "not merely a temporary refuge but a home," in which they "have acquired a feeling of solidarity," and look towards Ottawa, rather than their previous homelands, "for political guidance and leadership."[107] The book has two points: to acknowledge the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Canadian population at that time and to demonstrate that the foreign population was harmless, for either it had already become loyal or was committed to becoming such. This idea is crucial for understanding the emergence of social typology based on people's different origins and jobs but unified under the umbrella of Canadianness – the shared desire for the well-being of the country based on comradeship, friendship and collaboration, as well as on the recognition of the government's authority. In Biriukova's day, the idea of a new multicultural Canada had not yet become official policy, however, the desire for cultural and ultimately social and professional unification of the country reflected the important processes of rethinking its social structure.

[107] John Murray Gibbon, preface to *Canadian Mosaic: The Making of a Northern Nation* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1938), V.

Typology and Canadian painting

One way of visually manifesting the idea of a national mosaic was by developing the painterly genre of the type. In such a context, the combination of landscape and portraiture took on a completely different connotation when it was transformed into a portrait of an individual who represented a group. Once placed into a local landscape – with all its nationalistic connotations – such figures gave rise to a typological thinking about Canadian society. Not all occupation-based types were in the landscape,[108] but once the two traditions (type and figure in the land) were combined, it became a very popular formula.

Portraiture from the twenties and thirties showcased different kinds of typological divisions. Some works, like Coonan's *The Italian girl*, and Prudence Heward's *Sisters of rural Quebec*, allow one to group types according to ethnicity (figs. 58-59). Others classed their subjects by occupation: for example, Holgate's *The Naturalist* (1941), *The Professor of Mathematics* (1924), *The Cellist* (1923) and *The Skier* (c. 1935) (figs. 60-63). Common examples were rural types, showcased in the *Portrait of a Farmer, Saint-Urbain*, 1938, by André Biéler (fig. 64) and *Ontario Farmer, Thornhill*, or industry workers, like *The Prospector* and *The Riverman* by Biriukova (fig. 65). Each of these types was shown, when possible, in a landscape. *The Riverman* is one example of a painting that emphasized *both* the ethnicity of the sitter and his occupation. Biriukova also made other paintings that were exponents of the figure-in-the-landscape tradition that also used generalizing occupation and provenance-based titles. Some of the known works are an oil sketch of another *River man* and *Cape Breton Islander*, mentioned in section one of the present thesis.

Scholars have made cautious attempts to speak about types in Canadian painting of the interwar period. Niergarth has described the populist and anti-industrialist social vision espoused

[108] For example, Holgate's *The Cellist* was painted against a plain background.

by a group of New Brunswick group of artists, which inevitably returned them to the "archetypes of rural folk and honest labourers."[109] Writing about Edwin Holgate, Francois-Marc Gagnon has argued that *The Lumberjack* inaugurated what became the first major series of paintings and prints of Canadian "types," though he finds precedents for the approach in earlier representations of Québécois habitants by Suzor-Coté and Alfred Laliberté, created in the 1920s.[110] Gagnon also recounts that Holgate was very familiar with the *terroir* literature and the nationalist discourses that arose around them in the 1920s francophone intellectual milieu, which he was determined to transform into "unmistakably modern works of art."[111] Despite such passing observations, however, the trope of the type itself has remained largely unexamined by Canadian art historians.

In other countries, by contrast, scholars have been reflecting on social typologies for some time. Kathryn Steinbock uses the examples of German photographers Eugen Fischer and August Sander to demonstrate modern ways of classifying people according to their profession and not to social status assumed by birth. Steinbock focuses on Sander's magnum opus *People of the Twentieth Century* that is structured according to "archetypes," three of which were "The Farmer," "The Craftsman," and "The Professions," the last one concentrating on the old, established, prestigious ones like lawyer, doctor, and merchant (fig. 66). [112] Interestingly, Steinbock assesses typology as an attempt to offer a *social* counterpart to the laws and categories of natural history. In this context, she inquires into what it takes to raise an image of a person to the status of type, and she observes that realism is an important part of the typological structure, standing in for scientific positivism and mystifying social relations. The realism and frankness of Holgate's and Biriukova's lumberjacks can be thus interpreted as an instrument for rendering a convincing myth.

[109] Niergarth, 191.
[110] This observation becomes more solid when Gagnon notes that Holgate and Suzor-Coté rented studio space from Laliberté in Montreal. See Pepall and Foss, 42.
[111] Pepall and Foss, 42.
[112] Kathryn Alice Steinbock, "Crisis and Classification: Photographic Portrait Typologies in Early 20th-Century Germany" (PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 2011), 180.

Furthermore, Steinbock claims that these taxonomies constitute part of ideological apparatuses, an observation that we have seen to be relevant for both the liberal and the socialist interpretations of the Canadian labourer.[113]

In some countries, moreover, social typology was used to build national identity. In her work *Social Types in Nineteenth-Century French Literature and Journalism: The (un)Making of National Identity in France*, Pauline de Tholozany examines how social types were related to the discourses of national identity in France during the July Monarchy. De Tholozany grounds her argument on the broad recourses provided by the artistic thought of distinguished writers of that time, notably, Jules Janin and Honoré de Balzac, as well as by journalistic works. The example of her study suggests a valuable parallel with the Canadian reality of the 1930s. Canada had neither extensive scholarly, nor artistic material that would focus on social typology. However, the work of Tholozany shows that the construction of types begins with literature. In Canada, that role was played by the literary genre of the *roman du terroir*, as well as by magazine stories.

The study of de Tholozany shows how much a national ideal is crucial for constructing a nation. Furthermore, it demonstrates how, in the words of Abner Cohen, "local interests, a local sense of place, or a local identity" is used for building a national paradigm.[114] Specifically, De Tholozany shows how such types as the *grisette* (a young working-class Frenchwoman), the *flaneur*, and the dandy act as a connecting link between national myth and the national unity in France. Though those types do not have much in common with Canadian types, they raise the

[113] Steinbock notes that in pre-World War II Germany "from the pages of rationalistic tomes on human sciences like physiology or bio-anthropology, to manuals on criminology, to pristine gallery walls, modernist art books, and cluttered newspapers, variations of the photographic portrait typology assailed public audiences and academic disciplines alike. However, in such a developed practise of classification that reached out to a wide public, there were still epistemological tensions between describing and theorizing; observing and aestheticizing; looking and intuiting." In Canada, where discourses on typology do not appear often, it would be even harder to ground a study of such a kind on academic literature than using an empirical method, derived from conclusions based on the visual and cultural studies. Furthermore, Steinbock argues that typology was a symbolic system geared toward overcoming the sameness of modernity, and this coincides well with the concept of a social mosaic. See Steinbock, v.

[114] Abner Cohen, *Two-Dimensional Man – An Essay on the Anthropology of Power and Symbolism in Complex Society* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1976), 41.

possibility of having an infinite number of types that vary from context to context. De Tholozany further argues that a type is always a fluctuating notion; for all its apparent fixedness, the project of establishing a stable social taxonomy is impossible, as a "type," being a construct of a human mind, depends on historical conditions. Thus, drawing a parallel with the Canadian reality, one can say that the frame of a type can be narrowed or widened, becoming a lumberjack or a worker depending on local context.

The rise of the middle-class in the nineteenth century prepared the ground on which typologies of labourers would be formed. In his book *Aristocracy and the middle-classes in Germany; social types in German literature, 1830-1900*, Ernest Kohn Bramsted attempted to assess the subject of social typology using the example of nineteenth-century Germany. Specifically, he outlined the principles of the middle-class division of people not according to birth but according to different grades of property and culture. In his study, he discusses the persistent concept of a binary division between the elite (aristocracy) that reveal the "man of the world" and the commoners (our *Riverman* is a good example) whose body and mind show their daily employment. Bramsted notes that it was labour that yielded the greatest sense of immanent satisfaction and an opportunity for advancement thanks to its training in moderation, order, sufficiency, diligence, determination, calmness – virtues that became regarded as necessary qualities for success. Bramsted writes: "The ideology of labour is not a specifically German manifestation, it is rather a collective European reaction to the rise of the middle-class in the modern world."[115] In this way, *The Riverman* acts not only as a Canadian type but, through its stylistic links to European painting traditions, it also is an example of a man of modernity and the virtues that go with that role.

[115] Bramsted, *Aristocracy and the middle-classes in Germany; social types in German literature, 1830-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 110.

Bramsted closely explores non-German examples of the attitude towards labour, quotes some notable German writers, like Berthold Auerbach and Gustav Freytag, who linked labour, industry and liberal thinking together, noting that labour was a common ground for most people, while industry was a common environment for a modern human.[116] In nineteenth-century English literature, too, one finds a didactic doctrine of labour as the "touchstone of human existence."[117] Bramsted thus provides good insights into European social history and the development of the concept of the working class and the labourer as a type that certainly permeated into Canada with waves of immigration and through intellectual interaction with Europe.

These contemporary studies about modern classifications of society suggest that at a time of fast development in mass media and the economy, European nations had a need to rethink their vision of society by forming a social mosaic and a community of belonging based on types. Furthermore, these case studies show a tendency towards basic typology on occupations and the implications of this thinking for discourses about nationhood – two key aspects of typology that also took place in Canada.

What, then, was the Canadian way of doing types and how did Biriukova fit in that trend? The works of Edwin Holgate, so similar to Biriukova's, are the key in answering that question. In a recent essay "A *Canadian* Portraiture? Some Thoughts on Edwin Holgate," Canadian Studies scholar Christopher Rolfe attempts to assess whether Holgate's portraits conveyed a sense of what it was to be Canadian.[118] Rolfe rightly considers Holgate as a part of the project of some members of the Beaver Hall Group and the Canadian Group of Painters, who asserted that the primacy of Canadian subject matter for Canadians could be supported by a distinctive visual language. Moreover, Rolfe backs up that idea by pointing to the fact that Holgate painted distinguished

[116] Bramsted, 112.
[117] Bramsted, 113.
[118] Christopher Rolfe in an essay "A *Canadian* Portraiture? Some Thoughts on Edwin Holgate," *Interfaces Brasil/Canada* 8, no. 2 , 2008: 21-28.

people in their field. For example, apart from the fact that *The Lumberjack* could be considered as a Canadian "archetype," the represented man was one of the finest woodsmen and a métis from the Gatineau Valley. Rolfe also discussed the professional background of the aforementioned portrait of *The Skier* – Hermann Johannsen, a pioneer of all forms of skiing who was particularly remembered for cutting alpine and cross-country trails across Ontario and the Eastern Townships.[119] *The Naturalist* was the elder brother of A.Y. Jackson and was, like all previous characters, depicted in his natural "element" – a statement of belonging that emphasized the sitters' occupation.[120] With his predisposition to portraiture, interest in painting models of diverse origins, and the encouragement he received from the Group of Seven to represent ideas that would embody a national idea, Edwin Holgate had all prerequisites to create a strong image that could combine qualities of a type.

In the context of heated debates about national art, *The Riverman* as a figure in a landscape and as a character had a great potential to embody a national idea that corresponded well to the narrative around the landscape and to the incipient national portrait tradition in Canada. Namely, not only did it represent a hero of popular Canadian myths about lumberjacks of French-Canadian origin but also was part of a portrait tradition that had tried to assert itself a decade before *The Riverman* was painted. For example, Christine Boyanoski very opportunely lists some works with similar subjects that featured portraits of prominent persons, immigrants, fisherman, munitions workers, native peoples and French Canadian "types," all showcasing "a broad scope of Canadian populous." These, however, had been pushed into the background during the British Empire

[119] Matthew Farfan, "HERMAN "JACKRABBIT" SMITH-JOHANNSEN (1875-1987)," *Laurentian Heritage WebMagazine*, accessed December 30, 2017, http://laurentian.quebecheritageweb.com/article/herman-jackrabbit-smith-johannsen-1875-1987.
[120] Hill, 16, 40.

Exhibition of 1924 because they did not correspond to the idea of Canadian wilderness.[121] By the 1930s, much had changed.

In sum, the great importance of *The Riverman* is displayed in the ideas of a French-Canadian lumberjack being part of the Canadian mosaic that symbolised national unity and of the richness of a nation that can build its prosperity on primary resource-extraction. Accordingly, French-Canadian literature that the English-speaking elite of Canada was integrating into its environment was a rich resource for justifying this anti-modern industry, at the same time being in line with the nationalism of the Group of Seven and the National Gallery of Canada. Biriukova, following most of the Toronto circle of painters she was involved in, did not paint Canada as an urban industrial nation, but as a nation of primary resource-extraction based on the land, as was the case with many resource-extraction industries, including lumbering, in her homeland.

The points discussed above lead to a conclusion that for labourers working on the land the land was a symbol of patriotism that represented the connection to past generations. A worker like a lumberjack, engaged in the exploitation of the country's natural resources since olden times, played an even more crucial role than any other industrial worker during the interwar period would: his representation became one of the key figures in nation-building through enriching its national doctrine by linking to the "glorious days" of previous generations. The literature that emanated from these feelings was, in its turn, created and widely consumed by the intellectual elite. The interests of the two groups was well suited to achieve the objectives that the government set to promote the country's economy, as exemplified by the Canadian national exhibition posters and the decoration of the Canadian Pavilion at the International Exhibition of Arts and Techniques in Paris in 1937. The forceful worker thus played a crucial role as an instrument of propaganda of Canada's economic well-being.

[121] Boyanoski, "Selective memory: The British Empire Exhibition and national histories of art," 167.

Some scholars might classify Biriukova's *Riverman* as a representative of older visual and literary examples that longed for the "good old times." As Biriukova's *Riverman* and Holgate's *Lumberjack* are analogous paintings from the same context, it seems valid to draw a parallel between a contemporary interpretation of Holgate's art and Biriukova's artistic legacy. For example, Caroline Beaudoin has discussed "the abundance and popularity of publications, illustrations, and paintings of habitant figures, loggers, and teamsters, created by antimodernists F.S. Coburn, Louis Fréchette, Georges Bouchard, Edwin Holgate and W.H. Drummond," as "escapes from industrialization and the 'progress' of modernity."[122] Yet others have been interested in showing how artists like Holgate and Biriukova were preoccupied with classifying their art as "modern." For example, the National Gallery of Canada presents Holgate as a "central figure in the development of modern art in Canada."[123] As Holgate stated himself, "It didn't matter what a thing looked like or was to be, the basic structure was what was most important . . . It's more than composition."[124] François-Marc Gagnon noted that Edwin Holgate "was interested in modernism but was never indifferent to subject matter."[125] Jean Chauvin would have addressed Holgate's position as a traditionalist and modernist at the same time, while the *Montreal Gazette* praised his works in phrases synonymous with the embrace of a modernist aesthetic.[126]

Not only did many realist artists from the interwar period who dedicated their art to picturing the Canadian populace, like Biriukova, paint in a more "generalizing," "precise, simple and frank" pictorial manner, typical of modernism,[127] they also depicted the subject that was an

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[122] Caroline Beaudoin, "Everyday Landscapes: Picturing Places of Labour, Leisure, and Industry in Quebec's Eastern Townships, 1900-2015," (PhD thesis, Concordia University, 2017), 44.
[123] "Edwin Holgate," Gallery.ca, accessed 30 June 2018, https://www.gallery.ca/collection/artist/edwin-holgate.
[124] Taped interview by Ann Davis with Edwin Holgate, recorded at Morin Heights on 26 February 1970 (National Gallery of Canada Archives).
[125] Marylin J. McKay, *Picturing the Land: Narrating Territories in Canadian Landscape Art, 1500-1950* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press – MQUP, 2011), 238.
[126] Pepall and Foss, 39.
[127] Lora Senechal Carney, *Canadian Painters in a Modern World, 1925–1955: Writings and Reconsiderations* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2017), 164.

active part of Canada's reality for decades and remained such long after *The Riverman* had been completed. In the view of the role and the innovative representation of the lumberjack as a modern emancipated man, it might be too categorical to call Biriukova an anti-modernist.

Conclusion

As a response to the fact that in some circles there was an interest in broadening the subject matter that could characterize Canadian art, the motif of "the-figure-in-the-landscape" enabled portraiture to revitalize the pictorial concern with nature. While this approach was not new to the rest of the world, it was crucially symbolic for the continuation of a pictorial discourse on Canadian identity. In finding a way to move the moribund landscape tradition forward, the merging of the portraits of Canadian people with the land, also implied that a sense of belonging to nature was critically important to Canadians.

From their position at the heart of the Canadian cultural establishment, the Group of Seven created a vision that was in line with dominant political and economic visions. In the 1920s, this vision had been focussed on the claiming of empty land; by the 1930s, with the admission of Edwin Holgate to membership, it broadened out to encompass people, defining a nation where each group would fulfill its own indispensable functions. By filling its own predictable niche, each "type" was, to some extent, a cog in the machine of production of the national wealth, or a cell in the properly functioning social organism. By choosing the individualist figure of the lumberjack, however, and by painting him in a highly personalized way, these artists counterbalanced the underlying social work that the very structure of typological thinking presupposed. This was a liberal way of representing labour, which consisted in showing the image of *a* worker (notably *not* as part of an aggregate class force) who would produce both individual and national wealth through transforming natural recourses into a marketable product.

The lumberjack was an embodiment of many concepts of that time. He represented both the Quebec and the Canadian mythos. He was seen as a symbol of industry that fitted the nation thus contributing to the idea of national prosperity. Lastly, he acted as an exponent of a typological approach to the Canadian populace that supported the emerging discourse of the Canadian mosaic

and thus strengthened the national unity agenda in two distinctive ways: as a collective image of French-Canadian ethnicity *within* Canada, and as an embodiment of an ideal of Canadian industry and industriousness.

The emerging interest of Canadian people in social typology and the desire to personalize specific industries was crucial in Canada, as indeed it had been elsewhere. In the hands of Holgate, Biriukova and other artists of the 1930s, this interest created "symbols" of industries and canons of their representations, including three of the historically most important ones in Canada: mining (as represented in Biriukova's *The Prospector*), farming (for example, in works such as Biriukova's *Ontario Farmer, Thornhill*), and, of course, logging. The "aura" of some these images proved to be so strong that they continued to be reproduced many decades later as recognisable national symbols of the Canadian society and its industries.[128]

Yulia Biriukova entered into this context as an immigrant. Well-eduated and from an affluent family background, she made the most of her allure as a cultured European, either exaggerating her own qualifications or perhaps permitting others to do so. Despite the hardships of the Great Depression, Biriukova was able to make the 1930s the most productive chapter of her artistic career. Her exhibiting history tells a story of a volitional person, while the portrait that emerges from the press reveals her early artistic ambition and, subsequently, the security that came from devoting herself to pedagogical practice. Her active social life and "charming" character allowed Biriukova to make an important contribution to Canadian art. Her portraits paired with the landscape created visuals that strengthened the concept of typology in the mosaic of Canadian populace, while her social integration was facilitated by her upbringing and political experiences of

[128] For example, *The Lumberjack* and *Rollande* by two of the most well-recognized and acclaimed Canadian artists (Holgate and Prudence Heward), were used twice to represent Canadian art in such a highly populist means of dissemination as postage stamps, in 1995 and 2010 respectively. See the Canadian Postage stamps, accessed 15 March 2017, https://www.canadianpostagestamps.ca/stamps/16860/the-lumberjack-1924-holgate and https://www.canadianpostagestamps.ca/stamps/18239/prudence-heward--rollande.

the Russian revolution that suited her to the liberal economic climate of the cultural elite in Toronto.

Unlike her contemporaries in Russia and Europe, who practiced abstraction, she remained faithful to the old school of figurative art, which, along with her religiosity, attests to her conservatism. Nonetheless, with her modern bright colourful palette and confident approach to representations of a modern self-made man, she significantly differed from long-established realist painters, reared by European academies. Her painterly style facilitated her successful integration into a Canadian artistic establishment that, for all its aesthetic rhetoric of modernism, was socially rather traditionalist.

The information about Biriukova that is accessible to the general public is limited to a few recent newspaper articles that show, however, an existing interest and remembrance of her. I hope that this research will help to further this interest. As more of her canvases are explored in detail, the story of her contribution to Canadian culture will become more and more complete.

APPENDIX I.

Works by Yulia Biriukova shown at major Canadian exhibitions

Ontario Society of Artists

Portrait of Mrs. Bess Housser (1930)

Portrait of A. Y. Jackson (1931)

Mountain Study (1931), price indicated $175

Portrait of Miss Diana Boon (1932), indicated as not for sale

Portrait of Mrs. C. Schaefer (1933)

Prospector (1934), price indicated $500

Portrait Study (1935)

Ontario Farmer (1937)

Canadian National Exhibition (at the Art Gallery of Toronto)

Portrait (1933), price indicated $300

Prospector (1934), price indicated $500

A Riverman (1935), price indicated $700

Boris Volkoff (1936), N.F.S.

Ontario Farmer (1937), price indicated $200

Cape Breton Islander (1938), price indicated $500

Royal Canadian Academy

Countess Fersen (1930)

Portrait of Mde. G. (1930)

Portrait of Madame G. (1933)

Signora G. B. Ambrosi (1932)

Portrait of J. E. H. MacDonald (1932) – N.F.S. (no price)

A Prairie Settler (1936), price indicated $400

Ontario Farmer (1937), price indicated $200

Annual Exhibition of Canadian Art, National Gallery of Canada:

Portrait of Mrs. F. B. Housser (1931)

J. E. H. MacDonald (1932)

Mountain Study (1932)

APPENDIX II.

Other known works by Biriukova

Young bride (1953) Ritchie's Toronto. Decorative & Canadian Art. September 13, 1999. Lot No. 4197. Price sold $575 USD.

Works in possession of Upper Canada College:

Ed Seager, Thornhill Ontario farmer (1937), oil on burlap

Major F.J. Mallet, UCC Teacher (1953), oil on linen

Ralph M. "Pop" Law, c. 1950 (UCC Teacher), oil on linen

Rev. Dr. Cedric Sowby (UCC Principal), oil on canvas

Sgt. Maj. F.N. Carpenter, UCC Teacher (c. 1955), oil on linen

Hockley Valley (1939), oil on cardboard

Back Field and Sunflower, Thornhill (1936), oil on cardboard

Works in private collections:

Portrait of Julia Hampton, date n/a

Portrait of Cecil Dickinson (1936)

Portrait of Maria Ildegarda Ambrosi, 1932

Portrait of Dr. Pierre Vieli, date n/a

Portrait Marquise Bisleti, date n/a

Works in Canadian museums:

AGO:

Portrait of Mrs. Carl Schaeffer, née Lillian Evers (1933)

Little Girl with Geranium Pots, 1927(?)

Boy in Overalls (In The Country), 1927(?)

Louisette, 1927(?)

MCC Permanent collection:

Madonna and Child (ink on paper, 1931)

Sunflowers (oil on board, 1933)

Unlocated works:

Icons painted for the Russian Orthodox Church in Toronto: *Virgin and Child, The Angel Michael*, c. 1930.

Portrait of a woman (Alexandra Biriukova?), 1940

Prof. C. V. Pilcher

Mildred V. Thornton

Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen (study)

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Figures

Fig. 1. Yulia Biriukova, *The Riverman, Frenchy Renaud*, 1935, oil on canvas, 122 x 107 centimetres, Art Gallery of Hamilton, gift of Thoreau MacDonald.

Source: courtesy of Art Gallery of Hamilton.

Fig. 2. Dmitri Pavlovitch Biriukov, Yulia's father, born in 1964.

Source: Russian State Historical Archive, St. Petersburg.

Fig. 3. Yulia Biriukova at the age of 15.

Source: courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, J.E.H. and Thoreau MacDonald Collection.

Fig. 4. Yulia Biriukova, *Boy in Overalls (In The Country)*, c. 1927, charcoal on paper, 35.6 x 28.3 centimeters. Art Gallery of Ontario, gift of Mrs. Doris Huestis Mills Speirs, 1971.

Source: Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, photo by Alena Krasnikova.

Fig. 5. Yulia Biriukova, *Little Girl with Geranium Pots*, c. 1927, charcoal on paper, 36.2 x 28 centimeters. Art Gallery of Ontario, gift of Mrs. Doris Huestis Mills Speirs, 1971.

Source: Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, photo by Alena Krasnikova.

Fig. 6. Yulia Biriukova, *Louisette*, c. 1927, charcoal on paper, 35.6 x 26.7 centimeters. Art Gallery of Ontario, gift of Mrs. Doris Huestis Mills Speirs, 1971.

Source: Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, photo by Alena Krasnikova.

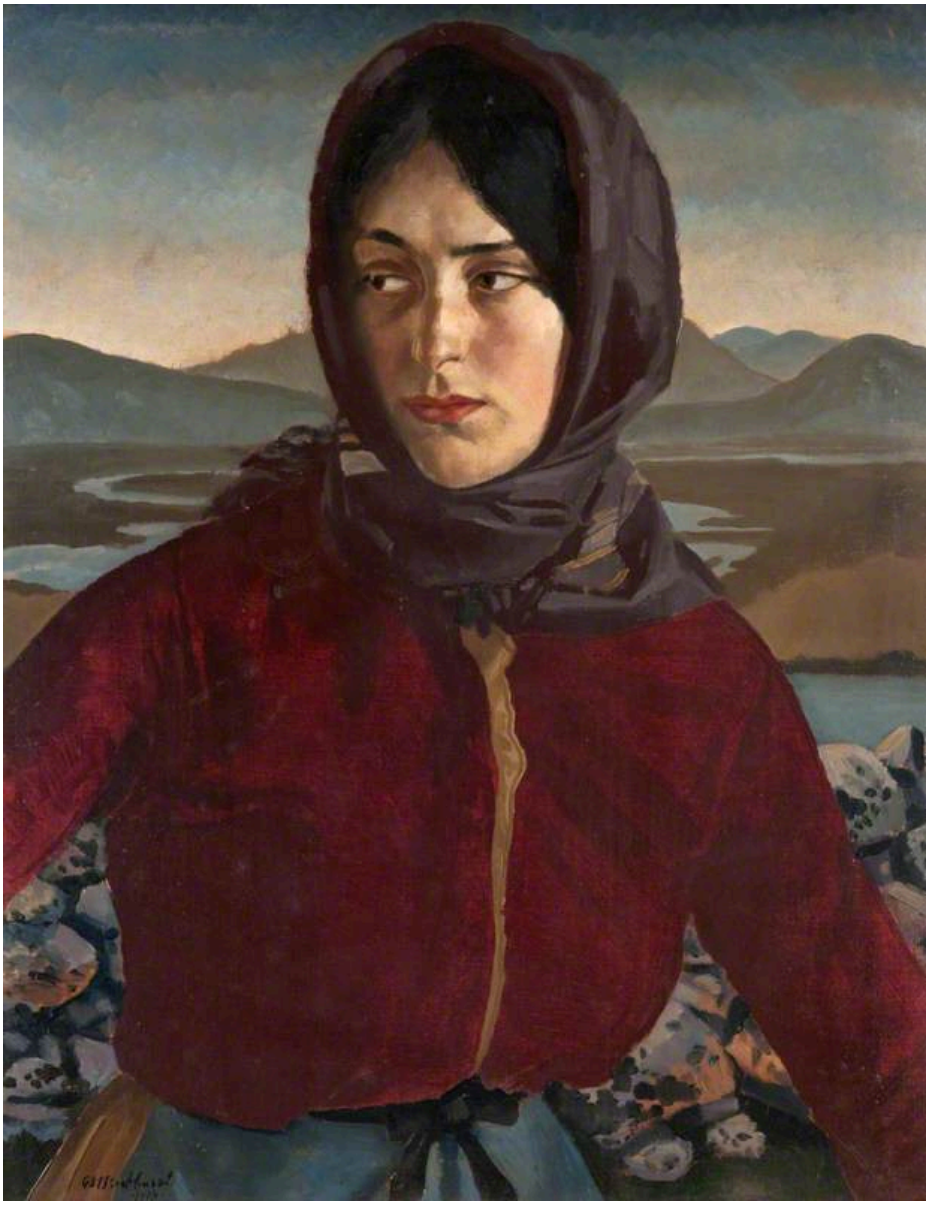


Fig. 7. Gerald Brockhurst, *Ireland*, 1916, oil on board, 66.1 x 53.2 centimeters. Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland.

Source: photo by Richard Woodward.

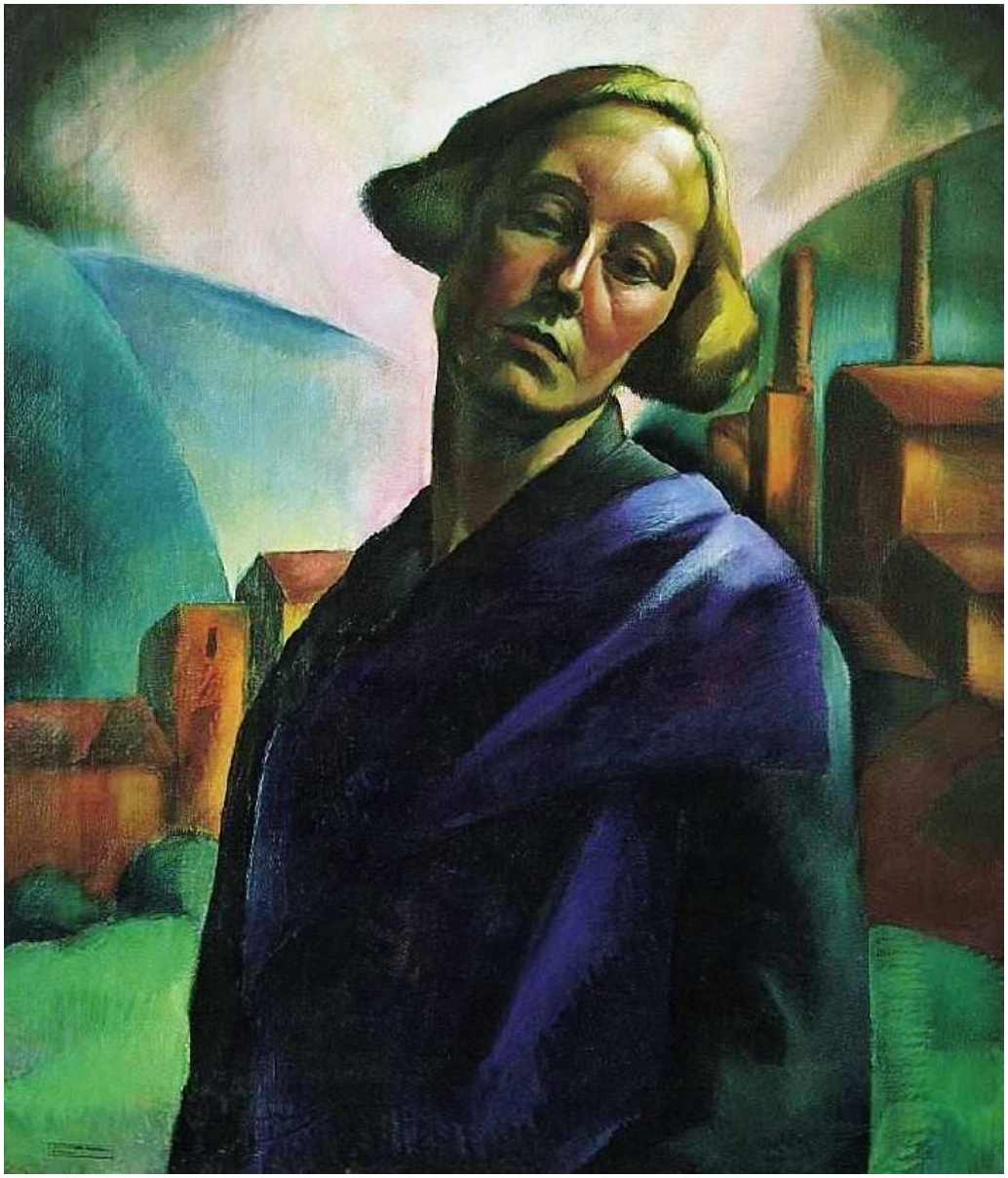


Fig. 8. Erzsébet Korb, *Self-portrait*, c. 1921, oil on canvas, 80 x 64 centimeters. Private collection.

Source: Kieselbach.hu.

Fig. 9. Prudence Heward*, Girl on a Hill*, c. 1928, oil on canvas, 101.8 x 94.6 centimeters.

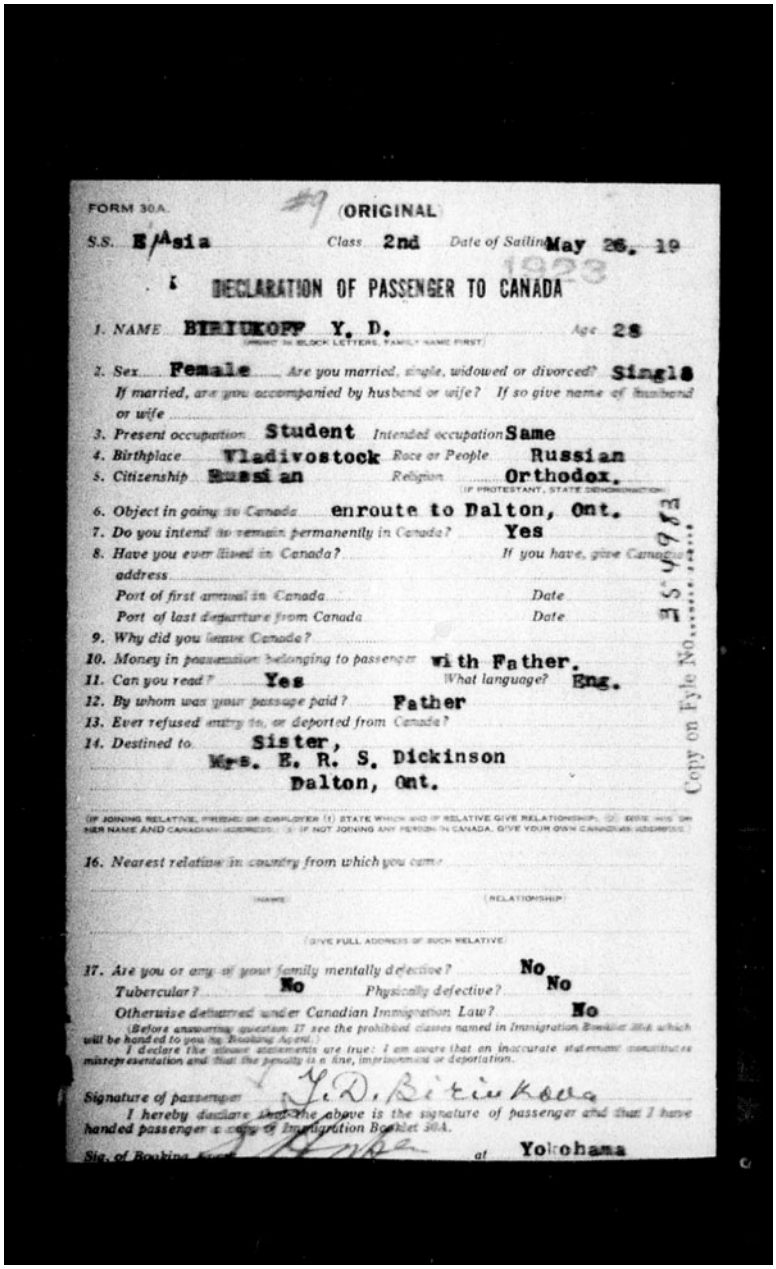
National Gallery of Canada.

Source: Gallery.ca.

Fig. 10. Lilias Torrance Newton, *Nonnie*, c. 1920, oil on canvas, 66.3 x 56.2 centimeters.

National Gallery of Canada.

Source: Gallery.ca.



FORM 30A. #9 (ORIGINAL)

S.S. Asia Class 2nd Date of Sailing May 26, 19

1923

DECLARATION OF PASSENGER TO CANADA

1. NAME BIRIUKOFF Y. D. Age 28
(PRINT IN BLOCK LETTERS, FAMILY NAME FIRST)

2. Sex Female Are you married, single, widowed or divorced? Single
If married, are you accompanied by husband or wife? If so give name of husband or wife
3. Present occupation Student Intended occupation Same
4. Birthplace Vladivostock Race or People Russian
5. Citizenship Russian Religion Orthodox.
(IF PROTESTANT, STATE DENOMINATION)
6. Object in going to Canada enroute to Dalton, Ont.
7. Do you intend to remain permanently in Canada? Yes
8. Have you ever lived in Canada? If you have, give Canadian address
Port of first arrival in Canada Date
Port of last departure from Canada Date
9. Why did you leave Canada?
10. Money in possession belonging to passenger with Father.
11. Can you read? Yes What language? Eng.
12. By whom was your passage paid? Father
13. Ever refused entry to, or deported from Canada?
14. Destined to Sister,
Mrs. E. R. S. Dickinson
Dalton, Ont.

(IF JOINING RELATIVE, FRIEND OR EMPLOYER (1) STATE WHICH AND IF RELATIVE GIVE RELATIONSHIP; (2) GIVE HIS OR HER NAME AND CANADIAN ADDRESS; (3) IF NOT JOINING ANY PERSON IN CANADA, GIVE YOUR OWN CANADIAN ADDRESS)

16. Nearest relative in country from which you come
(NAME) (RELATIONSHIP)
(GIVE FULL ADDRESS OF SUCH RELATIVE)

17. Are you or any of your family mentally defective? No
Tubercular? No Physically defective? No
Otherwise debarred under Canadian Immigration Law? No
(Before answering question 17 see the prohibited classes named in Immigration Booklet 30A which will be handed to you by Booking Agent.)
I declare The above statements are true: I am aware that an inaccurate statement constitutes misrepresentation and that the penalty is a fine, imprisonment or deportation.

Signature of passenger Y. D. Biriukoff

I hereby declare that the above is the signature of passenger and that I have handed passenger a copy of Immigration Booklet 30A.

Sig. of Booking Agent at Yokohama

Copy on File No. 35-4983

Fig. 11. Yulia Biriukova's record, Ocean Arrivals, Form 30A, 1919-1924, May 26, 1923.

Source: Library and Archives Canada.

http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/microform-digitization/006003-119.01-e.php?PHPSESSID=gasppvsfvaj1edpise9fodi125&sqn=1064&q2=5&q3=517&tt=4778.

Fig. 12. Photo of Yulia Biriukova, “Russian Portrait Painter Comes to Live in Toronto,” *Toronto Daily Star*, December 14, 1929, 26.

Fig. 13. Yulia Biriukova, *Portrait of a woman* (Alexandra Biriukova?), 1940, pastel on paper, 50 x 40 centimetres. Waddington's. Canadian Art. June l, 2005. Lot 00533.

Source: Torontoist.com.

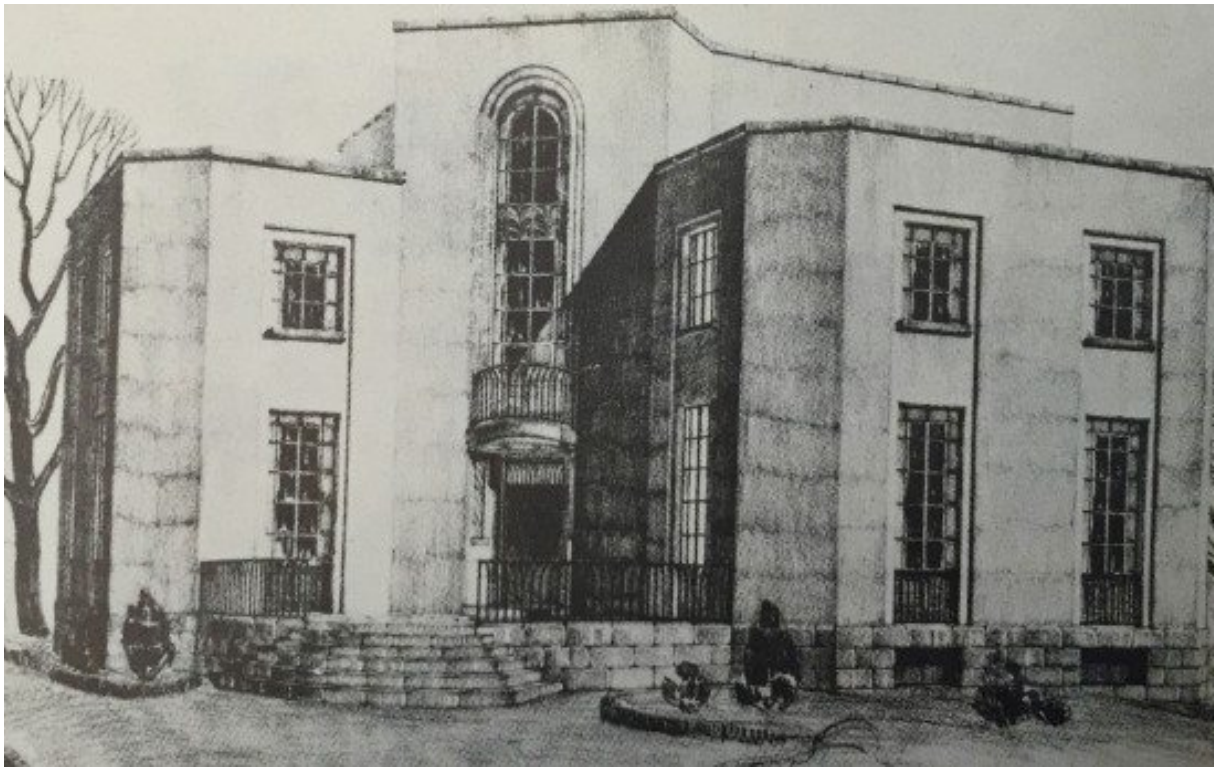


Fig. 14. Architectural drawing of 2 Ava Crescent (Lawren Harris House) by Alexandra Biriukova, 1930.

Source: *Canadian Homes and Gardens*, Vol. VIII (April 1931), 40.

Fig. 15. Randolph Stanley Hewton, *Portrait of an artist (Yulia Biriukova*?), c. 1942, oil on canvas, 101.5 x 81.5 centimetres. Library and Archives Canada.

Source: Library and Archives Canada.

TORONTO'S ART COLONY GETS TALENTED RECRUIT

Julie Biriukova, Russian Artist Comes to City After Life of Turmoil and Danger

Julie Biriukova, charming and talented Russian refugee, who, since her flight from the Bolshevik regime in Vladivostok, has studied her profession as an artist in China, Japan, Italy and England, arrived in Toronto to-day and plans to make her permanent home in the city.

Julie Biriukova

Still a young woman, Biriukova's life history is a repetition of that of many thousands of cultured Russians, whom revolution has forced to flee for their lives from their native land. Her father was a construction engineer in czarist times and played an important part in the building of Siberia's railroad systems.

At the outbreak of the Russian revolution the family went to Vladivostok and later to China, Japan and Italy. In Rome her parents both passed away. She had a married sister in Dalton, Ont., and decided to come to Canada and pursue her art here.

Julie Biriukova is at her best in portraits of children, which she has exhibited at the salon in Rome and the International Art Exhibition. She is equally skilful in oils, water color drawing and pastel work. There is nothing stereotyped about her art,

Fig.16. Photo of Yulia Biriukova "Julie Biriukova, Russian Artist Comes to City After Life of Turmoil and Danger," *Toronto Daily Star*, October 22, 1929.

Source: The Canadian Women Artists History Initiative.

Fig. 17. Yulia Biriukova, portraits *of Dr. Pierre Vieli*, first secretary of the Swiss embassy in Rome (left) and *Marquise Bisleti* (right).

Source: "Russian Portrait Painter Comes to Live in Toronto," *Toronto Daily Star*, December 14, 1929, 26.

Fig. 18. Yulia Biriukova, *Portrait of Miss Diana Boon*, pastel on paper (?), 1932, 101.6 x 76.2 centimetres. Ritchie's: Tuesday, June 2, 1992. Canadian Art. Lot 00522. Sold for: 274 USD. Source: Artnet price database.

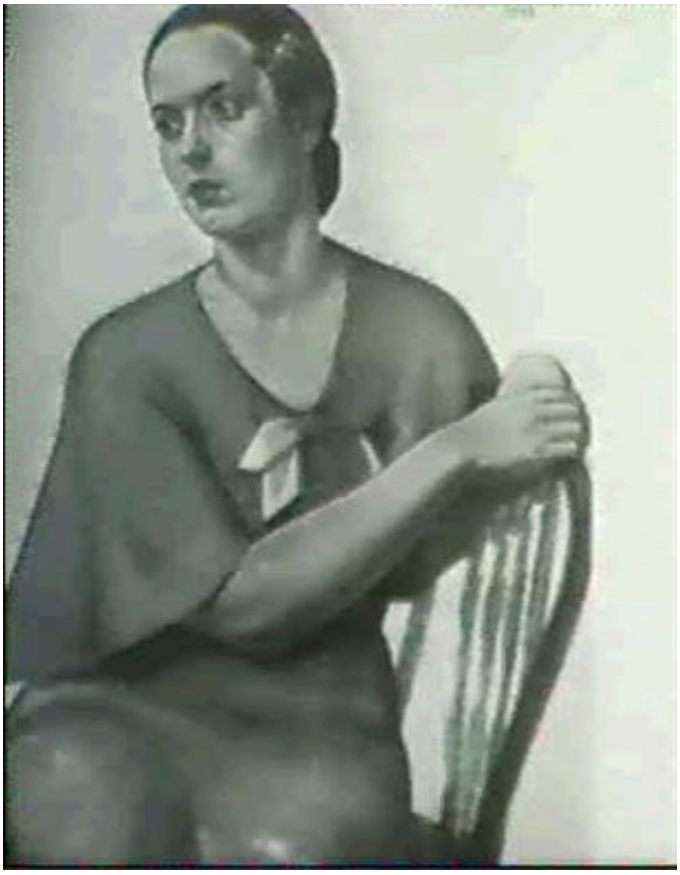


Fig. 19. Yulia Biriukova, *Portrait of Mrs. G.*, 1932, pastel on paper (?), 101.6 x 76.2 centimetres.

Ritchie's: Tuesday, June 2, 1992. Canadian art. Lot 00526. Sold for: n/a.

Source: Artnet price database.

Fig. 20. Yulia Biriukova, *Portrait of Maria Ildegarda Ambrosi,* 1932, oil on canvas (?), dimensions n/a. Private collection.

Source: courtesy of the Biriukova's family.

Fig. 21. Yulia Biriukova, icons painted for the Russian Orthodox Church in Toronto, *Virgin and Child* (left), *The Angel Michael* (right), dimensions n/a, location n/a.

Source: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, artist file.

Fig. 22. Yulia Biriukova, *Portrait of J.E.H. MacDonald*, 1930, oil on canvas, 67 x 54 centimetres.

Art Gallery of Hamilton.

Source: photo courtesy of Art Gallery of Hamilton.

Fig. 23. Yulia Biriukova, *Portrait of A.Y. Jackson*, 1931, oil on canvas, 65 x 52.5 centimetres. Joyner Waddington's Toronto. Canadian Fine Art. Lot No. 52. May 27, 2011. Sold for: 4,351 USD. Source: Blouinartsalesindex.com.

Fig. 24. Yulia Biriukova, *Portrait of Mrs. Carl Schaeffer (née Lillian Evers)*, 1933, oil on canvas, 91.44 x 73.66 centimetres. Art Gallery of Ontario.

Source: courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Fig. 25. Yulia Biriukova, *Portrait of Bess Housser*, 1930, oil on canvas, 88.9 x 41.5 centimeters.

Art Gallery of Ontario.

Source: Art Gallery of Ontario, photo by Alena Krasnikova.

14 MacLean's Magazine, August 15, 1930

Dear Julia Knows Best

Wherein a feminine Napoleon meets her Waterloo and an outcast demonstrates the finer points of domestic intrigue

ILLUSTRATED BY JULIE BIRIUKOVA

By LESLIE GORDON BARNARD

IT WAS Aunt Julia, standing centrally in her own large living room who broached the subject. Everybody—even old Uncle Gregory, who was of the Randall family through accident of marriage, and could not be counted—knew that it was bound to come. Every Sunday, for weeks on end now, conversation had skirted the very edge of the pool. They knew that Aunt Julia would take off sooner or later. And Aunt Julia knew that they knew.

"Bella is getting too old to stay there alone."

Nobody but Aunt Julia would have dared to put it bluntly that way. Come to that, they were all "getting on . . . getting on, you know?" as Uncle Matthew put it.

"Oh, come now, Julia!" protested Uncle Matthew, humorously.

"Well, she is. She's almost as old as you are, Matthew."

You couldn't fool with Aunt Julia; it was playing with fire.

So everybody stood around the uncomfortable, stiff room, and was more uncomfortable than usual, because with the exception of Matthew they were not without imagination of a kind, and they were thinking of what it would mean to Aunt Bella. To shatter the awful silence and rob Aunt Julia of at least that much of her triumph, conversation broke out like a rash all over the room in little local eruptions. Aunt Julia moved about with apparent casualness, so presently every little group was saying: "Of course, Julia is perfectly right. She always knows."

As you can't go on saying things you don't believe too long, in time the rash faded and there was the embarrassed silence back again.

And then Gregory spoke. For him to open his mouth at all at these family gatherings, except to perform such social amenities as to say: "Thank you, another cup if you please," or, "Oh, no really, Julia, I can take it quite well with sugar!" except for that kind of thing it was not considered good form. A man should know his place. If he had any perception he would see that Kate in marrying him had gone far beyond her province, and that only Randall loyalty preserved him—a clerk of superior respectability most generously thrown about one who, at best, scarcely deserved it. Kate had been dead a good while now. And they still let him crawl under the cloak.

For him to speak his mind, therefore, was unthinkable. For him to speak the newer, collective mind of Randalls, bred in the Aunt Julia tradition . . .

Gregory said:

"Bella won't come. It'd break her heart to leave her little place there."

Nobody spoke. Uncle Matthew coughed helpfully, to show that everybody was perfectly at ease, and performing everyday functions.

The eyes of all but Gregory rested on Aunt Julia with a startled, expectant horror.

Aunt Julia attacked immediately. "For heaven's sake, Bella, why don't you take up the loaves?"

Aunt Julia picked up a yellow time-table that she had been studying earlier, and opened it.

"There is a train at nine-five in the morning. I had thought of sending Wilfred down. But I think, after all, I had better go myself."

A little sigh ran around the room. Old Gregory had been stunned. Quite right, too! The Randalls, with Aunt Julia as spokesman, knew better than Gregory Clegg, or anyone with a name like that. Nothing explosive, still less distinctive, about it. Kate Randall. Mrs. Kate Clegg. Fancy him daring to speak—the touch—that way!

Aunt Julia put the time-table down, just so, on the table. Her glasses—very large, round ones, tied with black ribbon, and held, when necessary, on the extreme bridge of her nose—were removed, and replaced with a decisive little click on the clip that was half hidden in her expensive silk.

She glanced only then at old Uncle Gregory.

"I shall certainly go myself and acquaint Bella with our decision."

From his corner Gregory spoke again:

"Then Bella will come, God help her!"

Even Uncle Matthew forgot his everyday functions. No sound was heard in the room. Gregory Clegg, rising, paused, head erect, between two frozen rows of Randalls, seized his hat, his coat, his heavy cane, and stamped out, shutting the street door none too gently. Behind him, in that stricken room, the ghastly silence continued. Everybody thought, hearts beating with angry excitement, and even satisfaction: "Well, that's the end of him. We've rid of him." But nobody spoke out. Not even Aunt Julia. Aunt Julia stood with the others, quite at a loss.

ENVELOPING Aunt Julia, like a garment of righteousness as she travelled into the country on the nine-five next morning, was a sense of self-sacrificing mission. She had given up such a luncheon and a community bridge. On Saturday she had told Wilfred's wife—the daughter-in-law who lived with Aunt Julia, because Julia liked to have Wilfred still about the house: "I despise Mrs. Merrithorne's luncheons. I'd give anything to get out of going." As for the bridge, Aunt Julia had come out badly lately and wasn't very keen. She thought now: "I hope Bella appreciates this. But, of course, she wouldn't understand what it means."

Deep under this cloak of complacency was something much more vital. Bella had never bowed to Julia's dictum; she had gone her way in life quite outside the circle of Julia's influence and suzerainty. She treated Julia, indeed, as an ordinary sister, as if they were, intellectually and otherwise, equals. You can't fight a thing like that. Well, now that Bella was getting ahead of Julia—it was time to end this nonsense.

Aunt Bella was working in her garden as the taxi from the station drew up at the gate in the white picket fence. Aunt Julia said, by way of greeting: "For heaven's sake, Bella, why don't you rake up the leaves?"

Aunt Bella, who had been kneeling down, examining with microscopic intensity some fancied blight, got up. Her silver hair trailed in wisps, unkemptly, over her forehead; her plain blouse and stout tweed skirt bore earth stains.

"Well, Julia," she said. And then, placidly: "Would you rake up the leaves as well, dear?"

"I should have it done at once."

Aunt Bella glanced up at the trees, whispering in a slight breeze above her, and then at the pattern of yellow and brown and faintest crimson on the lawn.

"Yes, Julia," she said evenly. "I believe you would."

Aunt Julia stiffened. She had been prepared to be extremely kind and nice to Aunt Bella. She could see that it was going to be very hard. They went into the house, and Bella took her hat and coat and opened the front parlor for her. Aunt Julia had seen this room before, but she was appalled anew at it. Its motifs old—she was years ahead of Julia—it was time to end

seemed to be keyed to two pictures, at each end of the room. One was of a very prominent felt, cold in death. The globular eye of this creature regarded Aunt Julia steadily, as few eyes were ever able to do. It was the other picture that upset her, seeming to defy the thing she had said outside a moment ago. It pictured trees in an autumn breeze and the drift of leaves; something of sadness was in it, but more a haunting promise that disturbed Julia because she couldn't understand it.

"Bella," she said abruptly, "we've decided it's time you gave up living alone here. Everybody is agreed you must come to town."

Aunt Bella did not speak. The pink died from her face, one earth-stained hand—"grubby," thought Aunt Julia—fidgeted with the upholstered top of a stiff old chair. Without conscious cruelty Julia enjoyed the sensation of seeing her sister go limp that way.

"If John had lived," she said, helpfully, "it would have been different—"

"I'm," agreed Aunt Bella gently. "It would have been different—"

"Or if you had any children, Bella."

"Or anything left, Julia," suggested Aunt Bella, her voice rising a little, "except an old house with a few old things no one else would value, and a . . . a bit of garden untidy with leaves."

"Please don't be sentimental, Bella. And don't imagine," implored Aunt Julia, "that we haven't thought it all around. It's for your sake, Bella, we're doing it. I've got Wilfred and Anna living with me now, but I can furbish up the spare room for you."

"Oh?"

The word seemed to be jerked out of Aunt Bella. She looked frightened.

"It's good of you, Julia, but . . . I'm very happy here."

"We'll try to make it pleasant there. A woman your age, Bella, should have people around her, a home where she is sure of every care and attention." Aunt Julia's eyes roved the room. "We can, of course, sell off whatever is saleable here; it won't bring much, but still . . ."

Bella, have you taken to smoking a pipe?"

On a table near by was a much used pipe, and an ash tray with the irregular ends of a dozen burnt matches. Aunt Julia's keen eyes rested suspiciously upon her sister; Bella looked confused. "So?" thought Julia. She sniffed; there was still a smell of smoke clinging, a very intimate tobacco fragrance. Bella had been entertaining a man. At her age, too! Julia had come just in time.

"You know, Bella," she said, "you couldn't live here without papa's insurance money from the estate. And you forget, perhaps, he directed that we should have charge of it to make sure that you were properly cared for."

"There—that was the trump card! Years ago, before Thomas Randall died, she had plastered that seal. She had dominated him then, as she had dominated all but Bella since. He had said, as all the family said in matters of the kind: "Well, you know best, Julia. Do as you think best." Her husband, John, had left Bella nothing to speak of; the very cottage was mortgaged; so Bella was in hands, as it were, to the estate. And the Randall estate executors were under the thumb of Aunt Julia.

"I'll arrange with Wilfred about your coming in," Julia said now with a firm sweetness.

Aunt Bella was beaten. She acknowledged it by offering no further protest. She excused herself, presently, to start arrangements for lunch. Aunt Julia sat in the parlor, savoring her triumph. Then the pipe caught her eye again; she picked it up with delicate fingers and sniffed disapprovingly. She narrowed her lids, considering how she could get a confession out of Bella, and in the end went to offer help in getting lunch. Bella was very quiet. Could she be in the kitchen? It was a sunny place, with growing things all over it. Two canaries sang their hearts out in the light by the window that gave a vista of garden and fields. Aunt Julia was drawn from these things by the sound of subdued grief: in the pantry Aunt Bella, getting down from the shelves china that Julia remembered as a set from Bella's earliest housekeeping, had evidently been overcome. Aunt Julia tiptoed out again. As well that Aunt Bella should have her tears now, and be done with it. It was all for her own highest good. She would get over it presently.

THE day on which Wilfred obediently went down in the car to fetch Aunt Bella up, was a grey, sodden one, with a restless wind, heavy with rain beating against the car. Aunt Bella, huddled in the seat, sat very silent, and the young man beside her remembered the final closing of the house, the last look around the garden, with its fraying remnants of flowers half-beaten to the earth, and the sodden leaves half-buried in the moist turf and mud.

He said, embarrassedly, at last:

"Town's not a bad place this weather, Aunt Bella." When she did not answer, he hurried on: "It's nice you're going to stay with us. Anna'll make you feel at home—and—anything I can do, you know—"

"Thank you, Wilfred."

He looked at her, sitting there with her long mackintosh drawn about her, and a quiet, honest affair covering her head like a basket. He thought: "Good lord, she doesn't belong. You can't transplant that kind of thing." He wondered, too, about tonight.

"The mater's giving a bit of a rag for you tonight, Aunty. Family affair. The Randalls, their wives and relations. Candles and finger rolls, and squishy things with cream in 'em. That type of racket. You mustn't take 'em seriously, Aunty; in right perspective they're funny."

"It won't be used, Julia," said Uncle Gregory in a low tone, "unless necessity arises." She understood perfectly. He had her!

"They'll all be there tonight?" asked Aunt Bella faintly.

"All but Uncle Gregory. The old boy ditched himself talking to the mater."

Suddenly this member of a younger generation felt a protective tenderness rising in him. Aunt Julia, the Randalls said, knew how to set a good table if anybody did. When any minor crisis arose in their own lesser circles, you would hear Aunt Martha or Cousin Miriam saying: "Now I wonder how that was done at Julia's." It would be a very big table, in a very large room, and everybody would be correct and well-dressed and abominably genteel. Into this terrible gentility Aunt Bella would be plotchforked. Being a Randall, they would defend her against the outside world at all costs, but, among themselves thus, she would be butchered to make their holiday. All this they would do so politely, trying in their sweet, delicate way to make poor Aunt Bella feel quite at home on her first night back in the city.

WILFRED, turning over Aunt Bella to his mother, went and smoked a cigarette in the warm depths of the bath tub. Julia went up to see dear Bella installed safely in the room that housekeeping was to house her frail mentality. It was a room in excellent taste, with not a single detail of furnishing familiar to the guest's eyes. It gave, unfortunately, on a discouraged prospect of brick walls and a row of meagre, treeless gardens enclosed with hideous high boardings, on which the rain fell pitilessly down, and for which only the growing dusk held any mercy.

Aunt Bella went over and looked out, and then sat on the edge of the bed.

"Let me help you off with your things, Bella."

"No."

Aunt Julia's mouth threatened a superior firmness, but she decided it was better to humor Bella for the time.

"Well, I'll leave you," said Julia. "You'll find clean towels there, and the bathroom's the second door to the left. We're dining at seven-thirty. A few of the family will be in. Could I lend you anything, dear? I think, perhaps, with a stitch here and there we could make it fit."

"No," said Aunt Bella again.

"The bell will ring at seven; and again at seven-thirty." Aunt Julia told her. "We shall expect you down then, dear."

She closed the door. Her heart was fluttering. She had Bella at last. Wilfred came downstairs, languidly, as the first guests began to arrive.

"Where's the Aunt?" he asked.

"I'm not going to trouble her until dinner's served," said Julia sweetly.

Uncle Matthew came stamping in then, to declare heavily it was devilish weather for a man to stir out in, and he hoped Julia had something rare good to eat, to compensate; it was an attempt to give a touch of lightness to the stiff moments before dinner was announced, but nobody noticed him, so he shuffled into a corner and read the evening paper. He looked up and grumbled to himself: "We're all here now; time we were getting to table. No, by George, where's Bella, I'd like to know?"

Other people were asking that discreetly. Aunt Julia smiled. "Aunt Bella was very tired," she said. "I've given her until the last moment. And I think, perhaps, the poor dear feels a little constraint. Her clothes, you know . . ." Aunt Julia shrugged her shoulders. "It isn't nice to speak of it, but we're just . . . her family, after all . . . aren't we, and you know how it would be? She hasn't kept very up to date . . . down there alone. So we most pretend not to notice anything. I offered

Continued on page 56

Fig. 26. Yulia Biriukova, "Dear Julia Knows Best," *MacLean's*, August 15, 1930, 14-15.

Fig. 27. Yulia Biriukova, *Portrait of Boris Volkoff*, 1936, oil on canvas, 104.5 x 87.5 centimeters. Boris Volkoff Collection, Toronto Public Library, gift of Miss Margaret Clemens (Volkoff's pianist) and Mme. Zinaida Orentas. The portrait was also illustrated in the 29th Annual Carnival program (Toronto Skating Club, 1936).[129]

Source: "Portraits of the Dance," *Saturday Night*, June 7, 1949, 3.

[129] K. Chirametli, "Boris Volkoff Collection (1924-1975) Inventory," Toronto public library, http://torontopubliclibrary.typepad.com/files/volkoff-boris-collection-pdf.pdf (accessed 30 March 2018).

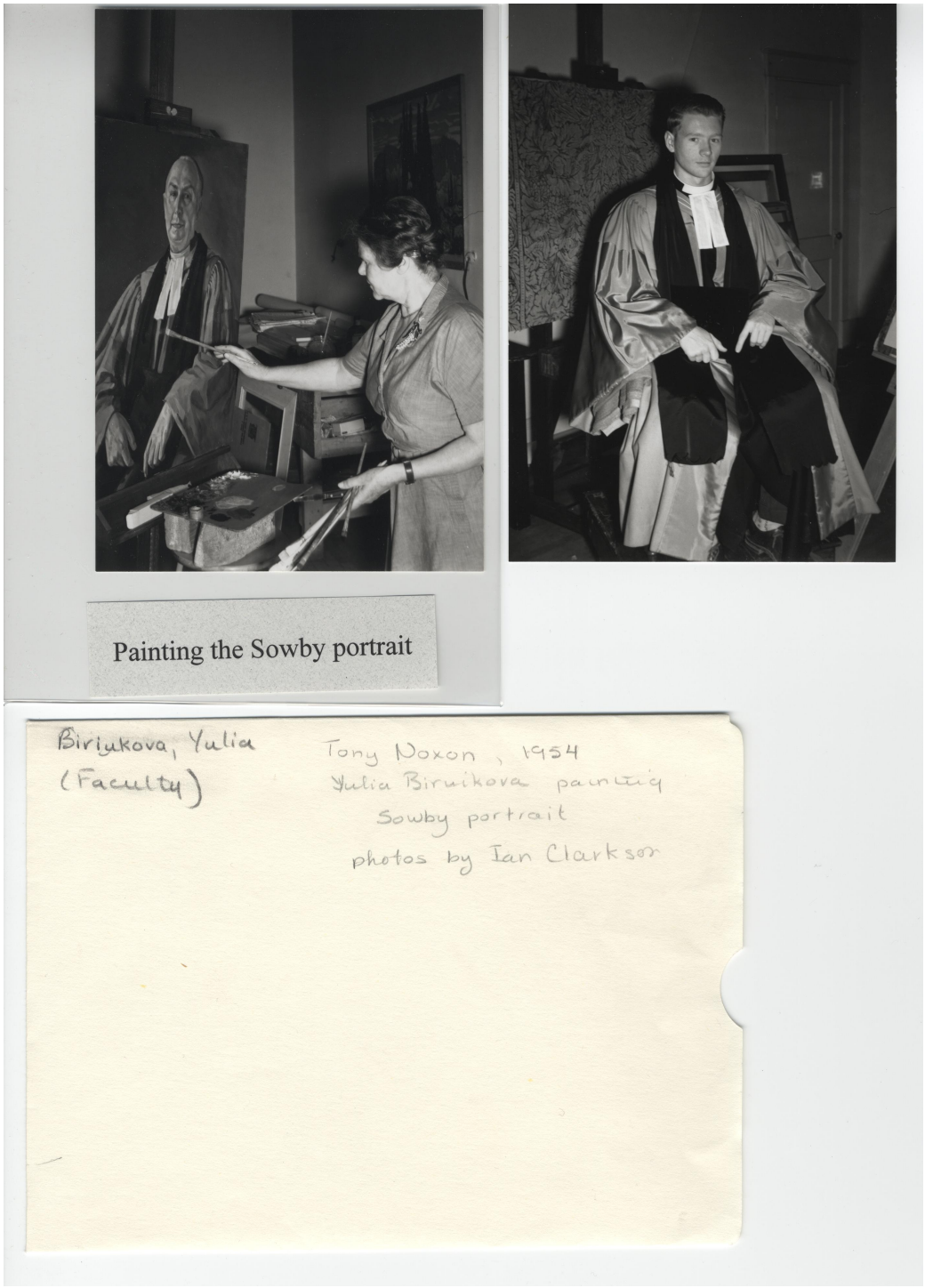


Fig. 28. Ian Clarkson, *Yulia Biriukova painting Sowby portrait*, 1954.

Source: Upper Canada College archives.

Fig. 29. *Yulia Biriukova during an art lesson*, year n\a.

Source: Upper Canada College archives.

Fig. 30. Yulia Biriukova, *Ontario Farmer, Thornhill, (Ed Seager),* 1937, oil on burlap, dimensions n/a. Upper Canada College.

Source: courtesy of the Upper Canada College Archive.

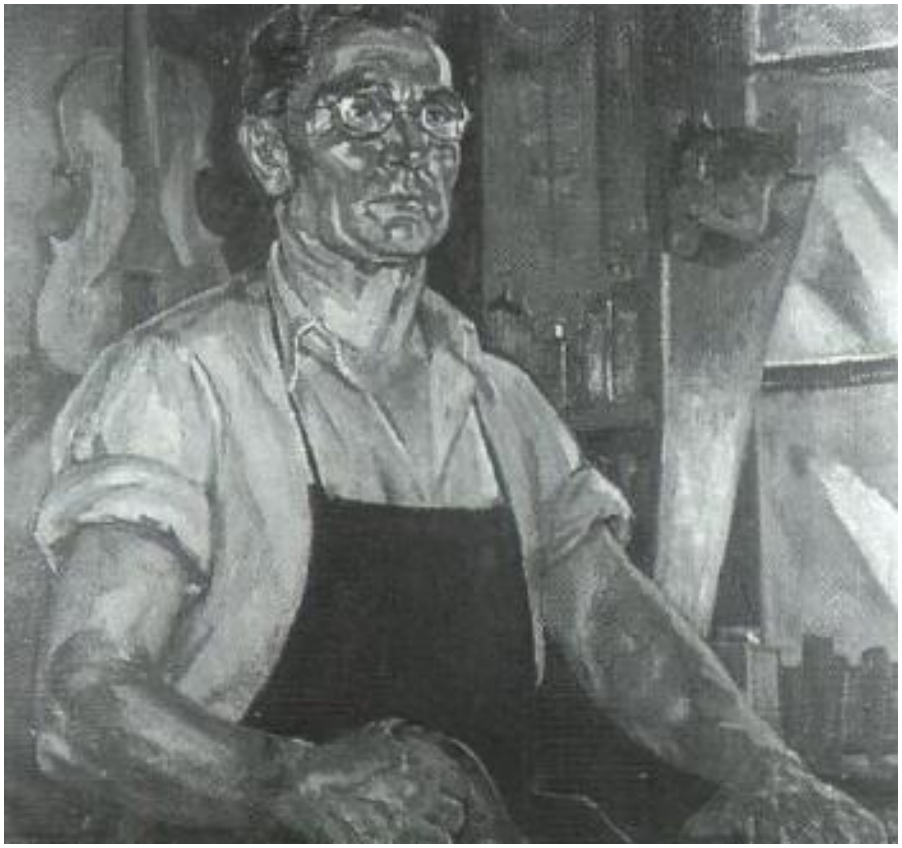


Fig. 31. Yulia Biriukova, *Walter Adamovitch (A Violin Maker)*, 1938. Oil on canvas. 96.52 x 40.00 centimetres. Ritchie's Toronto. Decorative & Canadian Art. September 16, 1999. Lot No. 4188. Sold for: 1,354 USD.

Source: Blouinartsalesindex.com.

Fig. 32. Yulia Biriukova, *Cape Breton Islander*, 1937, oil on canvas, 88.9 x 106.7 centimeters.

Ritchie's Toronto. Canadian Art. June 2, 1992. Lot 00525. Sold for: 411 USD.

Source: Artnet price database.

Fig. 33. Yulia Biriukova, *A River man*, oil on panel laid on panel, 67.2 x 58.4 centimetres. Sothbey's Toronto/Richie's. Important Canadian Art. November 20, 2006. Lot 00122. Sold for: bought in. Source: Artnet price database.

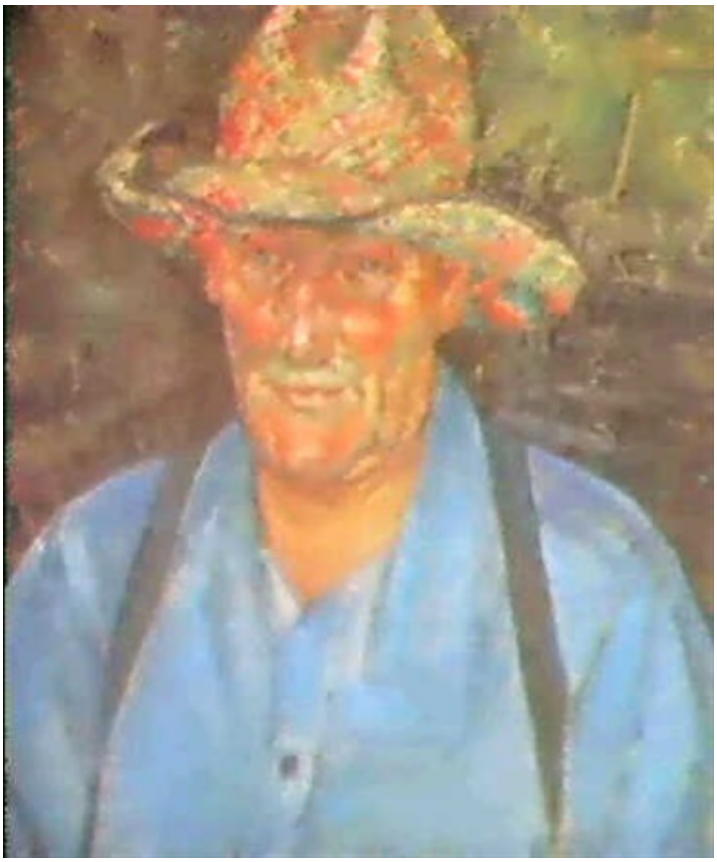


Fig. 34. Yulia Biriukova, *Rory Cullen* (?), 1937, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 76.2 centimeters. Ritchie's Toronto. Canadian Art. June 2, 1992. Lot 00524. Sold for: 319 USD.

Source: Artnet price database.

Fig. 35. Yulia Biriukova, *Young Girl With A Cat By A Window*, *Winter's Day*, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 50.8 centimetres. Waddington's: September 14, 2015. Lot 34.

Source: Arcadja.com.

Fig. 36. Yulia Biriukova, *A young woman with floral shawl in sunflower patch*, 1936, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 74 centimetres. Ritchie's: Tuesday, June 2, 1992. Canadian Art. Lot 00520. Sold for: 502 USD.

Source: Artnet price database.

Fig. 37. Yulia Biriukova, *Portrait of Cecil Dickinson*, 1936, pastel, dimensions n/a.

Private collection.

Source: courtesy of the Biriukova's family.

Fig. 38. Yulia Biriukova, *Portrait of Julia Hampton*, pastel, dimensions n/a.

Private collection.

Source: courtesy of the Biriukova's family.

Fig. 39. Edwin Holgate, *Head of a Lumberjack*, c. 1924, wood engraving, 18 x 13.2 centimetres.

National Gallery of Canada.

Source: Gallery.ca.

Fig. 40. Edwin Holgate, *Lumberjack*, wood engraving, 12.7 x 10.16 centimetres.

Source: Heffel Fine Art Auction House, Vancouver.

41. Edwin Holgate, *Man with Axe*, 1925, wood engraving, 12.4 x 9.2 centimetres, National Gallery of Canada.

Source: Gallery.ca.

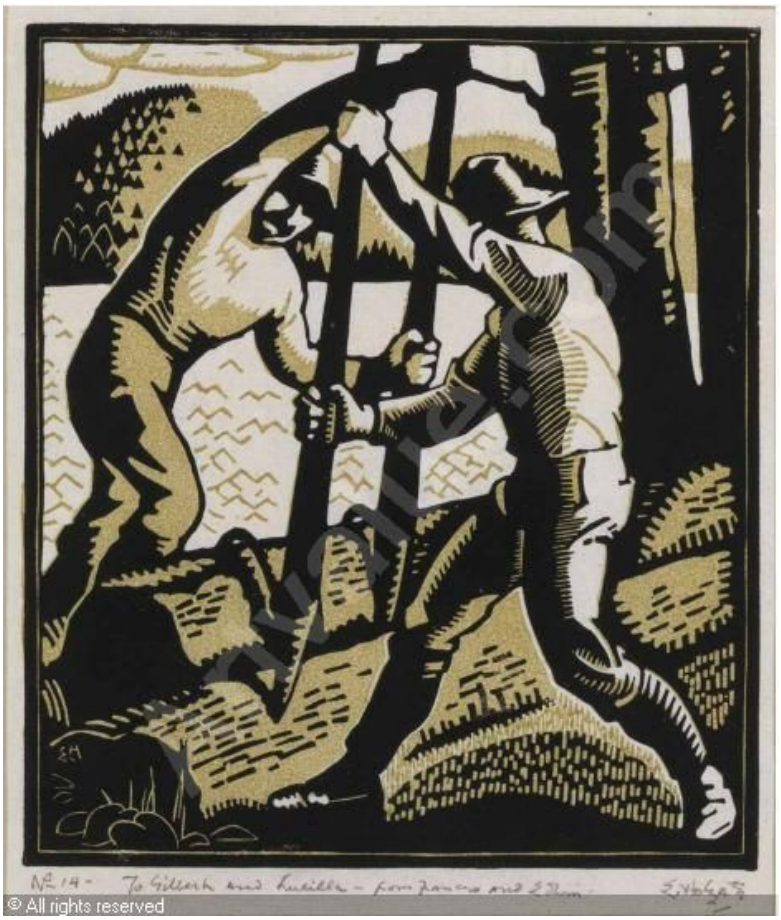


Fig. 42. Edwin Holgate, *Lumberjacks*, c. 1927, wood engraving, 11.7 x 10.2 centimetres.

Source:Heffel Fine Art Auction House, Toronto.

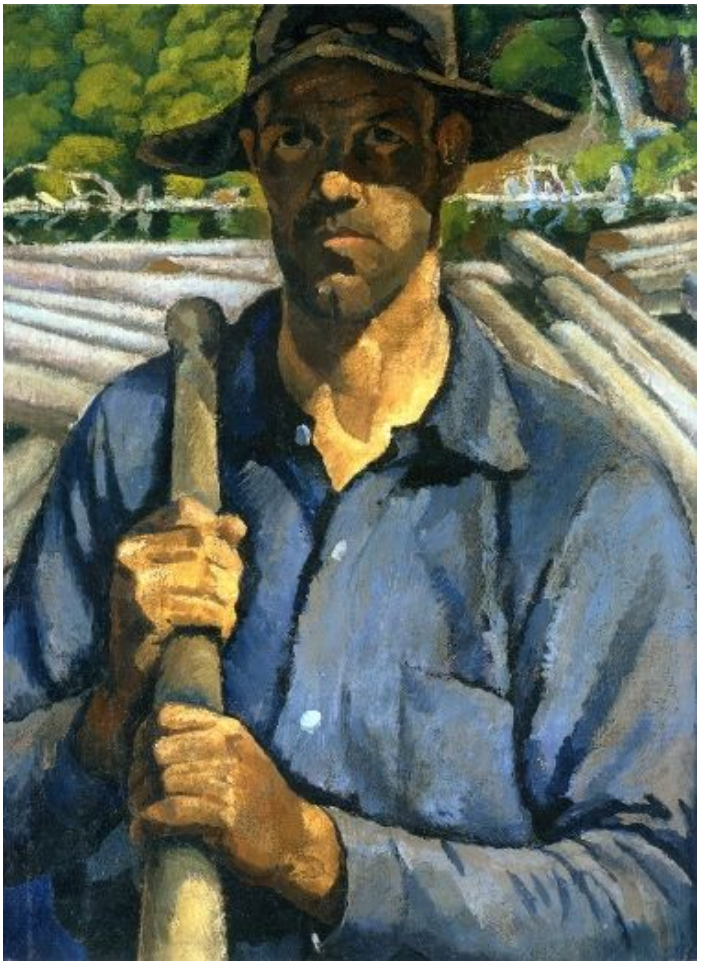
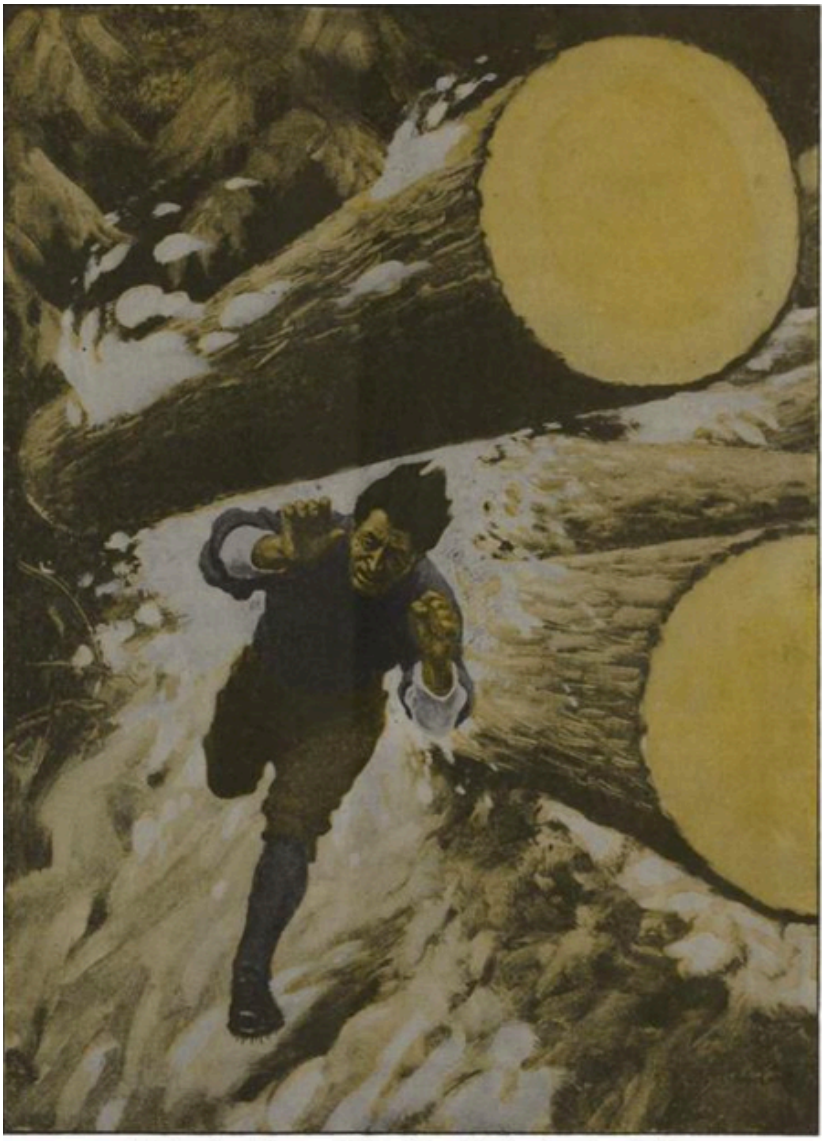


Fig. 43. Edwin Holgate, *The Lumberjack*, 1924, oil on canvas, 64,8 x 56,6 centimetres.

Judith and Norman Alix Art Gallery, Sarnia.

Source: Petroliatopic.com.



Had he slipped there would have been little hope for him. Nothing could stop the avalanche that thundered down from above.

Fig. 44. Arthur Heming, "The Gang," *MacLean's Magazine*, Dec 15, 1930, 13.

Fig. 45. Thoreau MacDonald, *Log drivers*, illustration for *Maria Chapdelaine*. Toronto: MacMillan, 1921.

Fig. 46. Thoreau MacDonald, *Lumberjacks*, illustration for *Maria Chapdelaine*. Toronto: MacMillan, 1921.

Fig. 47. Franklin Carmichael, *Canadian national exhibition poster*, Toronto 1920.

Source: Torontoist.com.

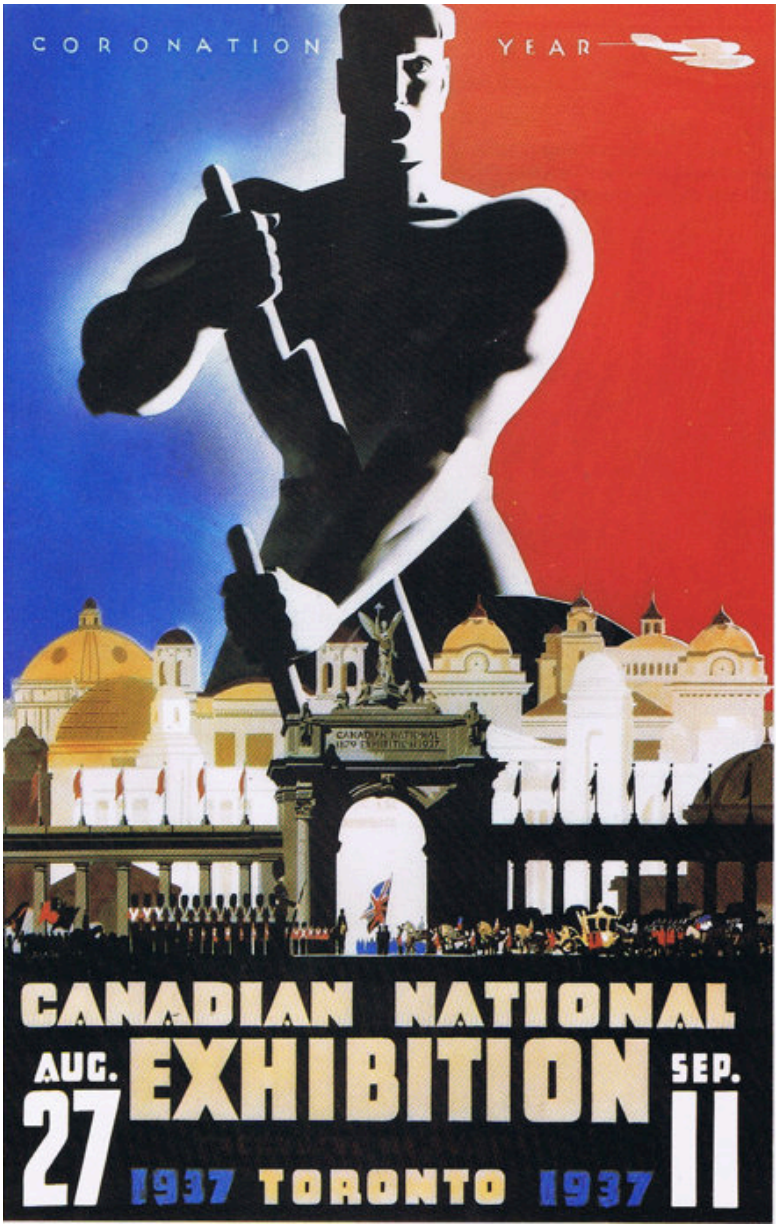


Fig. 48. Eric Aldwinckle, *Canadian national exhibition poster*, Toronto, 1937.

Source: Torontoist.com.

Fig. 49. *Canadian National Exhibition poster*, Toronto, 1921.

Source: CNE Archives.

Fig. 50. Vera Mukhina, *Worker and Kolkhoz Woman*, bronze, 24 by 65,5 x 21 meters, 1937.

Source: Muzei-mira.com.

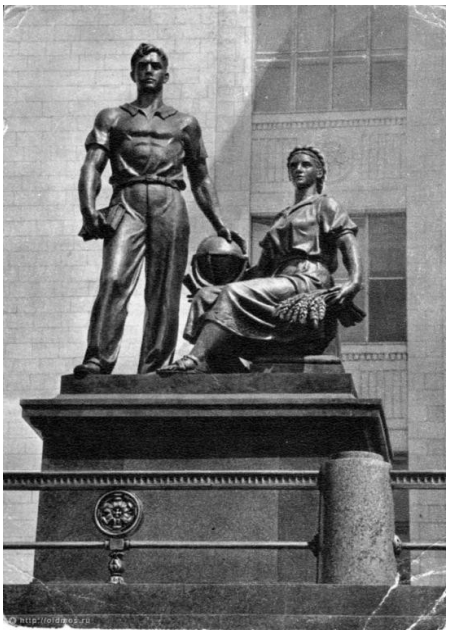


Fig. 51. The Mukhina Studio, *Science*, Moscow State University, bronze, dimensions n/a, 1950s.

Source: Artcontext.info.

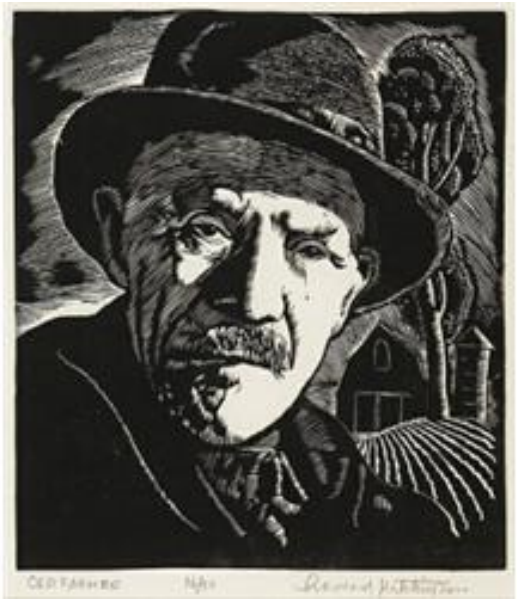


Fig. 52. Leonard Hutchinson, *Old Farmer,* etching, 29.2 x 26.6 centimeters. Possibly the artist's collection.

Source: Icollector.com.

Fig. 53. Leonard Hutchinson, *Woman Farm Worker,* etching, dimensions n/a. Possibly the artist's collection.

Source: Barry Lord, *The history of painting in Canada: toward a people's art*, NC Press, 1974.

Fig. 54. Leonard Hutchinson, *Tobacco Worker,* etching, c. 1930–1939. Possibly the artist's collection.

Source: Icollector.com.

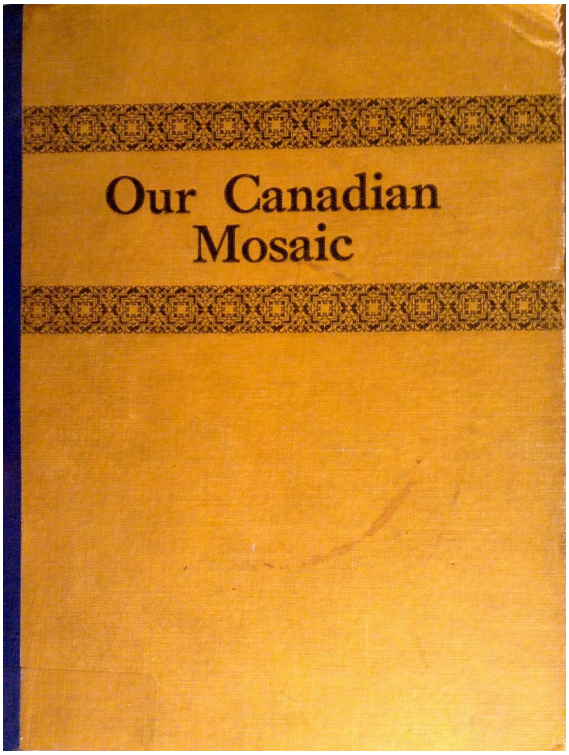


Fig. 55. Kate A. Foster, *Our Canadian Mosaic*, Dominion Council Y.W.C.A., 1926.

Source: photo by Alena Krasnikova.

Fig. 56. John Murray Gibbon, *Canadian Mosaic:*

The Making of a Northern Nation, McClelland & Stewart, 1938.

Source: Folkmusichistory.com.

CAPT. A. V. Seferovitch, Consul-General for Jugo-Slavia in a lecture under the auspices of the Canadian Handicraft's Guild, Montreal.

"What our people could not put down in writing they put into their applied arts, and in national songs and ballads sung by minstrels travelling from village to village."—

Top—Katherine Paluk, a Ukrainian Singer

Right—Ukrainian Folk-dancers

Lower—A Favorite Ukrainian Folk-dancer of Winnipeg

(9)

Fig. 57. Canadian Pacific Railway CPR Folk Festivals, 1928-1931.

Source: Junctioneer.ca.

Fig. 58. Emily Coonan, *Italian Girl*, c. 1921, oil on canvas, 107 x 85.5 centimeters. The Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Montreal.

Source: Westmountmag.ca.

Fig. 59. Prudence Heward, *Sisters of Rural Quebec*, 1930, oil on canvas, 157 x 107 centimeters.

Art Gallery of Windsor.

Source: Aci-iac.ca.

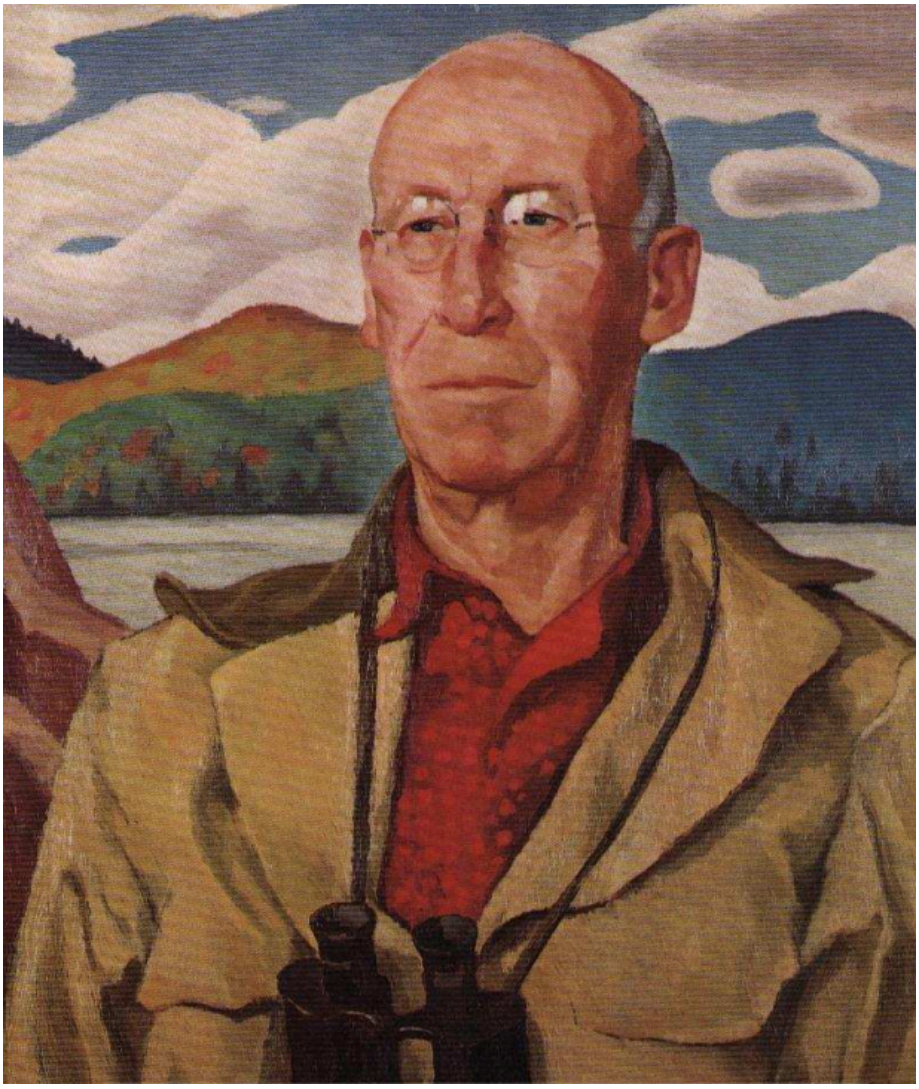


Fig. 60. Edwin Holgate, *The Naturalist*, 1941, 64.7 x 54.5 centimeters. Musée du Québec.

Source: Periodicos.ufpel.edu.br.

Fig. 61. Edwin Holgate, *Professor of Mathematics*, 1924, oil on canvas, 55.2 x 46 centimeters.

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Source: Carleton.ca.

Fig. 62. Edwin Holgate, *The Cellist*, 1923, oil on canvas, 128 x 97.5 centimeters.

Source: courtesy of McMichael Canadian Art Collection.

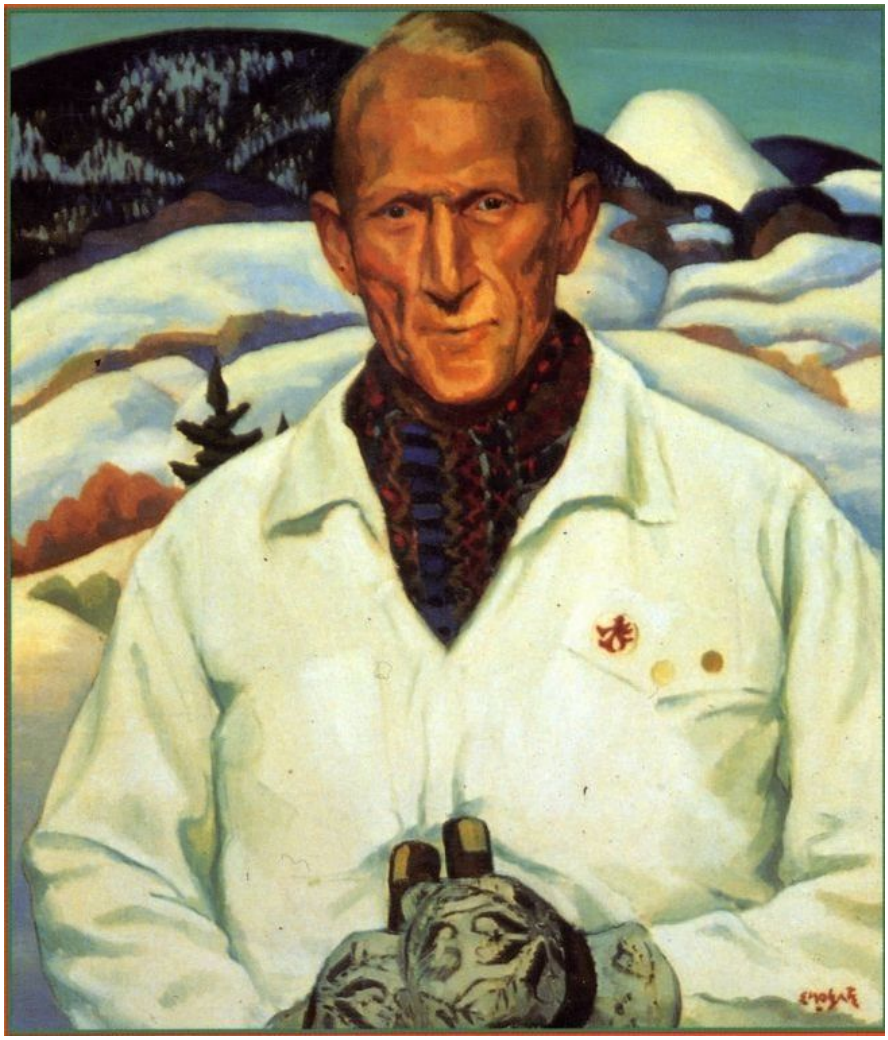


Fig. 63. Edwin Holgate, *The Skier*, c. 1935, oil on canvas, 66.5 x 56.6 centimeters. Montreal Museum of Fine Art.

Source: Pinterest.com.

Fig. 64. Andre Biéler, *Portrait of a farmer, Saint-Urbain*, 1938, oil on canvas, 56 x 71 centimeters. Private collection.

Source: Frances K. Smith, *André Biéler: An Artist's Life and Times*, Québec: Presses Université Laval, 2006.

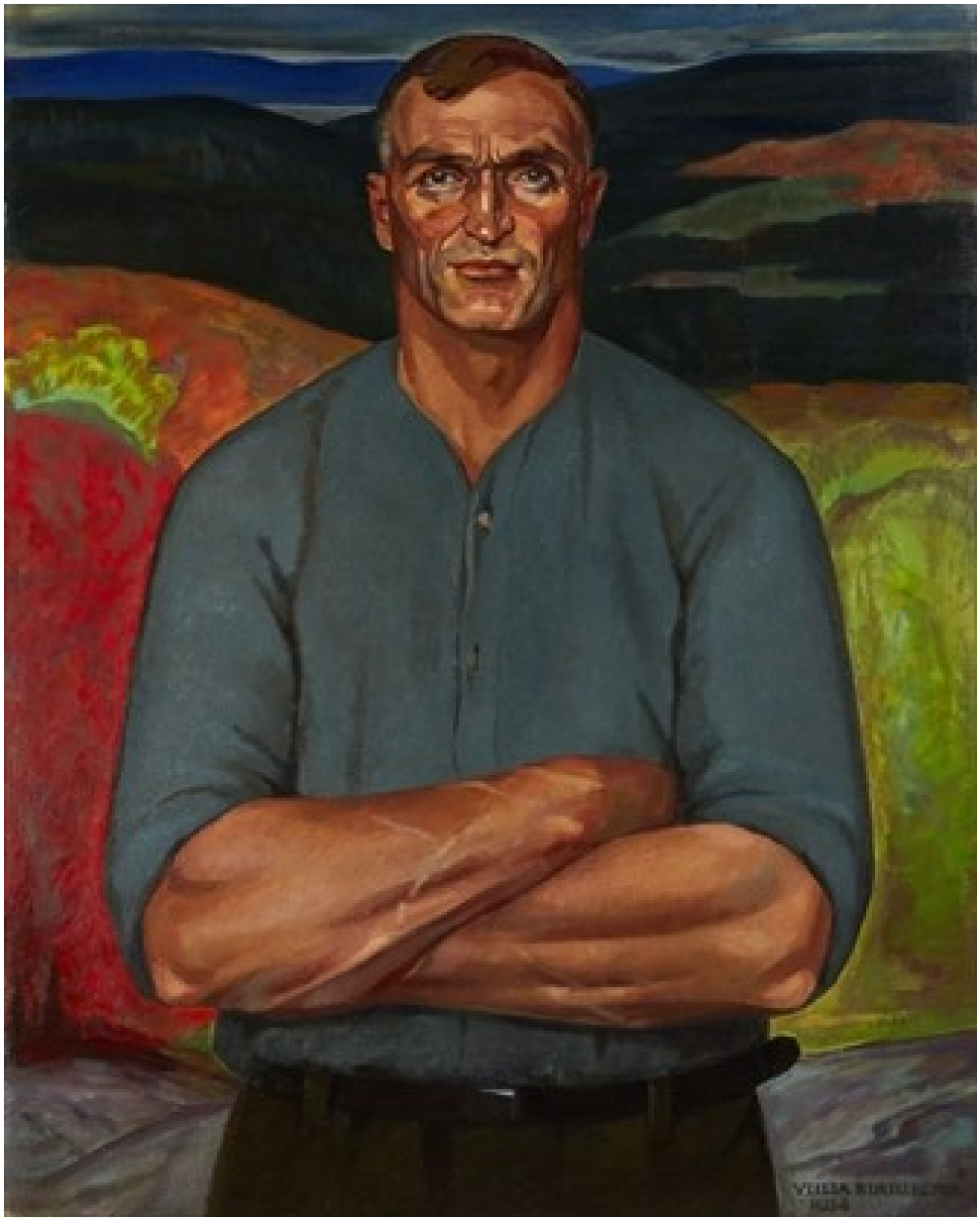


Fig. 65. Yulia Biriukova, *The Prospector, Peter Swanson*, 1934, oil on canvas, 114 x 92 centimetres. Gift of Thoreau MacDonald, 1973.

Source: courtesy of Art Gallery of Hamilton.

Fig. 66. August Sander, *Occupational Portraits*, gelatin silver prints, 1925-33, 22 x 15 centimeters,

People of the Twentieth Century. A Photographic Portrait of Germany, 1918-1933.

Source: Getty Museum.