Beyond European Extractive Modernism: Appropriations of West- and Central-African Cultural Belongings in Paul-Émile Borduas' 1942 Gouaches

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ABSTRACT

Beyond European Extractive Modernism: Appropriations of West- and Central-African Cultural Belongings in Paul-Émile Borduas' 1942 Gouaches

Alexis Janssen

This thesis argues that the celebrated Québécois modernist Paul-Émile Borduas (1905-1960) appropriated West- and Central-African cultural belongings in five of his 1942 gouaches. Through popular literature including the surrealist magazine *Minotaure*, and exhibitions spaces such as the Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro and the Paul Guillaume Gallery in Paris, and the Exposition missionnaire and McGill Museums in Montréal, Borduas encountered the African cultural belongings he would eventually appropriate. The artist likely sought out these points of contact as a way to feed his interest in global Indigenous cultures. Using a post- and anti-colonial approach, this thesis highlights how influential literary and museological colonial channels were on the artist. The extractive nature of these channels places Borduas within a tradition of "extractive Modernism," pervasive in early twentieth-century European Modernism. While he was made aware of African cultural belongings in Paris, Borduas also took an interest in European art and likely adopted extractive Modernism as a way to assert his independence and originality in war-time Québec. As well as engaging with global colonialisms, Borduas' appropriations can be placed in dialogue with local colonial legacies in Montréal. This thesis concludes that some of Borduas' 1942 gouaches are doubly transnational: first as they appropriate West- and Central-African cultural belongings, and second as they inherit from European extractive Modernism. By placing Borduas at the intersection of these two themes, this thesis places Québec art history within global dynamics of colonialism.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce mémoire propose que le célèbre artiste québécois Paul-Émile Borduas (1905-1960) s'est approprié du matériel culturel d'Afrique de l'Ouest et d'Afrique centrale dans cinq de ses gouaches de 1942. Grâce à la littérature populaire, dont la revue surréaliste *Minotaure*, et des lieux d'exposition comme le Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro et la Galerie Paul Guillaume à Paris, ainsi que l'Exposition missionnaire et les musées de l'Université McGill à Montréal, Borduas a pu voir les objets africains qu'il allait éventuellement s'approprier. Par ces points de contact, l'artiste a cherché à nourrir son intérêt pour les cultures autochtones des quatre coins du monde. En utilisant une approche post- et anticoloniale, ce mémoire examine l'influence de la littérature et des expositions coloniales par lesquelles Borduas a perçu les objets africains. La nature extractive de ces points de contact place Borduas dans une tradition de « modernisme extractif », omniprésente dans le modernisme européen du début du xx^{e} siècle. En plus d'avoir été sensibilisé aux matériels culturels africains à Paris, Borduas s'est également intéressé à l'art européen et a probablement adopté le modernisme extractif comme moyen d'affirmer son indépendance et son originalité d'un Québec en guerre. En plus de dialoguer avec un colonialisme international, les appropriations de Borduas se situent dans le contexte colonial local à Montréal. Ce mémoire conclut que certaines des gouaches de Borduas de 1942 sont doublement transnationales : d'abord parce qu'elles s'approprient du matériel culturel d'Afrique de l'Ouest et d'Afrique centrale, et ensuite parce qu'elles sont héritières du modernisme extractif européen. En plaçant Borduas à l'intersection de ces deux thèmes, ce mémoire inscrit l'histoire de l'art québécois dans une dynamique mondiale du colonialisme.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Introduction

In the winter of 1941 to 1942, Québécois artist Paul-Émile Borduas (1905-1960) produced around sixty gouaches that have come to define his oeuvre and Québec art history. The gouaches are the result of the artist's first explorations with Automatism, a surrealist technique which would propel his career and establish him as "the most important painter of his generation."[1] Fifty-three of the sixty gouaches were exhibited from April 25 to May 2, 1942 in the foyer of the Ermitage, a gymnasium and theatre belonging to the Collège de Montréal on Côte-des-Neiges Road in Montréal (Fig. 1). Titled *Œuvres surréalistes*, the exhibition was not the first show of surrealist art in Québec—Alfred Pellan (1906-1988) displayed surrealist paintings in a 1940 retrospective—however, it has been recognized as having an unprecedented impact on the development of Modern Art in Québec, pushing for abstraction within a largely classical provincial tradition.[2]

The work of documenting and cataloguing Borduas' 1942 gouaches was done by François Laurin in 1973.[3] Since then, art historian and Borduas' biographer François-Marc Gagnon added to our knowledge of four gouaches.[4] Six remain to be found and documented.[5] The fifty-three gouaches Borduas exhibited at the Ermitage were originally untitled, simply numbered in the order in which they were hung. During the exhibition's opening, visitors and Borduas—trying to decipher the content of the more abstract works—attributed titles to some of

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[1] François-Marc Gagnon, "Autobiographie critique et analyse de l'œuvre / Critical Autobiography and Analysis of the Work," trans. Peter Feldstein, *Journal of Canadian Art History / Annales d'histoire de l'art Canadien* 32, no. 1 (2011): 40.
[2] François-Marc Gagnon, *Chronique du mouvement automatiste québécois: 1941-1954* (Montreal: Lanctôt Éditeur, 1998); Ray Ellenwood, *Egregore: The Montreal Automatist Movement* (Toronto: Exile Editions, 1992).
[3] François Laurin, "Les gouaches de 1942 de Borduas" (M.A. Thesis, Montreal, Université de Montréal, 1973).
[4] François-Marc Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas: A Critical Biography*, trans. Peter Feldstein (Montreal and Kingston, Ont.: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013): 115-135.
[5] These are: *Abstraction no. 2*; *Abstraction no. 19*; *Abstraction no. 27* or *Dromadaire exaspéré* [*Exasperated Dromadary*]; *Abstraction no. 31*; *Abstraction no. 32*; and *Abstraction no. 48*.

the gouaches. This explains why certain gouaches have both a numerical and a descriptive title.[6] Although there was no printed catalogue for *Œuvres surréalistes*, a typed list was kept by Borduas which includes forty-five numbered works. Seven handwritten entries were added at the end of this list.[7] Other annotations, such as the descriptive titles and notes on purchasers, were added during and after the exhibition by Gabrielle Borduas (1911-2005), the artist's wife. *Œuvres surréalistes* was organized by Borduas' friend and colleague at the École du Meuble, Maurice Gagnon (1904-1956), who was also teaching at the Collège de Montréal at the time. Borduas was hired to teach decoration courses at Montréal's École du Meuble in 1937 and would spend just over a decade at the institution.[8] It is difficult to know why only fifty-three of the over sixty gouaches Borduas produced were exhibited at the Ermitage. Perhaps the artist (or Maurice Gagnon) selected fifty-three gouaches he thought would be most suitable for the exhibition. Despite this distinction, the around seven gouaches that were not exhibited were likely produced with the same surrealist technique that informed the Ermitage gouaches.

Over the years, many scholars have addressed the importance of *Œuvres surréalistes* and the gouaches that were shown.[9] However, the existing literature on the subject has mainly been a narrow historiographic reading of the events leading up to and the reception of the exhibition, as well as formal analyses of Borduas' gouaches themselves, focusing on orientation, colour, and a categorization into abstract and figurative. Although these investigations are essential to our

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[6] This thesis will use the numerical titles of the gouaches under investigation so as to reduce any possibility of confusion. The descriptive titles for three of the five gouaches discussed are similar: *Two Masks*, *The Two Masks*, and *The Two Heads*.

[7] "Liste des Œuvres de Borduas," 1942, Fonds Paul-Émile Borduas, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, FA1973.1.S6-1-1.D25.

[8] Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, 2013, 73.

[9] Among others, see: Ellenwood, *Egregore*; Gagnon, *Chronique du mouvement automatiste québécois*; Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, 2013; François-Marc Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas* (Montreal: The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1988); François Laurin, "Les gouaches de 1942 de Borduas," *Journal of Canadian Art History / Annales d'histoire de l'art Canadien* 1, no. 1 (1974): 23–27.

understanding of the 1942 gouaches, important methodologies including feminist, queer, and anti- and post-colonial approaches have been omitted from any close, critical reading of the works. This thesis seeks to partly address this lacuna by proposing a renewed reading of a selection of Borduas' 1942 gouaches using a post- and anti-colonial approach.

In this thesis, I argue that five of Borduas'1942 gouaches demonstrate the artist's appropriations of West- and Central-African cultural belongings. I further propose that Borduas' appropriations are doubly transnational: first as they appropriate from West- and Central-African cultures, and second as they inherit from a European tradition of "extractive Modernism."

The five gouaches analyzed in this thesis are: *Abstraction no. 28* (Cat. res. No. 2005-0261; Fig. 2), *Abstraction no. 36* or *Deux Masques* [*Two Masks*] (Cat. res. No. 2005-0747; Fig. 3), *Abstraction no. 51* or *Les deux masques* [*The Two Masks*] (Cat. res. No. 2005-0757; Fig. 4), *Abstraction no. 52* or *Les deux têtes* [*The Two Heads*] (Cat. Res. No. 2005-0758; Fig. 5), and *Le musicien* [*The Musician*] (Cat. res. No. 2005-0760; Fig. 6). I argue that through literature such as magazines, and thanks to exhibitions he saw in Paris and Montréal, Borduas was exposed to the West- and Central-African cultural belongings he would eventually appropriate in his gouaches. The literature and the exhibition methods that framed Borduas' contact with African objects were tainted with colonialism: the way cultural belongings were written about and the methods used to acquire and exhibit them form part of a system that reinforced and was reinforced by colonization. Literature and exhibitions also allowed Borduas to encounter early twentieth-century European artistic movements, including Cubism, Fauvism, and Surrealism. It was through these channels that Borduas was first made aware of European appropriations of global Indigenous cultures, and that it was artistically legitimate to participate in these appropriations. I propose to move beyond an understanding of appropriations of global Indigenous cultural

belongings as geographically limited to Europe and demonstrate how Canadian and Québec art histories situate themselves within this modernist trend.

Borduas' Automatism is something we must consider as we conflate appropriation with automatic production processes. Derived from Surrealism, Automatism is a production technique whereby the artist allows their subconscious to dictate the flow of the mark-making tool on the support. During an interview with Maurice Gagnon on the closing day of *Œuvres surréalistes*, Borduas explained that: "*Il y a, pour un artiste surréaliste, une nécessité de commencer son œuvre sans idée préconçue afin qu'il puisse exprimer* des « souvenirs » assimilés*, le monde extérieur assimilé, incorporé à lui-même* […]."[10] Borduas pulled from his "assimilated memories," that is to say his perception and understanding of surroundings he encountered over the years, in order to produce his art. These "assimilated memories," I argue, include readings about and visits to exhibitions of African cultural belongings. In that same interview with Gagnon, Borduas said:

> Je n'ai aucune idée préconçue. *Placé devant la feuille blanche avec un esprit libre de toutes idées littéraires, j'obéis à la première impulsion. Si j'ai l'idée d'appliquer mon fusain au centre de la feuille ou sur l'un des côtés, je l'applique sans discuter, et ainsi de suite. Un premier trait se dessine, divisant la feuille. Cette division de la feuille déclenche tout un processus de pensées qui sont exécutées toujours automatiquement. J'ai prononcé le mot pensées i.e. pensées de peintres, pensée de mouvement, de rythme, de volume, de lumière et non pas des idées littéraires (celles-ci ne sont utilisables dans le tableau que si elles sont transposées plastiquement)*.[11]

[10] Paul-Émile Borduas, *Écrits I*, ed. André-G. Bourassa, Jean Fisette, and Gilles Lapointe (Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1987), 637. "There is, for a surrealist artist, the need to start their piece without a preconceived idea so that they can express *their assimilated 'memories,'* the assimilated exterior world, incorporated for themselves […]" (emphasis mine). All translations in this thesis are mine, except where indicated otherwise.
[11] Borduas, 640. "*I have no preconceived ideas*. Placed before a blank page with a mind void of any literary ideas, I obey my first impulses. If my idea is to start by placing my charcoal in the center of the page or on one of the sides, I do so without hesitation, and so I continue. The first stroke divides the page in half. This division then triggers a series of thoughts which are always executed automatically. By thoughts I mean painters' thoughts, the thought of

Borduas emphasized the automation of his painting technique and its non-preconceived nature. However, despite Borduas' claim to "have no preconceived ideas," his works still betray the influences he was working with at the time of their production. Borduas' "assimilated memories" can help guide the viewer to decode the artist's works. As François-Marc Gagnon writes about the 1942 gouaches: "The gouaches […] despite their spontaneity, or rather because of it, reveal the outlines of an unconscious system that is nonetheless amenable to structural analysis."[12] Borduas' works are not immune to analysis simply because his methods were supposedly automatic and not pre-conceived. We can thus undertake the work of uncovering the appropriations of African cultural belongings in Borduas' oeuvre with confidence.

My thesis is marked by a geographic specificity in order to avoid making the simple observation that Borduas' gouaches evoke the vague and wide field of "African art." Indeed, as art historian Joshua Cohen has notes:

> [h]eterogeneous examples of African sculptures are frequently passed off as interchangeable, and a certain ethnocentric subtext wins validation when African works get recruited almost at random to participate in superficially plausible but historically impossible formal analogies. Such invented juxtapositions suggest an unbridled Western modernist propensity to digest and engender the total visual world.[13]

Cohen emphasizes the need to avoid repeating false comparisons between white European Modern Art and global Indigenous material, comparisons whose inaccuracy reflect a disregard for the social life of the Indigenous objects themselves. Keeping this in mind, I detail the points of contact between Borduas and specific West- and Central-African cultural belongings the

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movement, of rhythm, of volume, of light, and not literary ideas (these are only useful for artworks when they are adapted to the medium)" (emphasis mine).

[12] Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, 2013, 132.

[13] Joshua I. Cohen, *The "Black Art Renaissance": African Sculpture and Modernism Across Continents* (Oakland, Cal.: University of California Press, 2020), 56.

Canadian artist appropriated. I then demonstrate these appropriations through formal comparisons between Borduas' art and West- and Central African objects.

Borduas lived, studied, and worked in Montréal for many years. Although originally from Saint-Hilaire, he first settled on the island on the recommendation of his mentor, the artist Ozias Leduc (1864-1955). He studied at the École des beaux-arts de Montréal from 1923 to 1927—he was part of the École's first cohort—, after which he took up teaching in the city.[14] As an artist living in Montréal, Borduas was acutely aware of the city's artistic scene, not least because he was such a prominent member of it. He was at the forefront of artistic developments happening in Montréal in the 1930s and 1940s, from the Contemporary Arts Society (CAS) to *Refus global,* a manifesto he co-authored and co-signed with fifteen of his students.[15]

Borduas is recognized as one of the most important artists of the twentieth century in Québec art history. His legacy as a quasi-titan of Modern Art in the province is reflected in the numerous exhibitions devoted to his oeuvre, the important sums his works fetch at auction, and the emphasis placed on his art and writings in courses on Québec art and history.[16] The artist is closely tied to Quebec's nationalist discourses and is a key figure in the modernization of the province.[17] Borduas, along with a handful of other artists such as Pellan and John Lyman (1886-

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[14] Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, 2013, 17.

[15] Paul-Émile Borduas, *Refus Global et Autres Écrits* (Montreal: Typo, 2010); Sandra Shaul, *The Contemporary Arts Society La Société d'art Contemporain* (Edmonton: The Edmonton Art Gallery, 1980). The Contemporary Arts Society/La Société d'art contemporain was a group "conceived […] as a body to bring artists and collectors together, and as a lobby to counteract the influence if the academics in the art schools, galleries, and other societies." Borduas co-founded the group with fellow artist John Lyman and was its first vice-president. The fifteen other signatories were: Madeleine Arbour, Marcel Barbeau, Bruno Cormier (who authored a text titled "L'œuvre picturale est une expérience"), Claude Gauvreau (who authored three texts : "Au cœur des quenouilles," "Bien-être," and "L'ombre sur le cerceau"), Pierre Gauvreau, Muriel Guilbault, Marcelle Ferron, Fernand Leduc (who authored a text titled "Qu'on le veuille ou non"), Thérèse Renaud, Jean-Paul Mousseau, Maurice Perron, Louise Renaud, Françoise Lespérance, Jean Paul Riopelle, and Françoise Sullivan (who authored a text titled "La danse et l'espoir"). The manifesto severely criticized the religious establishment in Québec and embodied the ideas of the Automatists.

[16] For a full exhibition history, see Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, 2013, 471–98; and for a partial bibliography on Borduas, see Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, 1988, 475–78.

[17] Jean-Philippe Warren, *L'Art vivant autour de Paul-Émile Borduas* (Montreal: Boréal, 2011).

1976), were instrumental in the desecularization of Québec art (and to a certain extent Québec society) and the move towards European modernist traditions among a generation of Québécois artists during and after the Second World War.[18] Without questioning Borduas' historical importance, this research strives to offer a more complete reading of such an important figure in Québec art history.

The existing literature on Borduas is impressive and voluminous.[19] Despite all that has been written about the artist, his appropriations of global Indigenous cultural belongings have yet to be fully analyzed. During my initial research for this work, I catalogued over sixty artworks created throughout the artist's forty-year career that demonstrate possible appropriations and deserve greater study at a later time. The glaring omission of any critical investigation into Borduas' appropriations until now is remarkable given how pervasive they are in the artist's work. These appropriations connect Borduas' corpus to Indigenous communities in North and South America, Oceania, Africa, and Asia, leaving much to be written about the artist's interactions with Indigenous communities across the globe. This gap in the scholarship, I argue, stems from the artist's central place in Quebec's nationalist discourse. Furthermore, this omission has served to legitimize and uphold a white-supremacist reading of Québec art history that has and continues to neglect the documentation, preservation, analysis, and presentation of Black artists in and from Québec. As generations of art historians have neglected to acknowledge and critic Borduas' appropriations, his technique has continued to extract from African cultures and dismiss local Black artists. This thesis acknowledges but breaks from a reading of Borduas' work

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[18] Shaul, *The Contemporary Arts Society La société d'art contemporain*.
[19] It would be too fastidious to cite them all here. However, I recommend the following: Borduas, *Écrits I*; Ellenwood, *Egregore*; Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, 1988; Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, 2013; Guy Robert, *Borduas: ou le dilemme culturel québécois* (Ottawa: Stanké, 1977); Louise Vigneault, *Identité et modernité dans l'art au Québec: Borduas, Sullivan, Riopelle* (Montreal: Éditions Hurtubise, 2002); Warren, *L'Art vivant autour de Paul-Émile Borduas*.

as nation-building or identity-forging in order to propose a new, critical perspective on the artist, one that accurately reflects the relationship between Borduas and international colonialism. In so doing, this thesis recenters lost or unrecorded voices and perspectives to counter-balance what Borduas was unable or unwilling to do himself. Such work is vital as we contend with the artist's corpus in a holistic, rigorous, and nuanced way.

In recent years, scholarship has turned to a re-reading of Canadian art history as a way to unsettle it and provide a more complete understanding of the country's art while appropriately addressing its colonial past.[20] The essays included in Erin Morton's *Unsettling Canadian Art History*, for example, question Canadian art history by pushing for a recognition of the presence and absence of the country's colonial pasts in its art. This thesis falls within this movement to unsettle Canadian art history and offer a critical analysis of one of the most celebrated Quebecois artists of the twentieth century. However, it also departs from Morton's framework insomuch as it suggests how both Canadian *and* European colonial histories can be read within some of Borduas' 1942 gouaches. In doing so, I am investigating how Canadian art interacted with other colonial powers. Unsettling Canadian genocidal colonial legacies in art also includes, I argue, reconning with how Canadian artists interacted with *global* dynamics of colonisation and situating Canadian art within such dynamics.

Divided into five sections, my thesis first outlines a theoretical framework from which I analyze Borduas' appropriations. I develop and theorize Anne Higonnet's term "extractive Modernism" to better define specifically twentieth-century appropriations of global Indigenous cultural belongings and representations of global Indigenous peoples by white European, American, and Canadian artists. I then analyze five of Borduas' gouaches and provide details

[20] Erin Morton, ed., *Unsettling Canadian Art History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022).

about their exhibition and reception. I continue by detailing Borduas' interest in global Indigenous cultures and the artist's encounters with African cultural belongings in literature such as the *Minotaure* magazine and in exhibitions at the Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro, the Paul Guillaume Gallery, the Exposition missionnaire, and McGill's Redpath and Ethnological Museums. I link these encounters and some of the 1942 gouaches, and follow this by situating Borduas' appropriations of West- and Central-African cultural belongings within local legacies of colonialism in Montréal at the time. Finally, I place Borduas and his gouaches within a wider context of global Modern Art and within global dynamics of power. I argue for a recognition that Borduas' appropriations are doubly transnational, appropriating from African objects while inheriting from European artistic traditions.

1. From "Primitivism" to Extractive Modernism: Theoretical Approaches to Appropriations of Global Indigenous Cultural Belongings

Appropriations of Indigenous Asian, African, Oceanic, and North and South American cultural belongings by white European and American modern artists, as well as depictions of Indigenous peoples by these same artists, have long been termed "Primitivism."[21] Despite the etymological, ethical, and applicability limitations of "Primitivism," most scholars who have approached the topic since the 1960s have framed the term as a necessary evil, enveloping it in quotation marks, noting its limitations, but conceding that no other better term has been proposed. The conclusion is repeated *ad noseam*: "Primitivism" is not ideal, it is the only (sometimes described as best!) term we have, we recognize how contentious it is, but we will keep using it.

As I explore Borduas' appropriations of West- and Central-African cultural belongings, I must confront sixty years of scholarship in order to move away from a superficial and somewhat performative recognition of the problem without it seriously being addressed.[22] I thus borrow

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[21] Carl Einstein, *A Mythology of Forms: Selected Writings on Art*, ed. Charles Werner Haxthausen (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019); Paul Guillaume, Guillaume Apollinaire, and Alphonse Bellier, *Sculptures nègres: 24 photographies précédées d'un avertissement de Guillaume Apollinaire et d'un exposé de Paul Guillaume* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1972 [1917]); Georges Salles, "Reflections on Negro Art," in *Primitivism and Twentieth-Centuryy Art: A Documentary History*, ed. Jack D. Flam and Miriam Deutch (Berkley and Los Angeles, Cal.: University of California Press, 2003); André Salmon, "Negro Art," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 36, no. 205 (1920): 164–72. The term "Primitivism" has been part of art historical discourse since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Artists, dealers, and scholars used the term as it relates to the unspecific and vague adjective "primitive," understood to apply to global Indigenous peoples and their cultural production. The interest Europeans, Americans, and Canadians had in global Indigenous materials is evident as numerous books and magazine articles on the subject were published starting in the early twentieth century. Noteworthy authors include Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918), Carl Einstein (1885-1940), Paul Guillaume (1891-1934), Georges Salles (1889-1966), and André Salmon (1881-1969). This interest is materially demonstrated in the extractive Modernism of early twentieth-century European art itself.

[22] Moshe Barasch, "Introduction: Conditions of Modern Primitivism," in *Modern Theories of Art. 2, From Impressionism to Kandinsky* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Anne Anlin Cheng, *Ornamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019); Ben Etherington, *Literary Primitivism* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 2018); Jack D. Flam and Miriam Deutch, *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art: A Documentary History* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 2003); Robert Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986); Sieglinde Lemke, *Primitivist Modernism: Black Culture and the Origins of Transatlantic Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998);

Anne Higonnet's "extractive Modernism" to describe the appropriation of global Indigenous objects and the representation of global Indigenous peoples by white European and North American modern artists. The ways global Indigenous cultural belongings were acquired, displayed, and written about by white Europeans, Americans and Canadians are deeply linked to discourses of colonialism. I use extractive Modernism to interrogate and critique these colonial links. The extraction of material culture mimicked the often violent economic extraction that was so central to projects of imperialism. By highlighting the extractive nature of modernist appropriations, I wish to make evident how these appropriations and colonization are two independent, but interdependent markers of European and North American art history. I also want to demonstrate the hybridity of the European, American, and Canadian art created through appropriations.

Limitations: "*Primitiv*ism" and "Primitivism*s*"

A major limitation of the term "Primitivism" is its etymological roots. "Primitivism" stems from "primitive," an adjective that was used by colonizing powers to describe Indigenous peoples. As Sieglinde Lemke has written: "when referring to human conduct or manners, 'primitive' was the antonym of discipline, order, rationality—the antithesis of 'civilized.' The racist imagination conflated these two versions of alterity and defined [Indigenous peoples] as irrational,

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Colin Rhodes, *Le Primitivisme et l'art Moderne* (Paris: Thames & Hudson, 1997); William Rubin, ed., *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, vol. 1 & 2, 2 vols. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1984); Daniel J. Sherman, *French Primitivism and the Ends of Empire, 1945-1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990); Miles J. Unger, *Picasso and the Painting That Shocked the World* (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2018); Louise Vigneault, *Identité et modernité dans l'art au Québec: Borduas, Sullivan, Riopelle* (Montreal: Éditions Hurtubise, 2002); Laura Winkiel, *Modernism, Race and Manifestoes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). This is by no means an exhaustive list, but simply some of the books I have come across in my research.

uncivilized, and not-yet-modern."[23] The framing of the colonized subject as inferior, lesser than, and backward as compared to the colonizer was a central argument used by colonial powers to justify their projects of colonization.[24] This discursive definition of Indigenous peoples constitutes a vital element to understanding European, American, and Canadian modernist appropriations of Indigenous cultural belongings.

In 1984, William Rubin, one of the curators of the famously problematic and Eurocentric exhibition *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art: Affinities of the Tribal and the Modern* at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City, wrote that "the notion that 'primitivism' is pejorative, can only result from a misunderstanding of the origin and use of the term, whose implications have been entirely affirmative."[25] Rubin was embarking on a discourse that was outdated even by the 1980s. Indeed, two authors made the links between appropriation and colonization clear in their critiques of the MoMA exhibition. James Clifford writes that "the scope and underlying logic of the 'discovery' of tribal art reproduces hegemonic Western assumptions rooted in the colonial and neo-colonial epoch."[26] Similarly, Hal Foster argues that "on the one hand, the primitivist incorporation of the other is another form of conquest (if a more subtle one than the imperialist extraction of labour and materials); on the other, it serves as its

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[23] Lemke, *Primitivist Modernism*, 4–5.
[24] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994); Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995). This reading is based on a certain Saidian understanding of the colonized/colonizer relationship as a construction based on binary power relations. A major theoretical basis for extractive Modernism is Bhabha's notion of hybridity which, to a certain extent, challenges Said's binary construction. For Bhabha, the understanding of the world as strictly divided into colonizer and colonized is not a just description of the interactions between both groups. A Saidian perspective is nonetheless tenable and productive as we understand the language used by the colonizer to engage the colonized. As we will see below, hybridity is an important consequence of colonization. Concurrent to this hybridity, however, the discourses used by the colonizer to justify their endeavours are premised on a binary construction of us/them (however much such as binary is questionable in and of itself).
[25] Rubin, *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art*, 5.
[26] James Clifford, "Histories of the Tribal and the Modern," in *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art: A Documentary History*, ed. Jack D. Flam and Miriam Deutch (Berkley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1985), 357.

displacement, its disguise, even its excuse."[27] Both authors recognize the deep links between appropriations and colonization as early as the mid-1980s.

Many modernists saw global Indigenous cultures as "pure," "natural," "primordial" cultures that had not yet been influenced by Hellenistic tradition. Modernists thus viewed Indigenous cultures with both a geographic and historical distancing that could be justified in the former, but not always in the latter case. Indigenous cultural belongings were understood to represent the essence of a culture that did not yet (but could eventually) achieve what the European tradition was able to accomplish.[28] This understanding of an art-form as lesser-than because of its divergence from the Classical tradition and its movements has informed various definitions of "Primitivism" throughout the years.

This brings us to the second limitation of the term: its broad use to describe various artistic practices over temporal and geographic periods. Throughout my research, I have read the term "Primitivism" as it relates to sixteenth-century Flemish and Italian art, nineteenth-century European interest in Asian and Middle-eastern art, twentieth-century modernist appropriations of global Indigenous objects, twentieth-century folk art, children's art, art by disabled and neurodivergent people, and contemporary artists using garbage to create art.[29] Yet the pervasiveness of the word "Primitivism" is not only limited to art history. Many disciplines, including literature, film studies, music, anthropology, and history, have adopted the term for

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[27] Hal Foster, "The 'Primitive' Unconscious of Modern Art," in *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art: A Documentary History*, ed. Jack D. Flam and Miriam Deutch (Berkley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1985), 384.

[28] Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive*, 46 and 91.

[29] Jean-Loup Amselle, "Primitivism and Postcolonialism in the Arts," trans. Noal Mellott and Julie van Dam, *MLN* 118, no. 4 (2003): 974–88; Etherington, *Literary Primitivism*; Flam and Deutch, *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art*; Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, 2013; Lemke, *Primitivist Modernism*; Benoît de L'Estoile, *Le goût des Autres: De l'Exposition coloniale aux arts premiers* (Paris: Flammarion, 2007); Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive*; Vigneault, *Identité et modernité dans l'art au Québec*; Louise Vigneault, "Le primitivisme dans l'œuvre de Françoise Sullivan" (M.A. Thesis, Montreal, Université de Montréal, 1994); Philippe Dagen, *Primitivismes: une invention moderne* (Paris: Gallimard, 2019).

their own contexts. We are thus faced with a growing number of applications for the same term across various temporal, geographical, and disciplinary contexts. The multiplicity of the use of "Primitivism" ultimately erodes its effectiveness because of its myriad interpretations.[30] A new term must thus be employed in order to avoid the question that ultimately arises in discussions of "Primitivism" today: which "Primitivism"?

From "Primitivism" to Extractive Modernism

In 2019, the Musée d'Orsay in Paris held an exhibition titled *Le modèle noir de Géricault à Matisse* which aimed to demonstrate the presence of Black figures and Black culture in French art from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. In the accompanying exhibition catalogue, feminist art historian Anne Higonnet wrote a chapter about Paul Gauguin's (1848-1903) extractive Modernism in which she writes

> *Dans le modernisme, tant d'écrits féministes et postcoloniales ont été consacrés au nu féminin et aux images racialisées—sans parler de ceux spécifiquement consacrés à Gauguin—qu'il serait fastidieux de les résumer tous ici. Rappelons seulement que les années 1890 à 1910 ont marqué l'apogée de ce qu'on a appelé « l'impérialisme extractif », mais aussi de ce que l'on pourrait qualifier de « modernisme extractif ». Pour reprendre le commentaire aigre de Debussy sur Stravinsky (« c'est de la musique sauvage avec tout le confort moderne »), on pourrait parler aussi de « peinture sauvage avec tout le confort moderne ».*[31]

[30] Amselle, "Primitivism and Postcolonialism in the Arts." Jean-Loup Amselle's article is perhaps the best example of the dangers associated with "Primitivism." In his text, the author completely disregards the colonial nature of European appropriations of global Indigenous material because he conflates numerous different meanings of the word "primitive" and relates them to a single "Primitivism."

[31] Anne Higonnet, "Altérité et primitivisme," in *Le modèle noir de Géricault à Matisse*, ed. Cécile Debray et al. (Paris: Flammarion, 2019), 244. "In modernism, so much feminist and postcolonial writing has been devoted to the female nude and racialized images—not to mention those specifically devoted to Gauguin—that it would be tedious to summarize them all here. Let us just remember that the years 1890 to 1910 marked the apogee of what has been called 'extractive imperialism,' but also of what could be described as 'extractive modernism.' To take up Debussy's sour comment on Stravinsky ('it's wild music with all the modern comforts'), we could also speak of 'wild painting with all the modern comforts.'"

Higonnet does not develop further on this term, but I propose "extractive Modernism" as an alternative to "Primitivism" as it relates to the appropriation of global Indigenous cultural belongings and the representation of global Indigenous peoples by white European, American, and Canadian modern artists.

Extractive Modernism, unlike "Primitivism," does not perpetuate the colonial and racist language that imbues "primitive." What is more, extractive Modernism is temporally specific: it refers to Modern Art, roughly defined as beginning in the 1860s and ending in the 1960s.[32] By alluding to a particular time period and art movement, extractive Modernism avoids the blurred temporal and geographic limitations of "Primitivism." Furthermore, the adjective "extractive" is poignant in two ways. First, it highlights the colonial nature of the points of contact that allowed for modernist appropriations. Second, it denotes the hybridity of the artworks that resulted from European, American, and Canadian modernist appropriations. These two points should be considered as two sides of the same coin. One side highlights the means that lead to the other side, the resulting art.

The Extractive Nature of Points of Contact

The ways Indigenous cultural belongings left their homes, were displayed and written about in Europe and North America, and ultimately were interpreted by the white European, American, and Canadian artists who appropriated them are generally rooted in an extractive relationship.[33]

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[32] Winkiel, *Modernism, Race and Manifestoes*; Partha Mitter, *The Triumph of Modernism: India's Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1922-1947* (London: Reaktion, 2007). I am referring here to European Modernism. However, it is important to note that modernity is not a specifically European adjective. Modernity in multiple.

[33] For more on non-extractive relations between Indigenous and white European peoples, see Cécile Fromont, *Images on a Mission in Early Modern Kongo and Angola* (University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022). Extraction did not always dictate relations between Indigenous peoples and Europeans, Americans and Canadians. However, I comfortably define the museological and literary devices surrounding Indigenous cultural belongings at the time under consideration here as extractive.

The concept of extractive Modernism is, since its creation by Higonnet, linked to colonialism and extraction: "*les années 1890 à 1910 ont marqué l'apogée de ce qu'on a appelé « l'impérialisme extractif », mais aussi de ce que l'on pourrait qualifier de « modernisme extractif ».*"[34] This extraction, I argue, is materially evident in European and North American art collections and literature, which were the main means through which modern artists could access global Indigenous objects before appropriating them.

The language used in literature during the first-half of the twentieth century to describe Indigenous cultural belongings is tainted with colonial undertones. From academic channels such as books and articles to popular media such as magazines and didactic labels, much of what was written about Indigenous material helped to frame it in a colonial discourse.[35] In many cases, this language was simply racist. Although rare cases of heartfelt appreciation can be found among European writings, most of the available documentation demonstrates a curious contradiction. As Philippe Dagen has written: "*Si statues et masques sont reproduits dans la presse, les commentaires qui les accompagnent sont presque uniformément péjoratifs. C'est une contradiction qui se retrouvera sans cesse : curiosité et condescendance sont inséparables*."[36] Despite the real interest Europeans might have had for global Indigenous cultural belongings, they also framed the objects with racist and colonially-informed perspectives.

Indigenous cultural belongings were acquired for European, American, and Canadian collections in a number of ways. These include theft (through looting), exchange, and purchase at often unreasonable rates that were advantageous to the colonial party (generally represented by missionaries, ethnographers, tourists, soldiers, or colonial administrators). In some instances in

[34] Higonnet, "Altérité et Primitivisme," 244.
[35] Dagen, *Primitivismes*, 55–60.
[36] Dagen, 60. "If statues and masks are reproduced in the press, the comments that accompany them are almost uniformly pejorative. It is a perpetual contradiction: curiosity and condescension are inseparable."

Africa, private dealers would acquire cultural belongings from groups that had recently converted to Christianity (itself a process intertwined with slavery and colonialism) or that were in financial difficulties (due to an imposed capitalist economic system).[37]

The exhibition methods used to display Indigenous materials once they left their homes were fed by and reinforced colonial discourses of power. In many ethnographic museums and private collections, objects by Indigenous peoples were placed in exhibition spaces that were cramped as much as possible. As Marianna Torgovnick writes: "[t]he room's overall message suggested that [Indigenous] life was messy, chaotic, in need of Western order."[38] Cultural belongings were regarded as specimens meant for the study of what white Europeans, Americans, and Canadians believed were lost or fast-disappearing cultures.[39] Informed by a belief that local peoples could not care for their own material culture, there was a perceived urgency to collect and preserve these objects for the benefit of humanity. Yet as Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn have noted, "when such objects are removed from their original contexts, are subjected to appropriation and exhibition, their meanings undergo radical changes."[40] In fact, the spiritual and ritual significance of the material was lost when placed behind glass cases and labeled in subjective and sometimes inaccurate ways. Lauren Walden summarized the phenomenon as it pertains to African objects as follows:

> The preservation of African art in European museums was not just a source of inspiration for avant-garde artists, but was equally framed as a justification for the colonial endeavour itself and for the

[37] Suzanne Preston Blier, "The Long Arm of the Lens: Photography, Colonialism, and African Sculpture," in *Photography and Sculpture: The Art Object in Reproduction*, ed. Sarah Hamill and Megan R. Luke (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2017), 123.
[38] Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive*, 75–76.
[39] For more on the topic, see Said, *Orientalism*; Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture*, (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2011). This myth of a vanishing culture was evident in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art in the works of Jean-Léon Gérôme and Edward Curtis (whose photographs exemplify the North American myth of the "Vanishing Indian").
[40] Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn, eds., *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1998), 2.

> 'emancipation' of Africans from their 'primitive' past […]. African traditions were to be archived in museums rather than practiced.[41]

European frameworks were thus imposed onto African cultural belongings from extraction to exhibition. The deep links between colonialism and the acquisition, display, and interpretation of Indigenous cultural belongings in Europe, the United States, and Canada at the time Borduas would have frequented exhibitions leading up to 1942 should not be ignored when analyzing his gouaches. Indeed, a full understanding of the artist's extractive Modernism can only come from a recognition of these links.

Despite the colonial streams through which global Indigenous cultural belongings entered European, American, and Canadian collections, it should be noted that the objects themselves still maintained their authority as testaments to cultural assertion in spaces that denied them such a right. Using an object-oriented approach, I echo art historian Gloria Bell in recognizing that as cultural belongings of incredible ritual and spiritual significance, the global Indigenous material reproduced, exhibited, and eventually appropriated by European, American, and Canadian modernists should not be understood as passive objects subjected to greater colonial forces.[42] Rather, these cultural belongings can be seen as having a "social life" of their own.[43] By re-reading African cultural belongings using a local perspective, we can understand their movements as being part of the personal history of the works all the while acknowledging that these movements are rooted in greater extractive processes. Recognizing the social life of individual objects requires taking the time to engage with their histories beyond any relevance to European or North American modernist history.

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[41] Lauren Walden, "Africa in the Surrealist Imaginary: Photographs of Sculpture in Minotaure and Documents," *Visual Anthropology* 34, no. 3 (2021): 201, https://doi.org/10.1080/08949468.2021.1908110.
[42] Gloria Bell, "Competing Sovereignties: Indigeneity and the Visual Culture of Catholic Colonization at the 1925 Pontifical Missionary Exhibition," *Journal of Global Catholicism* 3, no. 2 (2019).
[43] Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 63–90.

The Martiniquais politician and scholar Aimé Césaire, in a speech delivered in 1956 titled "Culture et colonisation," stated that "*partout où il y a eu colonisation, des peuples entiers ont été vidés de leur culture, vidés de toute culture*."[44] Although the points of contact highlighted above are rooted in an extractive process that mimics the economic extraction inherent in colonialism, I would nuance Césaire's statement to make a distinction between the extraction of material and immaterial culture. African material cultural belongings have a social life and cultural power of their own. Although culture is intimately linked with the objects that empower it, the separation of one from the other does not imply the loss of culture *per se*. The cultural potency of the cultural belongings extracted via colonialism is still present and alive in European, American, and Canadian museological contexts. In recognizing the cultural weight of the belongings that have been removed from their cultural settings, I make space for the objects' agency and power.

The extractive nature of the acquisition, display, and interpretation of Indigenous cultural belongings justifies the adjective's use in "extractive Modernism." The relationship is defined by colonial dynamics of power. Also implicit in the word "extractive" is the hybridity that characterizes artworks resulting from appropriations of Indigenous cultural belongings by white European, American, and Canadian modernists. After all, extraction necessitates two parties: the extractive and the extracted. One can only extract *from*. We can understand this relationality better through Homi Bhabha's notions of hybridity and Third Space.

[44] Aimé Césaire, "Culture et colonisation," in *Intense proximité: une anthologie du proche et du lointain*, ed. Okwui Enwezor and Mélanie Bouteloup (Versailles: Art Lys Editions, 2012). "wherever there has been colonization, entire peoples have been emptied of their culture, emptied of all culture."

Homi Bhabha's Hybridity to define Extraction

In his book *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha begins by situating cultures not as fixed spheres established by national or ethnic groups, but rather at the borders where different groups come into contact.[45] Bhabha argues that one describes one's culture in relation to another culture, that is to say as it *relates* to the other culture, rather than how it *opposes* it. Bhabha rejects the reference to the colonized subjects as solely that which it has been defined as by the colonizer. Such a definition dismisses the multiplicity apparent in hegemonic colonial constructions such as "the Orient" and negates the possibility of expressions of dissent within colonial apparatuses. He argues that the points of contact between colonizer and colonized necessarily created a cultural and historical hybridity. Bhabha writes:

> in the very practice of domination the language of the master becomes hybrid—neither the one thing nor the other. The incalculable colonized subject—half acquiescent, half oppositional, always trustworthy—produces an unreasonable problem of cultural difference for the very address of colonial cultural authority.[46]

This problem is the hybrid culture itself. Indeed, as the colonized adopt the colonizer's culture, the latter loses its unique and domineering aspect so dear to the colonizer and central to their project of colonialism. When the colonized adopt the manners of the colonizer, these manners can no longer be markers of superiority as they are used by a group perceived to be culturally inferior. In doing so, the colonized question the legitimacy of the colonizer.

Bhabha insists on the notion of cultural difference as a way to approach hybridity. For Bhabha, cultural difference is

> the process of the enunciation of culture as 'knowledgeable,' authoritative, adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification. […] cultural difference is a process of signification through which statements *of* culture or *on* culture differentiate,

[45] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*.
[46] Bhabha, 49.

> discriminate and authorize the production of fields of force, reference, applicability and capacity.[47]

Cultural difference can thus be seen as a process and draws attention to how culture is problematized at the boundaries between cultures, where they can be misread and misappropriated. Bhabha links this misreading to Jacques Derrida's *différance*, whereby the meaning of culture is created not only in the communication between two parties, but in a Third Space of enunciation, where both are mobilized in the creation of culture. It is in this Third Space that hybridity occurs.

Bhabha's text is groundbreaking in presenting a new approach to cultural studies that counters the hegemonic narratives of European thought. It serves as a tool for the deconstruction of colonialism by the colonized. The concept of hybridity is used by the colonial resistor as a way to recognize the influence of the colonizer on their culture, but also to assert their independence. This concept of hybridity, then, is turned against the colonizer by questioning and dismissing the hegemonic normative binary that informed European colonialism. Yet hybridity is a two-way road and is also experienced by the colonizer. The exchanges that allowed for the colonized to assert their independence and to counter hegemonic narratives of European thought also enabled the colonizer to appropriate Indigenous cultures. This is implicit in Bhabha's definition of hybridity. The Third Space acts as a location where two parties engage in an *exchange*, in the production of culture. "[I]n the very practice of domination the language of the master becomes hybrid […]."[48] Of course, this two-way relationship was not equal: the power dynamics that informed one side greatly outweigh the other thus defining the colonized to

[47] Bhabha, 49–50 (emphasis original).
[48] Bhabha, 49.

colonizer exchange as extractive. The violence and power relations that tainted the exchange of culture from the colonized to the colonizer pushes us to recognize the exchange as extractive.

I am aware of the criticism laid against Bhabha's hybridity and Third Space.[49] It's application here is specific and pointed, pertaining to a generalized understanding which directs the extraction prevalent in imperial relations. Numerous other concepts, such as métissage, créolization, exchange, and mixing attempt to define the cultural result of centuries of contact between actors in the colonial play.[50] I have chosen hybridity for its wider perspective and its approach focused on the colonized.

Extractive Modernism's hybridity is a central element for our understanding of modernist appropriations, like the ones that informed some of Borduas' 1942 gouaches. The result of these appropriations is necessarily a product of multiple elements converging in a space of cultural production. Without the cultural exchange between Indigenous cultural belongings and European art, there would be no European Modernism. Likewise, without Borduas' interactions with global Indigenous objects via colonial channels, he would not have created some of his 1942 gouaches. It is important to recognize that this exchange is based on colonial, that is to say extractive, dynamics. Otherwise, one falls into the dangerous trap, as Jack Flam and Miriam Deutch do, of asserting that "the cultural interaction produced by Western artists' enthusiasm for Primitive art

[49] Alex Callinicos, "Wonders Taken for Signs," in *Post-Ality: Marxism and Postmodernism*, ed. Masud Zavarzadeh, Teresa L. Ebert, and Donald E. Morton (Washington D. C.: Maisonneuve Press, 1995), 98–112; Satoshi Mizutani, "Hybridity and History: A Critical Reflection on Homi K. Bhabha's 'Post-Historical' Thought," *Zinbun* 41 (2009): 1–19; Bart Moor-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics* (London: Verso, 1997); Benita Parry, *Postcolonial Studies: A Materialist Critique* (Oxford and New York: Rutledge, 2004).

[50] Lorna Burns, "Becoming-Postcolonial, Becoming-Caribbean: Édouard Glissant and the Poetics of Creolization," *Textual Practice*, February 1, 2009, https://doi.org/10.1080/09502360802622300; Edouard Glissant, "Creolization in the Making of the Americas," *Caribbean Quarterly* 54, no. 1/2 (2008): 81–89; Stuart Hall, "Creolité and the Process of Creolization," in *Creolizing Europe: Legacies and Transformations*, ed. Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez and Shirley Anne Tate (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 12–25; Charmaine A. Nelson, ed., *Towards an African Canadian Art History: Art, Memory, and Resistance* (Concord, Ont.: Cactus Press, 2019).

was one of the few aspects of the colonial encounter that had saving grace."[51] This statement completely forgoes the colonial relations that dictated "Western artists' enthusiasm," and thus gives license to the ideas of hierarchy that have long excused appropriations.

Before presenting the five Borduas gouaches I will examine in the thesis, I take the opportunity here to include a few more notes on terminology that will prove useful to the reader.

I firmly argue for a recognition of Borduas' extractive Modernism as appropriation rather than influence, inspiration, or borrowing despite the scrutiny the term has garnered in recent years.[52] In my thesis, appropriation refers to the use of Indigenous forms and iconography by white European, American, and Canadian artists in their art. Such a use is made possible via colonial channels of exchange. Granted, this definition is narrow and a post-colonial critique is arguably embedded within it. But this understanding of the word is meant to fully contend with the dynamics of power at play during the first half of the twentieth-century, the moment under consideration in this thesis.

I also once again echo Bell and use the term "cultural belonging" rather than "arts," "artefact," or "regalia" to describe the Indigenous objects under consideration in this thesis.[53] Bell uses "cultural belonging" to describe the material collected by Papal authorities for the 1925 Pontifical Missionary Exhibition at the Vatican. She argues that the term "dislocates the

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[51] Flam and Deutch, *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art*, 11.
[52] Arnd Schneider, "On 'Appropriation'. A Critical Reappraisal of the Concept and its Application in Global Art Practices," *Social Anthropology* 11, no. 2 (2003): 215–29, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8676.2003.tb00169.x; Stacy Ernst and Ruth B. Phillips, "Riopelle et l'art de la côte Nord-Ouest: Appropriation, dialogue, transformation," in *Riopelle : À la rencontre des territoires nordiques et des cultures autochtones*, ed. Andréanne Roy, Jacques Des Rochers, and Yseult Riopelle (Montreal and Milan: Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal and 5 Continents Editions, 2020), 200–241; Benjamin Buchloh, "Allegorical Procedures. Appropriation and Montage in Contemporary Art," in *Art after Conceptual Art*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Sabeth Buchmann (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press and Generali Foundation, 2006); Nicholas Thomas, "Appropriation/Appreciation. Settler Modernism in Australia and New Zealand," in *The Empire of Things: Regimes of Value and Material Culture*, ed. Fred R. Myers (Santa Fe, N.m.: School of American Research Press, 2001).
[53] Bell, "Competing Sovereignties, 20–21.

sovereign claims of Papal authority and centers an Indigenous frame of reference" when referring to the Indigenous objects.[54] Although I addresses Borduas' appropriations of African Indigenous cultural material rather than Canadian Indigenous ones, I believe Bell's term and its justification are equally applicable in a similar context of extraction for exhibition. Using cultural belonging limits arbitrary applications of inaccurate terms and rightly denotes how the ownership of the material still resides, in the case of unjust acquisition, with the Indigenous communities who created the objects in the first place. Furthermore, given the limited information recorded at the moment African cultural belongings were acquired, it is difficult to determine if the case studies presented below were considered art, artefact, or regalia by the Indigenous populations.

I now turn to the objects of analysis in this thesis, Borduas' five extractive modernist gouaches.

[54] Bell, 21.

2. A Closer Look at Five of Borduas' 1942 Gouaches

Borduas' 1942 gouaches were the artist's first exploration of Surrealism via Automatism. They mark a central point in Borduas' artistic development. As François-Marc Gagnon has written:

> The importance of the 1942 gouaches in Borduas' development cannot be overstated. From then on, under the influence of Surrealism, the mental exercise of cutting up reality and recombining the parts according to subconscious laws would take precedence over the imitation of external models. Borduas begins by timidly giving free rein to these mechanisms. He explores the possibilities of changing the content he has inherited from the structures of figurative painting, without questioning the structures themselves.[55]

Gagnon emphasizes the fragmentation and reconstruction inherent in Borduas' surrealist production process. Before we analyze Borduas' fragmentation of "external models," however, we must detail how Borduas encountered this surrealist technique and more closely examine his resulting 1942 extractive modernist gouaches. This section proposes an overview of Borduas' interest in Surrealism, the development of his own approach to the movement, and how his distinctive "surrational Automatism" was manifested through his 1942 gouaches.

A Surrealist Turning Point in Borduas' Oeuvre

Throughout late 1941, Borduas showed his surrealist-inspired gouaches to visitors to his studio on Mentana street in Montréal.[56] His most regular guests were his students from the École du Meuble and other young art lovers that would gather to discuss the arts every Tuesday evening.[57] It was during these Tuesday evening studio sessions that Borduas and his students familiarized themselves with European artistic movements including Surrealism.

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[55] Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, 2013, 132.
[56] Jacques de Tonnancour, "To Paul-Émile Borduas," 1941, Fonds Paul-Émile Borduas, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, FA1973.1.S1-2.D180.6.
[57] Gagnon, *Chronique du mouvement automatiste québécois*, 47.

In a lecture delivered at the Windsor Hotel on November 10, 1942, Borduas alluded to the fact that he was first made aware of Surrealism in the visual arts via "Château étoilé," an article written by André Breton (1896-1966) and published in the surrealist magazine *Minotaure* in 1936.[58] Borduas likely consulted this magazine at the École du Meuble library as of 1938.[59] Borduas may also have first been made aware of Surrealism through Maurice Gagnon, who, in 1940, published a book entitled *Peinture moderne* which devotes an entire chapter to Surrealism.[60] There can be no doubt that Borduas knew of Surrealism at the time the book was published. Gagnon mentioned Borduas in the book's acknowledgements, writing that "*par ses conseils discrets,* [*Borduas*] *a été l'âme de ce volume*," implying that Borduas was involved in discussions during the writing of the manuscript.[61] What is more, we know that Borduas had a copy of both the 1940 edition of *Peinture moderne* and the 1943 reprint in his library.[62]

Gagnon explained Surrealism via the surrealist poet, who he believed "*cherche l'instinct; mais celui-ci est difficile à découvrir, enfoui qu'il est sous les couches denses et vénérables de la civilisation*."[63] The author highlights how difficult it is for a surrealist to "discover" instinct—as opposed to reason—because it has been suppressed by centuries of "civilization." The

[58] Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, 2013, 137–41.
[59] Borduas, *Écrits I*, 208–40; André Breton, "Château étoilé," *Minotaure*, no. 8 (June 1936): 25–39; Maurice Gagnon, "To Whom It May Concern," June 5, 1941, École du Meuble Fonds kept at the Cégep du Vieux Montréal. In a letter written "To whom it may concern" by Maurice Gagnon and dated Jun 5, 1941, the art historian, who was also the École's librarian, confirms that the École's library holds numbers 1 to 10 of *Minotaure*. Another document proves that the library was subscribed to *Minotaure* as of 1938, but the document does not make it clear that the library held issues before that date.
[60] Maurice Gagnon, *Peinture moderne* (Montreal: Éditions Bernard Valiquette, 1940).
[61] Gagnon, n.p. "Thanks to his discreet comments, [Borduas] has been the soul of this book."
[62] The 1940 edition is dedicated to Gabrielle Borduas while the 1943 edition is dedicated to both Gabrielle and Paul-Émile Borduas. Borduas' library is kept in two separate archives. The first, smaller grouping is held at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréalin the Fonds Paul-Émile Borduas (FA1973.1). A larger grouping is located at the Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art Documentation Centre, part of Concordia University. I have catalogued the documents included in both archives and made the list publicly accessible via Zotero here: https://www.zotero.org/groups/5621452/biblioth%C3%A8que_de_paul-%C3%A9mile_borduas/library
[63] Gagnon, *Peinture moderne*, 160. "looks for instinct; but instinct is difficult to discover, buried under dense and venerable layers of civilization."

importance of instinct on surrealist philosophy lies in its necessity when trying to create via un- or subconscious thought processes and techniques. Gagnon went on to explain how

> [*l*]*e surréalisme a démontré, une fois de plus, que l'art était autre que l'imitation de la nature; que si l'homme est un animal intelligent, il est aussi, et parce qu'il est intelligent, animal instinctif, primitif sous la civilisation qui l'enrobe et l'oblitère à nos yeux*.[64]

Gagnon linked the instinctive and primitive with the subconscious and Surrealism. To be sure, he did not describe Surrealism as a primitive process. On the contrary, the art historian emphasized the intelligence of surrealists because they are capable of shedding the layers of civilization that otherwise screen off the unconscious mind. Quoting René Huyghe, Gagnon then linked surrealist methodology to artistic production: "*sous un thème vague, source d'associations d'images, ils (les peintres surréalistes) laissent flotter leur pensée et enregistrent, par le jeu spontané des lignes, ses pulsations, les ébauches ou les rappels d'objets qui y naissent ou s'y défont*."[65] In *Peinture moderne* Gagnon created a roadmap from which Borduas may well have learned how to translate literary Surrealism to the visual arts. From the poet to the artist, Gagnon traced a lineage the artist could follow to adopt Surrealism.

The binaries that Gagnon used throughout his text (primitive/civilized and irrational/reason) were often highlighted at the time in comparisons (or distinctions) between white Europeans, Americans, and Canadians on the one hand, and Indigenous peoples on the other.[66] Gagnon's allusion to a thought process unburdened by "layers of civilization" recalls the myth of the noble savage, popularized by ethnographic accounts of the early twentieth century.

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[64] Gagnon, 171. "Surrealism has demonstrated, once again, that art was other than the imitation of nature; that if man is an intelligent animal, he is also, and because he is intelligent, an instinctive, primitive animal beneath the civilization that envelops him and obliterates him from our eyes."
[65] René Huyghe, *Nouvelle histoire universelle de l'art*, ed. Marcel Aubert (Paris: Éditions Firmin-Didot, 1932), 273, quoted in Gagnon, 170. "under a vague theme, source of image associations, they (the surrealist painters) let their thoughts float and record, through the spontaneous play of lines, its pulsations, the sketches or reminders of objects which are born or undone there."
[66] Lemke, *Primitivist Modernism*, 4–5.

Indigenous peoples were seen to "have what the West has lost," transcend modern social constraints and benefit from an approach to life more in keeping with early homo sapiens.[67] By describing a "primitive and instinctive animal" below a façade of civilisation, *Peinture moderne* participates in narratives of hierarchy that regulated interactions between Indigenous peoples and white Europeans, Americans, and Canadians. This hierarchy was/is predicated on a white-supremacist conception of the world. These perspectives must not be lost as we try to understand how Borduas came to Surrealism and what informed his understanding of the movement.

Borduas wrote his own definition of Surrealism in 1948, as part of *Refus global*. In "Commentaires sur des mots courants," one of three texts Borduas wrote for the manifesto, the author-artist compiled a glossary of terms that he believed were the most pertinent when it comes to any discussion of Surrealism.[68] The most noteworthy definition is the one Borduas wrote for "Automatisme surrationnel":

> *Automatisme surrationnel : écriture plastique non préconçue.* Une forme en appelle une autre *jusqu'au sentiment de l'unité, ou de l'impossibilité d'aller plus loin sans destruction.*
>
> *En cours d'exécution aucune attention n'est apportée au contenu. L'assurance qu'il est fatalement lié au contenant justifie cette liberté : Lautréamont.*
>
> *Complète indépendance morale vis-à-vis l'objet produit. Il est laissé intact, repris en partie ou détruit selon le sentiment qu'il déclenche (quasi-impossibilité de reprise partielle). Tentative d'une prise de conscience plastique au cours de l'écriture (plus exactement peut-être 'un état de veille' – Robert Élie).* Désir de comprendre le contenu une fois l'objet terminé.

[67] Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive*, 169; 186–87.
[68] Borduas, *Écrits I*, 296. "We can rightly say that, for Borduas, the work of defining the key terms of his intellectual approach could have corresponded to an effort to assimilate surrealism."

> *Ses espoirs : une connaissance aiguisée du contenu psychologique de toute forme, de l'univers humain fait de l'univers tout court*.[69]

We need only recall the interview Borduas gave Gagnon at the closing of *Œuvres surréalistes* to realize how "surrational Automatism" likely informed the production of the 1942 gouaches: "*Un premier trait se dessine, divisant la feuille. Cette division de la feuille déclenche tout un processus de pensées qui sont exécutées toujours automatiquement.*"[70] For Borduas, the steps of the production of an artwork were informed by the previous steps themselves. But the movement of the tool, however much informed by the previous movement, was ultimately dictated by the artist's own thoughts. Regarding Automatism itself, Borduas writes: "*un des moyens suggérés par André Breton pour* l'étude du mouvement de la pensée."[71] For Borduas, Automatism was a means to study the artist's thoughts, their subconscious. What is more, the interpretation of the artwork, once it was determined to have a "feeling of unity," relied entirely on the artist and their *desire* to understand what they made. There can be no doubt as to the source of Borduas' art. The artist's work, despite not being pre-conceived, derived from the maker's thoughts. More than a theorist, Borduas applied his notion of surrational Automatism to his artistic production. The 1942 gouaches are some of the first results of this technique.

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[69] Borduas, 303–4. "Surrational automatism: non-preconceived plastic writing. *One form calls for another* until the feeling of unity, or the impossibility of going further without destruction. / During execution, no attention is paid to the content. The assurance that it is fatally linked to the container justifies this freedom: Lautréamont. / Complete moral independence from the object produced. It is left intact, partly taken up or destroyed according to the feeling it triggers (quasi-impossibility of partial takeover). Attempt at a plastic awareness during writing (more precisely perhaps 'a state of wakefulness' – Robert Élie). *Desire to understand the content once the object is finished*. / Their hopes: a sharp knowledge of the psychological content of all forms, of the human universe made of the universe itself" (emphasis mine).

[70] Borduas, 640. "The first stroke divides the page in half. This division then triggers a series of thoughts which are always executed automatically."

[71] Borduas, 301. "one of the means suggested by André Breton for *the study of the movement of thought*" (emphasis mine).

Five Extractive Modernist Gouaches

Five of the nearly sixty gouaches that Borduas created in 1942 using his surrational automatist technique can be considered extractive modernist. The first of these is *Abstraction no. 28* (Fig. 2). The gouache depicts a central, abstracted mass in the center of the composition in yellow, black, and red, surrounded by a black and white border, from which springs a black and white braid leading the viewer's eye to the bottom right of the page. The central object of the horizontal composition is an oval-like shape which terminates in a mouth in the bottom left of the page, and in the centre of the shape, a black, yellow, and white eye recalls the border and the braid. Taken as a whole, the gouache depicts an abstracted African mask in profile with protruding lips and a braid of hair.

This work was exhibited at *Œuvres surréalistes* in 1942, after it was likely given to Peter I. Freygood in exchange for having printed the invitations to the event.[72] Freygood and his wife Ruth "jestingly used to call [*Abstraction no. 28*] 'fish in a hot water bottle'[…]" and although such an interpretation is possible, I argue that Borduas' gouache is a reinterpretation of West African masks.[73] It is possible that the brown, red, and yellow seen in the gouache today were not the original colours of the work, as Ruth Freygood wrote in 1986 how "the varying shades of terra cotta and green [of *Abstraction no. 28*] were beautiful."[74] *Abstraction no. 28* is of particular

[72] Laurin, "Les gouaches de 1942 de Borduas," 1973, 142; "Abstraction No. 28," *Paul-Émile Borduas Catalogue Raisonné* (blog), n.d., https://borduas.concordia.ca/en/catalog/2226. Since *Œuvres surréalistes*, the gouache was exhibited at *Exposition des textiles Canadart organisée par la maison Henry Morgan* at the Antoine Gallery in Montreal from February 3 to March 1, 1950; *Household Fair* in Windsor, Ontario, from April 25 to May 2, 1950; *Paul-Émile Borduas 1905-1960: A Loan Exhibition* at the Currie Art Gallery in New Hampshire from January 6 to 29, 1967 and the Jaffe-Friede Gallery in Dartmouth College, New Hampshire from February 3 to March 5, 1967; and *Paul-Émile Borduas* at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts from May 6 to August 7, 1988.
[73] Ruth Freygood to Dominion Gallery, October 6, 1986 in Dominion Gallery Papers, Box 296, File Fre-Fry, Archives, National Gallery of Canada, quoted in Charles C. Hill, "Acquisition Justification, Canadart after Paul-Émile Borduas: 41775.1-2" (National Gallery of Canada, November 29, 2005), National Gallery of Canada, 41775.1-2 Object File.
[74] Ruth Freygood to Dominion Gallery, cited in Hill.

interest given its use by Peter Freygood in the 1950s as a pattern for fabrics. In 1949, Freygood asked Borduas if he would consent to his gouache being reproduced "on draperies" and the artist agreed enthusiastically.[75] Borduas approved three colour-ways to be printed on fabric and sold to consumers across Canada. But by 1954, Borduas denied having ever made designs for fabrics and few examples of the material have been conserved.[76] The examples in the National Gallery of Canada are red and green and may be closer in keeping with the original colours of the gouache (Fig. 7).

The second gouache that I consider to be extractive modernist is *Abstraction no. 36*, which was given the title *Two Masks* during *Œuvres surréalistes* (Fig. 3). The gouache shows two masks on either side of a horizontal page. To the left, one sees the profile of an elongated mask. From top to bottom: long dark blue "ears", a red protruding forehead, an indigo eye next to a dark blue nose, a blue mouth, and a light blue chin. The right half of the image depicts a frontal view of a squinting mask. Again, from top to bottom, one sees yellow eyes and a cubist nose outlined by contrasting fields of green and red, then follows the mouth, composed of a single horizontal black line and a distinctive chin with vertical wavy striations. The backdrop of the gouache is made up of organic black shapes on a grey surface, with a gradient moving

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[75] Peter I. Freygood, "To Paul-Émile Borduas," October 20, 1949, Fonds Paul-Émile Borduas of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, FA.1973.1-S1-1-D16, 1/2.

[76] Paul-Émile Borduas, "To Robert Hubbard," May 18, 1954, Fonds Paul-Émile Borduas of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, FA1973.1.S1-2.D100. In 1954, Borduas wrote: « *Je n'ai jamais fait de dessin pour le textile; ni pour quoi que ce soit ayant plus ou moins d'utilité pratique. Et j'espère m'en tenir toujours éloigné. […] Excusez-moi d'avoir pris la liberté d'attirer votre obligeante attention sur cette erreur; c'est que je serais ennuyé qu'elle se répandît.* » ("I have never made designs for fabrics nor for anything having any practical use. And I hope I never shall. […] I apologize for bringing your attention to the matter, but I would be very much upset that such an information might spread.") This disdain for the decorative from a Modern artist must not come as a surprise. By the 1950s, Modernism and decoration were seen as antithetical and Borduas, who was living in New York and had spent several months at an artist's colony in Provincetown, was likely persuaded to give up or hide any interest he had for decoration. This denial may be contrary to Borduas' interest in design. After all, he had taught decoration at the École du meuble for many years and had studied to be a church decorator. Such a shift away from the decorative can only be explained by a desire to conform to mainstream modernist discourses of the time. A pair of curtains reproducing *Abstraction no. 28* is conserved at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, object number 41775.1-2.

towards the upper right-hand side corner, which is completely black. This creates a clear separation between the background and foreground, and the masks appear to float in an infinite field of dark masses. The two masks are linked to one another by a light-blue shape, and other random red, yellow, green, and blue shapes are variously attached to the masks in a seemingly automatic pattern. Very little is known about *Abstraction no. 36*. Exhibited at *Œuvres surréalistes*, the work did not sell. It was later acquired by Dr Paul Poirier when he visited Borduas' studio in the autumn of 1942.[77] The gouache has not been exhibited since 1942.

Borduas' third extractive modernist gouache is *Abstraction no. 51* also known as *The Two Masks* (Fig. 4). Unlike the two previous gouaches, this one is vertical, with one mask above the other. Both masks are composed using warm and cool tones of red, orange, blue, and lilac. The top mask stares downwards and has flowing black and white hair. We can discern a clear cubist influence in how the face is constructed with contrasting colours. The bottom mask has an exaggerated mouth and asymmetrical eyes, and sports a pair of red horns. Both masks are linked together by an amorphous blue shape on a neutral background. This gouache was likely not exhibited at *Œuvres surréalistes*, despite its second, descriptive title. Purchased either by Jacques Beaulieu or his brother Gérard, no additional information about the gouache exists.[78]

The fourth gouache examined in this thesis is *Abstraction no. 52* or *The Two Heads* (Fig. 5). This horizontal work portrays two heads joined together in rich brown, beige, and black tones. The two faces are composed using simple black lines and are covered in a checkered pattern of beige and brown. Three of the four eyes in the gouache are empty and black. The asymmetrical eyes of the figure on the left and the mix of shapes below the heads place *Abstraction no. 52*, like *Abstraction no. 51* and *Abstraction no. 36*, in a cubist tradition. Unlike

[77] Laurin, "Les gouaches de 1942 de Borduas," 1973, 132.
[78] Laurin, 138.

the other gouaches we have seen so far, the heads in *Abstraction no. 52* do not float on the background of the composition, but are anchored to the bottom edge of the page. The light uniform background is peppered with dark shapes and an ornamental border runs along the top edge. This gouache was not exhibited at the Ermitage in 1942 and indeed has never been exhibited. It was offered by Borduas to Mrs. Hermel Boucher, a resident of his native Saint-Hilaire, as a wedding gift in 1944.[79]

The last gouache I consider is not part of the series painted in the winter of 1941-1942. *The Musician* was likely painted after *Œuvres surréalistes* (Fig. 6).[80] However, in subject matter and production technique, the gouache can be situated within Borduas' extractive modernist works created using surrealist Automatism. The gouache is composed of a head in profile in predominantly red and green tones. The figure appears to be wearing a red, white, and blue helmet or hat and has long green hair. Borduas has played with the figure's nose, creating an illusion of a double nose, one outlined in brown and black, and another in red, both pointed and protruding. Below the head's very square jaw, the viewer is lost in the shapes that huddle around the subject's neck and torso. In the bottom left corner, two protrusions might suggest fingers poised to play and instrument while the remainder of the composition is a jumble of black, green, and red shapes which mesh with the main figure, making it difficult to discern a background from the foreground. The gouache was acquired by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréalin 1973 thanks to a donation from the National Museums of Canada, which was gifted Borduas'

[79] Laurin, 138–39.
[80] "Le Musicien," *Paul-Émile Borduas Catalogue Raisonné* (blog), n.d., https://borduas.concordia.ca/en/catalog/2725. The gouache was exhibited at *Borduas à Saint-Hilaire* at the Manoir Rouville Campbell in Mont-Saint-Hilaire from June 21 to July 2, 1979; and at *Paul-Émile Borduas* at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréalfrom May 8 to November 29, 1988.

estate by the artist's widow. The work seems to have suffered from damage, although it is unclear when it was cut into four pieces.

These five gouaches are the main case study of this thesis. In the following section, I have selected points of contact between Borduas and African cultural belongings to demonstrate the extractive Modernism of five of the 1942 gouaches. I approach this selection in a quasi-curatorial way. This is to say, I have curated the sources I present below after combing through archives to investigate the many museums, books, galleries, magazines, films, and other media Borduas is known to have consumed prior to 1942.

3. Borduas and African Cultural Belongings: The Sources Behind the Non-preconceived Art

An investigation into Borduas' appropriations of African cultural belongings can only take place after an investigation into points of contact between the artist and the objects he appropriated as Borduas could not have appropriated material he never saw. Throughout his career, Borduas interacted with African cultural belongings through two main means: literature and exhibitions. These channels fed the artist's repertoire of African cultural belongings as early as the late 1920s and were likely sought out by the artist himself as a way to nurture his keen interest in global Indigenous cultures. It is unlikely that Borduas' encounters with African cultural belongings were accidental.

Despite the difficulties of obtaining contemporaneous literature on Modern Art in Québec at the time, Borduas was able to read surrealist magazines such as *Minotaure*. Borduas also attended exhibitions of African cultural belongings throughout his life. Starting in Paris while on a study trip in 1929, he basked in the vogue for African objects and visited the Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro and the Paul Guillaume Gallery. On his return to Montréal in the summer of 1930, there were no fewer opportunities for Borduas to see African cultural belongings. Museums such as McGill's Redpath Museum and the University's Ethnological Museum, and public exhibitions including the 1930 Exposition missionnaire were filled with African cultural belongings the artist could have appropriated.

Borduas' Interest in Global Indigenous Cultures

Looking through Borduas' biography, we can assess the extent of his interest in global Indigenous cultures. Demonstrating this interest can help us understand why Borduas may have appropriated West- and Central-African cultural belongings in the first place.

Borduas arrived in Paris in the autumn of 1928. While there, he was exposed to non-European goods via the numerous merchants that littered the streets. He bought a "carpet from the Orient" from a sailor for 75 francs.[81] This interaction places Borduas at the heart of the French market for imported goods. By the 1920s, the export market for global Indigenous cultural belongings was growing rapidly and flea markets in Paris were filled with objects created in the colonies to be exported and sold in Europe to cater to European demand.[82] Borduas may well have seen African objects on Paris' streets, but no evidence exists to confirm this hypothesis.

Shortly before leaving Paris in the late summer of 1930, Borduas wrote to Pierre Dubois—a church decorator he had worked with in Rambucourt earlier that year—to ask if Dubois had any work for the painter. Dubois had nothing to offer the young Borduas, but suggested he write to the organizers of Paris' 1931 Exposition coloniale.[83] It is unknown if Borduas took up the suggestion and wrote to the organizers, but it is telling that the artist would receive such advice as it points to Borduas' possible interest in global Indigenous cultural belongings. To dismiss Dubois' suggestion as merely a way for Borduas to earn some money

[81] Borduas, *Écrits I*, 48.
[82] Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner, eds., *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Cal.: University of California Press, 1999), 9–13; Dagen, *Primitivismes*, 36; Flam and Deutch, *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art*, 243.
[83] Borduas, *Écrits I*, 27.

would be to gloss over a potentially important link between the artist and global Indigenous belongings.

Once back in Montréal, in the fall of 1934, Borduas wrote to the French colonial administrators of Vanuatu and the Tuamotu islands.[84] In these letters, Borduas asked the colonial officials for advice on immigration and agriculture, expressing a desire to settle in the Pacific Islands. In a notebook Borduas used while teaching at the Montreal Catholic School Board, the artist took notes on Tahiti and Vanuatu.[85] Borduas clearly had a desire to move to the Pacific Islands. His dream was cut short however by the responses he received from the colonial administrators, which all cautioned the artist that conditions were extremely harsh for new immigrants. The response from the Tuamotu Islands official even referenced Gauguin, the French artist who lived in Tahiti for the second half of his life and helped exoticize Pacific Islanders in the eyes of European, American, and Canadian art markets: "*Mais si vous êtes peintre, vous aurez des distractions peu coûteuses et vous aurez tout le loisir d'exercer votre art au pays illustré par Paul Gauguin, Pierre Loti et tant d'autres*."[86]

Borduas' desire to immigrate to the Pacific falls within a common trope for white European, American, and Canadian modernists. Building on György Lukácks' term, Torgovnick has developed "transcendental homelessness" to describe the recurring desire for white modernists to immigrate to a place they felt was both geographically and culturally distant, yet somehow known and comfortable. Torgovnick conceives of this term as "the site of much of this century's interest in the primitive."[87] Indeed, the author draws a direct correlation between the

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[84] Borduas, 28.
[85] Paul-Émile Borduas, "Cahier de préparation de cours," 193X-194X, Fonds Paul-Émile Borduas, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, FA1973.1.S4.D1.
[86] F. Meuré, "To Paul-Émile Borduas," December 3, 1934, Fonds Paul-Émile Borduas, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, FA1973.1.S5.D7. " But if you are a painter, you will have inexpensive distractions and you will have plenty of time to practice your art in the country illustrated by Paul Gauguin, Pierre Loti and so many others."
[87] Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive*, 189.

desire—metaphoric or literal—for exile and the interest in global Indigenous peoples. Torgovnick links the desire for a new home with the modernist understanding of non-European, American, and Canadian places as the "original" home: "The state of transcendental homelessness produces primitivism in its most acute modern forms, with its various desires to go home to something simpler, more comfortable, less urban and chafing and crowded."[88] Based on these myths and stereotypes, Borduas developed a dream of traveling to the Pacific, likely modeling his ideal image on the life of Gauguin. We must not forget that in 1941, Borduas painted *La Tahitienne*, an early cubist inspired portrait of a Tahitian woman. The portrait was later acquired by the National Gallery of Ottawa and demonstrates once again the artist's interest in Pacific Island life. As François-Marc Gagnon has recognized, Gauguin was a constant inspiration for the young Borduas. Borduas was also described as a "modern Gauguin" by Charles Doyon in a review for a Québec City exhibition in 1941.[89]

For art historian Louise Vigneault, Borduas' dream of exile is brought on by Automatism's radicalism and distancing from local and international authorities:

> *Le spectre omniprésent de cette double autorité provoquera toutefois, chez Borduas, un réflexe de distanciation qui se concrétisera, d'une part, par la recherche d'un paradis perdu, d'un passé génésiaque enchanteur ou des richesses individuelles trop longtemps enfouies et, d'autre part, par la quête d'un ailleurs meilleur, la manifestation d'un nomadisme qui se concrétisera finalement par l'exil.*[90]

Here, Vigneault refers to Borduas' moves to New York and eventually Paris. But the author points to the need for Borduas to look outside of Québec as a way to counter the strict social

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[88] Torgovnick, 192.
[89] Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, 2013, 104; 108; 150.
[90] Vigneault, *Identité et modernité dans l'art au québec*, 115. "The omnipresent spectre of this dual authority will, however, provoke in Borduas a distancing which will take concrete form, on the one hand, in the search for a lost paradise, an enchanting genesis past or individual riches buried for too long and, on the other hand, in the quest for a better elsewhere, the manifestation of a nomadism which will finally take concrete form in exile."

pressures the artist was under in a highly clerico-nationalist province. Importantly, Vigneault highlights that this longing for exile is intimately linked with Borduas' development of Automatism, based on European Surrealism. This modernist perspective pushed Borduas to consider the extra-provincial as a balm to the pressures brought on by his artistic and social radicalism.

As late as 1949, on the advice of Louis Bernard, Borduas wrote to Paul Rivet, the director of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris, asking for a job.[91] After the publication of *Refus global*, Borduas was fired from his teaching post at the École du Meuble and his paintings were not selling enough for him and his family to live off his art. It is noteworthy, however, that the artist would contact Rivet to inquire for work. The Musée de l'Homme was the successor to the Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro and held a vast collection of objects from global Indigenous cultures. This request to work in a museum of global Indigenous objects speaks to Borduas' interest in the cultures represented in the museum.

These facts demonstrate Borduas' interest in global Indigenous cultures. It is thus not so surprising that the artist appropriated West- and Central-African cultural belongings in his early surrealist works. What is more, the points of contact that allowed Borduas to appropriate global indigenous belongings were likely not coincidental encounters.

Literary Points of Contact Between Borduas and African Cultural Belongings

It is important to note how difficult it would have been for Borduas to obtain literature on Modern Art in early twentieth-century Quebec. Successive provincial governments allowed the

[91] Borduas, *Écrits I*, 382; Paul-Émile Borduas, *Écrits II: 1923-1953*, ed. André-G. Bourassa and Gilles Lapointe, vol. 1 (Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1997), 307–8; Paul-Émile Borduas, "To Paul Rivet," January 25, 1949, Fonds Paul-Émile Borduas, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, FA1973.1.S1-2.D194.

Catholic church to impose the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, a repertoire of banned books compiled by the Roman Catholic Church. The printed medium was seen as the main means by which dissident groups could make their opinions known and was severely controlled by the Church as a way to maintain their authority on the social, intellectual, and religious life of Québécois.[92] The literature that Borduas would have consulted was thus acquired either through his more progressive friends such as Maurice Gagnon and Henri Tranquille (1916-2005; who owned and operated the Librairie Tranquille), or brought back to Montréal from Paris or New York by artists and writers (some of whom were Borduas' students) still making the pilgrimage to the cities to further their education.[93]

The Minotaure *Objects*

One of the most noteworthy opportunities Borduas would have had to encounter African cultural belongings in literature was the surrealist magazine *Minotaure*. The goal of the magazine was to "*mettre en lumière les rapports qui existent entre la conscience et le subconscient, tout en explorant les divers domaines de la sensibilité de l'homme*."[94] It was published from 1933 to 1939 by Albert Skira (1904-1973) and Tériade (Stratis Eleftheriades; 1897-1983) in Paris. Contributions by Breton, Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), Salvador Dalí (1904-1989), and Man Ray

[92] Pierre Hébert, *Censure et littérature au Québec: Le livre crucifié, 1625-1919* (Montreal: Fides, 1997), 15–22.
[93] Evan H. Turner, *Paul-Émile Borduas, 1905-1960: A Loan Exhibition* (Dartmouth, NH: Hopkins Center Art Galleries, 1967); Borduas, *Écrits I*, 223–27. Writing to Fernand Leduc in Paris, Borduas mentions "*Vos lettres sont lues, Fernand. Tout le groupe en prend connaissance, si possible, chaque fois qu'elles arrivent. Nous suivons attentivement vos tentatives de communication. À distance une liaison étroite est pleine de difficultés. Il faudrait nous écrire davantage. Vous êtes le diapason de nos jugements des activités européennes. Par vous la lutte se précise ici*." "Your letters are read, Fernand. The whole group takes note of them, if possible, each time they arrive. We follow your attempts at communication closely. At a distance, a close connection is full of difficulties. You should write to us more. You are the tuning fork of our judgments of European activities. Through you the struggle is becoming clearer here."
[94] Albert Skira, "Introduction," *Minotaure*, 1968. "highlight the links between the conscience and the subconscious, all the while exploring the various areas of human sensitivity."

(1890-1976), among others, were often published in its pages. The magazine would have catered to Borduas' circle of friends and students as they were exploring Surrealism.

The second issue of *Minotaure* was entirely devoted to the French 1931-1933 Mission ethnographique et linguistique Dakar-Djibouti and to sub-Saharan African culture. The issue included articles on circumcision and funerary rituals, Cameroonian music, Ethiopian amulets, and a bull sacrifice all of which were tainted with what we can today define as colonial and racist language. The Mission, headed by French anthropologist Marcel Griaule, was equipped with a *permis de capture scientifique* which allowed its members to acquire as many objects as they deemed was necessary. Griaule and his team brought back thousands of sub-Saharan African cultural belongings to Paris in 1933 where they were exhibited at the Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro.[95] Along with physical material, the Mission recorded local dialects with 200 sound recordings and took some 6,000 photographs.[96] As Richard Laurent Omgba writes about the Mission: "*au cours de leur mission ethnologique, Griaule et ses compagnons ratissent complètement l'Afrique, achetant à vil prix par-ci, rackettant par-là, dépouillant en somme les autochtones de tous les symboles de leur culture, au profit des musées hexagonaux*."[97] Despite the methodological introduction—written by Griaule as a way to add some legitimacy to the expedition—there is no doubt that the trip had important evangelical and colonial goals. Furthermore, however much the Mission was rigorous in its collecting, as de L'Estoile has noted, "*conformément à leur visée primitiviste, les ethnographes restent aveugles à tout ce qui ne*

[95] Paul Rivet was one of the members of the *Mission*.
[96] de L'Estoile, *Le goût des Autres*, 186–204.
[97] Richard Laurent Omgba, *La littérature anticolonialiste en France de 1914 à 1960: formes d'expression et fondements théoriques* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004), 222, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb39195026j. "throughout their ethnological mission, Griaule and his companions completely combed Africa, buying for a fraction of the value here, racketeering there, yet always stripping Indigenous peoples of all the symbols of their culture for the benefit of French museums."

correspond pas à l'image d'une Afrique préservée."[98] This censured version of the Mission's results was presented in the pages of *Minotaure*. Its extractive nature and its consequences must not be forgotten when considering how Borduas engaged with material about the Mission.

The preface to the *Minotaure* issue highlights the importance of ethnography as a discipline, noting that "*elle fournit d'indispensables matériaux à ces deux grands instruments de la connaissance humaine: sociologie, psychologie en même temps qu'elle est un des ferments les plus actifs de l'esthétique moderne*."[99] The editors of *Minotaure* thus not only recognized the scientific contributions of Griaule's Mission, but also its value in creating a modern aesthetic, one based on Indigenous cultures. The sub-Saharan African cultural belongings Borudas saw were framed as a central aspect of Modernism thus tainting his understanding of the objects. This is highly consequential as we think about how Borduas would have approached the material he consulted in *Minotaure*.

Along with its textual descriptions, the magazine featured many pictures of African cultural belongings which Borduas would have seen sometime between 1938 and 1942. Some of these pictures depict African masks that have similar stylistic features to *Abstraction no. 36* (Fig. 3). As previously mentioned, the mask on the left-hand side in Borduas' gouache is shown in profile, with protruding "ears." Five masks reproduced in *Minotaure* have the same protruding "ears," including a *kore hyena mask* from the Sikasso region of present-day Mali in West Africa (Fig. 8). Kore masks are danced by Kôrêdugaw, or jesters, and are worn along with other regalia such as a sugo which is placed between the performer's knees, a daduna stick, and a muru

[98] de L'Estoile, *Le goût des Autres*, 200. "In accordance with their primitivist aim, ethnographers remained blind to anything that did not correspond to their image of a preserved Africa."
[99] *Minotaure*, vol. 1 (Paris: Albert Skira, 1933), n.p., https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1525971n/f4.item. "It provides indispensable materials for these two great instruments of human knowledge: sociology and psychology, all the while being one of the most active ferments of modern aesthetics."

wooden sabre. During initiation ceremonies, boys are inducted into manhood via elaborate rituals that include dancers wearing kore masks representing different animals.[100] A photo of the *kore hyena mask* being danced was included in the *Minotaure* issue (Fig. 9). In addition to the similar "ears," the left hand-mask of *Abstraction no. 36* also has a red mass on its forehead, much like the protrusion on the *kore hyena mask's* forehead and both have the same square jaw.

Importantly, three photographs in *Minotaure* show six masks in profile. Posing in profile is indicative of the nineteenth-century practice of anthropological photography whereby colonized subjects and criminals were photographed in profile so as to accentuate their facial features like the nose, lips, and ears. [101] These side views would have undoubtedly inspired the left-hand mask in *Abstraction no. 36*.

Some of the masks photographed during the 1931-33 Mission bear similar stylistic features to the other mask in *Abstraction no. 36*. A *sirigue mask* from the Mopti region of Mali near Bandiagara has the same square construction as the mask on the right-hand side of *Abstraction no. 36* (Fig. 10). Also referred to as "the Great Mask," *sirigue* are worn during funerary rituals and represent the lineage of the deceased. The example shown in *Minotaure* is a fragmented *sirigue mask*, as they are usually several meters tall. Maskers swing the tall *sirigue* back and forth so that it touches the ground in front and behind them. In doing so, the masker highlights the symbolic union between the earth and the sky, and the union between the dead and the living.[102] The 1933 issue of *Minotaure* includes eleven other pictures of masks with the same angular features as the right-hand mask of *Abstraction no. 36* and three of these have fibers

[100] Jean-Paul Colleyn, "Les bouffons du Kórè," in *Les chevaux de la satire: Les Kórèdugaw du Mali = the Kórèdugaw of Mali*, trans. Barbara Mellor (Montreuil: Gourcuff Gradenigo, 2010), 37.
[101] Blier, "The Long Arm of the Lens," 120–22.
[102] Suzanne Preston Blier, *The History of African Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2023), 125.

hanging below the mask's jaw, which could have inspired the striations below the mouth of the mask in the gouache.

A *dege sculpture* (Fig. 11), shown resting on a wall, was reproduced as part of an article on Dogon ritual objects and may well have been invoked by Borduas in *The Musician* (Fig. 6). The sculpture, likely from the Mopti region of Mali, near Bandiagara, is now in the collection of the Musée du Quai-Branly—Jacques-Chirac in Paris (Fig. 12). It might be a *dege dal nda,* or "sculpture of the terrace," which ornaments a terrace during the funerary ceremony of a wealthy man. *Dege* sculptures may also be used as altars honouring mothers who die in childbirth.[103] The *Minotaure* image shows the sculpture without any context and explains that it was found in a nearby cave, a space where ritual objects were likely stored for safe keeping when not in use.[104] When comparing the *dege sculpture* and *The Musician*, the clear similarities between the construction of the heads is stark. Indeed, both figures have very sharp angular jaws and noses, and the helmet-like shape of both heads is noteworthy. The stylistic similarities between the West-African cultural belongings printed in the pages of the 1933 issue of *Minotaure* bear clear resemblances to some of Borduas' 1942 gouaches. To claim that such links are a coincidence would be to grossly underestimate the artist's appropriations and technique.

Museological Points of Contact Between Borduas and African Cultural Belongings

Borduas was not only exposed to African cultural belongings through literary means, he also saw them first hand through exhibitions in Paris and Montréal.

[103] The Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Figure: Female (Dege Dal Nda)," The MET, accessed October 28, 2024, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/310330.
[104] *Minotaure*, 1:29.

The Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro

An invitation to a conference held at the Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro in Paris was found among Borduas' papers, suggesting he may have visited the space as early as December 1928 (Fig. 13).[105] However, the artist makes no mention of the conference in his diary or letters and thus he may or may not have attended. Borduas' diary does confirm the artist visited the Trocadéro on March 19, 1929 with his friend Cecile T. Teakle (c. 1900-1998).[106] Although he did not leave a detailed account of his impressions or of what he saw, we can get a sense of what the young Borduas encountered at the Trocadéro thanks to photographs of the time and museum collection records.

The Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro was founded in 1879 and was housed in the Palais du Trocadéro, built the year before for the Paris World Fair. The Torcadéro was Paris' first anthropological museum, meant for the display, study, and education of global Indigenous cultural belongings.[107] The year 1928 marks a turning point in the history of the Musée. The Trocadéro welcomed its new director, Paul Rivet, after it was placed under the supervision of the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle. Rivet and his colleague Georges Henri Rivière wrote an account of the state of the Trocadéro when they first arrived:

> *Logé dans un palais construit pour un tout autre projet, sombre et non chauffé, garni de vitrines improvisées, mal protégées contre la poussière, l'humidité et les insectes, sans salles de manipulation, sans salle de travail, sans magasins, sans laboratoire, sans fichier*

[105] Comité "France-Orient," "Palais du Trocadéro, soirée de Gala," December 6, 1928, Fonds Paul-Émile Borduas, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, FA1973.1.S5.D2; Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, 2013, 37. Borduas arrived in France, at Le Havre, on November 10, 1928. The film he was invited to view was on France's presence in Syria. Organized by the Comité France-Orient, the film promised to offer "*la plus belle et émouvante des visions d'Orient"* ("the most beautiful and moving view of the Orient").

[106] Paul-Émile Borduas, "Agenda-Bijou 1929," c. 1928 - c. 1930 and 1946, Fonds Paul-Émile Borduas, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, FA1973.1.S5.D4.

[107] André Delpuech, Christine Laurière, and Carine Peltier-Caroff, eds., *Les années folles de l'ethnographie: Trocadéro 28-37* (Paris: Museum National Histoire Naturelle, Publications Scientifiques, 2017).

> *de collections, le musée donnait l'impression d'un 'magasin de bric à brac'*.[108]

The museum not only faced challenges in its displays, but also in its collection management and record keeping. The Trocadéro was badly in need of updating and, in 1929, Rivière wrote that "*la méthode d'exposition des objets est tellement 'vieux jeu' que seuls les savants s'attardent à contempler les vitrines*."[109] The fact that only dedicated aficionados of global Indigenous cultural belongings took the time to observe the exhibits speaks to Borduas' own interest in what the Trocadéro displayed.

The atmosphere was similar to the one famously described by Picasso when he visited the museum before painting his seminal work, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* in 1907 (Fig. 14): "When I went there for the first time […] to the Trocadéro museum, the smell of dampness and rot stuck in my throat."[110] Despite Rivet and Rivière's best intentions to update the museum as much and as quickly as possible, no tangible changes were noticed until the summer of 1931, long after Borduas had returned to Canada.[111] Borduas and Teakle thus visited an outdated Trocadéro with old display cases and exhibition methods that emphasized the quantity of loot preserved by the museum.[112]

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[108] Paul Rivet and Georges Henri Rivière, "La réorganisation du Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro," *Bulletin du Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro* 1, January 1931, 3 cited in Delpuech, Laurière, and Peltier-Caroff, 237–38. "Housed in a palace built for a completely different purpose, dark and unheated, furnished with improvised display cases, poorly protected against dust, humidity and insects, with no handling rooms, no work rooms, no stores, no laboratory, no collections file, the museum gave the impression of a 'junk shop'."

[109] Rivière cited in Delpuech, Laurière, and Peltier-Caroff, 108. "the method of displaying objects is so 'old-fashioned' that only scholars linger to contemplate the display cases."

[110] Pablo Picasso, translated quote in Anne Anlin Cheng, *Second Skin: Josephine Baker and the Modern Surface* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 18.

[111] Delpuech, Laurière, and Peltier-Caroff, *Les années folles de l'ethnographie*, 23, 245, and 262. Although Rivet did change the museum's classification system as of 1929, any changes to the visitor's experience (to use a contemporary understanding of museums) was only felt in 1931, when new heating and electrical, offices spaces, a library, and a conservation and cleaning laboratory were installed.

[112] Delpuech, Laurière, and Peltier-Caroff, 102–3. It should be noted that the eventual revitalization of the Torcadéro was fueled, at least in part, by a desire to restore a museum that housed the proof of France's place as the second global colonial power. It was felt that the poor state of the museum and its collection did not reflect France's colonial power and that such a situation should be rectified. By the mid-1930s, the redevelopment of the Trocadéro would succeed in recentering France's colonial prowess.

Borduas and Teakle would have seen several examples of African cultural belongings in the Trocadéro. When comparing the African objects in the collection's inventory and Borduas' gouaches, we can see some formal similarities that point to the artist's appropriations. *Abstraction no. 28* bears some similarities to a *ndoma baoulé face mask* from the Bandama Valley of Côte d'Ivoire (Fig. 2; Fig. 15). The mask depicts a male figure with facial hair below the chin and around the jaw (an *akenza*), a large diadem on his head, protruding lips, and pronounced eyebrows.[113] No additional information is known about this mask. The Musée du Quai-Branly—Jacques-Chirac, where the mask is now housed, notes that the object was donated to the Torcadéro in 1900 by Maurice Delfosse. Delfosse was a noted French ethnographer and travelled to Africa on several occasions before occupying a colonial administrative position in Côte-d'Ivoire, where he may have acquired the *ndoma baoulé face mask*.[114] The limited information available about the mask speaks to the limited information recorded at the moment the work was acquired which inevitably lead to a misrepresentation of the object in a museum setting. The undulating white border pierced with black spots around the mask in *Abstraction no. 28* is reminiscent of the facial hair around the *ndoma baoulé face mask*, and the gouache's protruding lips mimics the mask's features.

Two masks that were in the Trocadéro's collection as of the end of the nineteenth century have important similar features to the top mask in *Abstraction no. 51* (Fig. 4). These masks are likely *gelede masks* from the Yorúbà people of Dahomey in present-day Benin (Fig. 16). *Gelede masks* are danced by male performers to honour female ancestors and spirits. These female spirits regulate menstruation, pregnancy, as well as crop survival. By performing with *gelede*

[113] Sarah Boukamel and Najwa Borro, *4 masques baoulé du cercle de Dimbokro = Baule Masks from the Dimbokro Circle* (Bruxelles: Didier Claes, 2023), 20.
[114] Sophie Dulucq, *Écrire l'histoire de l'Afrique à l'époque coloniale: (XIXe-XXe siècles)* (Paris: Karthala, 2009).

masks, the dancers and their community hope to please the female spirits to protect communities from misfortune.[115] The pointed hairstyles of the *gelede masks* were repurposed by Borduas in the top mask of *Abstraction no. 51*, which sports an elongated forehead, terminating in a point.

Finally, the diamond pattern on the faces of Borduas' *Abstraction no. 52* may have come to the artist when looking at a *nkisi nkondo* from Loango in present-day Republic of the Congo (Fig. 5; Fig. 17). *Minkisi* are ritual objects containing spiritually charged power harnessed by healers and mediators known as banganga. *Minkisi* are used for divination, healing, or good luck. The *nkisi nkondo* presented here, with its raised arm which likely once held a weapon, is an aggressive figure meant to intimidate the viewer (either an enemy, an evil spell, or a malicious community member).[116] The diamond pattern on the face of the *nkisi nkondo* that was once part of the Trocadéro's collection was almost exactly reproduced on the right-hand face in *Abstraction no. 52*.

These formal comparisons serve to demonstrate how Borduas' experience at the Trocadéro translated into his art despite the fact he did not comment on his experience in the museum. Borduas' encounters with African cultural belongings in Paris would not be limited to the Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro.

Paul Guillaume's Gallery

In January 1930, Borduas visited the Paul Guillaume Gallery at 59 rue La Boétie.[117] Guillaume was one of the first Paris dealers to sell objects from Africa to Parisian collectors and had an

[115] Mariano Carneiro da Cunha, "Afro-Brazilian Art," *Art in Translation* 15, no. 3 (2023): 280, https://doi.org/10.1080/17561310.2023.2266879.
[116] Thomas B Cole, "Nkisi Nkondi (Nail Figure): Congolese, Republic of the Congo," *JAMA* 315, no. 4 (2016): 330, https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2015.14073.
[117] Borduas, *Écrits II: 1923-1953*, 1:95.

important collection of African cultural belongings.[118] He also dealt in Modern French art, displaying works by Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920), Picasso, and Henri Matisse (1869-1954), among others. Although we know he visited Guillaume's gallery, Borduas left no written comment about his experience. This being said, we can be certain that the young artist saw African cultural belongings at the gallery as Guillaume was still collecting and exhibiting works from Africa in 1930.

The interior views of Guillaume's galleries give us a taste of the spaces Borduas would have visited (Fig. 18). Works by Picasso, Modigliani, and Matisse hung on the walls as African objects were placed on sideboards below. Borduas was able to see African cultural belongings in a commercial, gallery setting for the first time. He also saw it as it was appropriated by European artists: this was one of Borduas' first experiences with extractive Modernism. This encounter would not be lost on the young artist. As one of his future students, Françoise Sullivan (1923-), recounted, by the late 1940s "*Borduas nous avait déjà parlé d'influences africaines dans les tableaux de Picasso*."[119] Borduas' experience with European extractive modernists, then, is something he would remember and teach in his later career.

While at the Paul Guillaume Gallery in 1930, Borduas likely saw a *gu face mask* from the Guro people of Côte d'Ivoire (Fig. 19). Gu is a religious figure in Guro culture and the wife of Zamble, a hybrid antelope-human. Both figures, as well as Zamble's brother Zuali, are invoked during sacrificial ceremonies meant to enhance the wellbeing of a family or individual.[120] The *gu face mask* was acquired by Guillaume before 1928 and remained in his collection until his death

[118] Colette Giraudon, *Les arts à Paris chez Paul Guillaume 1918-1935* (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1993).
[119] Cited in Vigneault, "Le primitivisme dans l'œuvre de Françoise Sullivan," 20. "Borduas had already spoken to us about the influences of African art in Picasso's paintings."
[120] The Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Face Mask (Gu)," The MET, accessed October 28, 2024, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/312516.

in 1934, after which it passed through the collection of the Rockefeller family before entering the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The elongated face and rounded lips of the *gu face mask* are evoked in Borduas' *Abstraction no. 28* (Fig. 2).

These points of contact between African cultural belongings and Borduas in Paris are likely the young artist's first encounters with global Indigenous objects. This material would inevitably have had a profound impact on Borduas, who was from a small village in an isolated Quebec. A pencil sketch of a mask found among Borduas' papers when he died in 1960 points to this impact (Fig. 20). It was likely drawn by a young artist and based on a model, as evidenced by the sketchy quality of the drawing. Although it is difficult to ascertain the authenticity of the drawing, it is worth considering that the sketch could be by the young Borduas. The sketch points to how Borduas was not only interested in viewing African cultural belongings, but also in reproducing them through drawing. By keeping the drawing with him throughout his many travels, Borduas betrays his interest in the formal qualities of African cultural belongings, an interest that could have transpired in his 1942 gouaches. The formal appropriations that guided these gouaches stem not only from exhibitions in Paris, however. Indeed, Borduas likely saw African cultural belongings in his adopted city of Montréal.

The 1930 Exposition missionnaire

There exists no complete study of the history of exhibitions of African cultural belongings in Montréal. However, I have been able to trace three spaces where Borduas may have seen African objects before he painted his 1942 gouaches: the 1930 Exposition missionnaire, and McGill University's Redpath and Ethnological Museums. Given Borduas' demonstrated interest in

global Indigenous cultures, it is not unlikely Borduas attended exhibitions of African cultural belongings in these spaces.

The 1930 Exposition missionnaire took place from September 21 to October 1, 1930 at the Drill Hall at 175 Craig Street (today destroyed to make way for the Ville-Marie expressway).[121] It was organized as part of a larger Missionary Week, designed "*uniquement* [*pour*] *faire de la propagande en faveur de la plus noble cause, en faveur des Missions de la sainte Église catholique en pays infidèles et par là susciter des vocations apostoliques et des sympathies pour les œuvres missionnaires*."[122] Inspired by the 1925 Pontifical Missionary Exhibition at the Vatican, thirty-two congregations and four missionary groups prepared displays for Montréal's Exposition, held in honour of Pope Pius XI's golden jubilee of priesthood.[123] For the event, the Drill Hall was transformed and where soldiers once practiced their paces, nuns and priests had installed a gift shop, a temporary post office and firefighting outpost, conference rooms, an infirmary, and a restaurant. 200,000 people came to see the exhibition, an impressive number of visitors considering the population of the city at the time was about one million people.[124] On the Sunday before the opening, every priest in the province advertised the exhibition as part of their sermon and the whole affair was closely reported on by the press.[125] Tristan Pensyf, reporting for *Le Devoir* wrote:

> *Trente-six pavillons* […] *regorgeant d'objets d'art, d'objets de curiosité, de produits de l'industrie domestique des quatre parties du monde, de statistiques, de photographies, c'est une trop grande richesse pour le nouvelliste qui visite l'exposition missionnaire de*

[121] *La Semaine missionnaire de Montréal* (Montreal: Librairie Beauchemin, 1931).
[122] *La Semaine missionnaire de Montréal*, 11. "solely as propaganda for the most noble cause, in favour of the Missions of the Holy Catholic Church [abroad] and thus to recruit missionaries and sympathies for missionary work."
[123] For more on the 1925 exhibition, see Bell, "Competing Sovereignties."
[124] *La Semaine missionnaire de Montréal*, 18.
[125] *La Semaine missionnaire de Montréal*, 31.

> *Montréal. On peut trouver là matière à remplir tout un journal—et un gros.*[126]

In *Le Droit*, Camille L'Heureux wrote that the exhibition "*fut une magnifique démonstration publique de l'effort apostolique canadien*."[127] These press reviews demonstrate how the displays of global Indigenous cultural belongings were understood in the context of missionary work. As Bell has written regarding the 1925 Pontifical Missionary Exhibition: "Visitors appreciated Indigenous cultural belongings sent in from the missions as silent markers of conversion."[128] The African objects displayed were tools used by missionaries to demonstrate their effectiveness as agents of conversion. But however much the global Indigenous cultural belongings displayed may have been silent, they were not silenced by the colonial and extractive context of the Exposition missionnaire. As material with immense spiritual and cultural significance, their histories, their social lives, should be kept in mind.

The size and press coverage of the exhibition make it difficult to imagine that Borduas did not at least hear of the displays in the Drill Hall. Borduas returned to Canada in late June 1930 after an eighteen-month *séjour* in France. He stayed in Montréal and started work decorating the church of Saints-Anges-de-Lachine in the suburbs of Montréal before the end of the Exposition missionnaire.[129] However, Borduas' correspondence makes no mention of the exhibition. It is thus difficult to prove that Borduas did attend. Nevertheless, it is worth exploring this possibility, as the presence of such a large event in the city speaks to the accessibility of and to the population's reception of African cultural belongings at the time.

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[126] Tristant Pensyf, "Les plus grandes fleurs de ce brillant parterre," *Le Devoir*, September 26, 1930. "Thirty-six kiosks… overflowing with art, curiosities and domestic products from around the world, statistics, and photographs: it is too much for the reporter visiting Montreal's Missionary Exhibition. There, we can find enough to fill an entire edition of the newspaper—and a large edition at that."
[127] Camille L'Heureux, "L'Exposition missionnaire de Montréal," *Le Droit*, September 30, 1930. "… was a wonderful public demonstration of Canadian apostolic efforts."
[128] Bell, "Competing Sovereignties," 23.
[129] Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, 2013, 48–49.

Looking at photographs from the Exposition's thirty-six kiosks allows us to see the breadth of objects from around the world that were displayed during the week-long exhibition. *Le Précurseur*, a bulletin published by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception dedicated an entire section of their first issue of 1931 to photographs of the kiosks at the Exposition missionnaire.[130]

The photograph of the Pères Blancs' kiosk is particularly noteworthy, as is the text accompanying it (Fig. 21):

> *C'est l'Afrique guerrière et effroyablement superstitieuse qu'évoque au premier coup d'œil le pavillon des Pères Blancs. Des panoplies de lances, de flèches et de diverses armes banches bizarres, des boucliers de peau, disposés en une heureuse ordonnance, forment le principal motif ornemental de la muraille et encadrent, contraste symbolique, Notre-Dame d'Afrique et des portraits d'apôtres de la paix du Christ. Des divinités et des fétiches rappellent la superstition africaine et aussi l'art* [*africain*]. *Mais non loin de ces divinités et fétiches, des sculptures sur défenses d'éléphant prouvent que les artistes africains ne se livrent pas uniquement à ce qu'on appelle l'art* [*africain*]. *La vue de tam-tams, de 'pianos' un peu plus grands que la main, d'instruments à vents de formes souvent remarquables complète la représentation des beaux-arts africains*.[131]

Pensyf's description offers us a clear understanding of the objects the Pères Blancs displayed.[132] The language used by the author ("*bizarre*," "*fétiches*," "*tam-tams*") betrays Montréalers' biased understanding of African cultural belongings. In total, twelve kiosks displayed African objects.

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[130] Tristant Pensyf, "Exposition missionnaire de Montréal," *Le Précurseur: Bulletin des Soeurs Missionnaires de L'Immaculée-Conception* 6, no. 1 (1931): 5–20.

[131] Pensyf, 17. "A quick glance at the *Pères Blancs'* kiosk evokes Africa's warriors and appalling superstitions. The panoply of lances, arrows and various odd blades, and animal-skin shields arranged in a pleasing display make up the main ornamental motif of the kiosk's mural, and frame, as a symbolic contrast, Our-Lady-of-Africa and portraits of Christ's apostles of peace. Deities and fetiches recall African superstition and [African] art. Yet not far from these deities and fetiches, sculpted ivories prove that African artists do not only produce Black art. Drums [tam-tams], 'pianos' slightly bigger than the palm of one's hand, and wind instruments of remarkable shape complete the representation of African fine arts."

[132] Unfortunately, the Pères Blancs, who still operate in downtown Montreal to this day, hold no records of the 1930 Exposition missionnaire. When visiting their headquarters however, I saw thousands of African cultural belongings from various regions in Africa and from various time periods. The Pères Blancs do not keep a database of their collection and the acquisition history of most of the objects is unknown.

Borduas was brought up a Catholic and at the time of the Exposition missionnaire, was decorating a Catholic church in Montréal. Yet in his later writings like *Refus global*, Borduas would proclaim his fervent anti-clerical beliefs. It is thus somewhat ironic that the artist could have come across artistic inspirations in such an exhibition devoted to Catholic missions abroad. Along with the Exposition missionnaire, Borduas may have encountered African cultural belongings in the many museums available to him in Montréal.

The McGill Museums

In 1882, the Redpath Museum was founded as a learning tool for members of McGill University, its parent institution.[133] The museum's collections were started in large part thanks to Sir John William Dawson, McGill's principal from 1855 to 1893.[134] A noted naturalist, Dawson also had a keen interest in ethnography, and from its very inception, the Redpath Museum had a small collection of mainly Canadian Indigenous and Ancient Egyptian cultural belongings.[135] As the collection grew, other African cultural belongings were displayed in the Museum and by 1900, the largest collection in the Redpath's ethnographic section was from Africa.[136] Their provenance, like most global Indigenous objects in European, American, and Canadian collections, is linked with colonial presences around the world. As a research institution, McGill

[133] Barbara Lawson, "Exhibiting Agendas: Anthropology at the Redpath Museum (1882-99)," *Anthropologica* 41, no. 1 (1999): 58, https://doi.org/10.2307/25605917.
[134] Lawson, 60. Dawson was a central figure in the development of the Redpath Museum and McGill University. A respected naturalist and devout Christian, he believed that the Museum could be a resource for discovering the origin of humanity (as a challenge to evolutionary theories) and for developing a greater interest in natural resource extraction. Dawson also believed that the local archeological artifacts included in the Redpath Museum were indicative of global Indigenous behaviours and practices, thus generalizing local findings to a global scale.
[135] Lawson, 58–60.
[136] Barbara Lawson, *Collected Curios: Missionary Tales from the South Seas* (Montreal: McGill University Libraries, 1994), 39.

University had the resources necessary to send ethnographic expeditions to Africa, which they did at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.[137]

In 1925, some of objects in the Redpath's ethnographic collection, along with a major donation from the Montreal Natural History Society, were moved into the newly inaugurated McGill Ethnological Museum in the University's Strathcona building, on the north-eastern edge of its downtown Montréal campus (Fig. 22).[138] Laid out geographically, objects in the Ethnological Museum were presented with detailed descriptions that were not always accurate, but provided more information than anything presented at the Trocadéro in Paris.[139] In 1950, under the supervision of Alice Johannsen, the Ethnological Museum was closed and most of the material was returned or integrated into the Redpath's collection, where they reside today. The creation and subsequent dissolution of the Ethnological Museum complicates any research into the provenance and exhibition histories of African cultural belongings currently in the Redpath Museum. This is compounded by the limited archival information available.

Borduas was an *habitué* of McGill, having attended an exhibition there in 1927 and entertaining close links with members of the school's community including Teakle—with whom he went to the Trocadéro in Paris—, Arthur Lismer (1885-1969), Marian Dale Scott (1906-1993), and others.[140] Of the many African masks in the Museums' care that could have been seen by Borduas, one is noteworthy and elements could have been appropriated by the artist to create *Abstraction no. 28* (Fig. 2). A *maiden mask*, likely made by the Igbo people of present-day Nigeria was donated in 1928 by Sydney Carter (Fig. 23).[141] The mask represents an adolescent

[137] Lawson, *Collected Curios*, 21–54.
[138] Ann Van Fossen, Tania Aldred, and Ingrid Birker, *Tea and Fossils: A Brief History of the Redpath Museum* (Montreal: Redpath Museum, McGill University, 2012), 13 and 15. The Redpath's ethnographic collection were returned to the Redpath Museum building in 1950, under the supervision of Alice Johannsen.
[139] Cyril Fox, *A Survey of McGill University Museums* (Montreal: McGill University, 1932), 22.
[140] Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, 2013, 32.
[141] Redpath Museum, McGill University. World Cultures Collections database, 2023.

woman and impersonates Igbo ideals of youthful feminine beauty. In their original context, maiden masks are danced along with a full-body costume by male performers during festivals honouring important patron deities, as well as for entertainment. The crest above the mask represents a woman's hair and the white and orange painted circles represent pigtails.[142] Formally, the mask in Borduas' *Abstraction no. 28* has the same elongated face and rounded lips as the *maiden mask*.

It should be noted that Borduas' production process makes it difficult to find an exact relationship between a single African cultural belonging and one of his gouaches. Borduas did not paint still lives or keep a private collection of African cultural belongings. Rather, the artist mined his subconscious for inspiration. Thus, when looking at the five gouaches under consideration in this thesis, we can highlight certain elements from West- and Central-African cultural belongings Borduas appropriated. The finished products are hybrid African/Canadian artworks created by fragmentation and reconstruction according to the artist's desire. This reconfiguration recalls François-Marc Gagnon's comment quoted earlier: "the mental exercise of cutting up reality and recombining the parts according to subconscious laws would take precedence over the imitation of external models."[143] Suzanne Preston Blier, regarding European extractive Modernism, has further noted how "it is not difficult to see in this very process of disassembly and reassembly complementary practices recalling the fragmentation and reassembly implicit in the colonization process itself."[144] The fragmentation and repurposing of West- and Central-African cultural belongings in Borduas' gouaches mimic the breaking and

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[142] Herbert M. Cole, "Two Case Studies on Masks and Masking," in *Invention and Tradition: The Art of Southeastern Nigeria*, ed. Herbert M. Cole, Dierk Dierking, and Luke W. Cole (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2012), 229–32.
[143] Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, 2013, 132.
[144] Blier, "The Long Arm of the Lens," 127.

remaking of social, political, and economic structures through colonization. Of course, this is not to claim that Borduas participated in the colonization of Africa. However, as we reassess and unsettle Canadian art history, it is important to recognize how Canadian—and in this case Quebecois—artists engaged with colonial dynamics of power and how these engagements are reflected in the art they produced.

4. Colonialisms, Surrealism, and Borduas

Having demonstrated Borduas' extractive Modernism, I now propose to situate his technique within local legacies and global dynamics of colonialism.[145] By placing Borduas' relationship with African cultural belongings in the local geographic and temporal spaces of his practice, we can better understand the impact of the artist's appropriations on Montréal's artistic scene. Furthermore, Borduas' interest in and appropriations of West- and Central-African cultural belongings are in keeping with surrealist trends of the 1920s and 1930s and thus place the artist within global modernist movements. This relationship with the global is reflected in more ways than one. Indeed, Borduas' transnationalism is evident in both his appropriations of global Indigenous cultural belongings and in the way he embraced the European tradition of extractive Modernism.

Black Culture in Early Twentieth-Century Québec

Borduas' appropriations should be considered in the local Montréal context of the early twentieth-century. One way of situating Borduas' appropriations within Montréal communities is

[145] Gilles Dupuis, "De *Peau noire, masques blancs* à *Nègres blancs d'Amérique* portrait du (demi)colonisé," *Nouvelles Études Francophones* 33, no. 2 (2018): 136–46; Pierre Vallières, *Nègres blancs d'Amérique: Autobiographie précoce d'un "terroriste" québécois*, Nouv. ed., revue et corrigee (Ottawa: Les editions Parti pris, 1974). I have often been asked about the (dis)association between Borduas, as a francophone québécois and appropriation of African cultures through colonial channel despite Québécois (or more justly, French-Canadians) being themselves "victims of colonization." This argument is often brought up with discussions of Pierre Vallières' (1938-1998) *Nègres blancs d'Amérique*. There is no doubt that the French-speaking Québécois of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries were subject to discrimination and economic oppression by British colonial rule. What is more the extraction of natural resources such as furs and lumber from Québec fall within a colonial model of resource exploitation. This colonization faced by French-Canadians is often equated with the colonization of Africa and I have been presented with a facile and dubious conclusion: Borduas could not have appropriated from African cultures because much like Africa, Québec was subjected to European colonization. However, there are significant distinction between the colonisation of Africa (a whole continent) and Québec. These include religious freedoms, slavery, bodily harm, and more. What is more, being colonized does not preclude the colonized from become a colonizer itself. Space does not allow me to detail the complexities of the distinction and similarities between African and Québécois colonization. In the context of Borduas' appropriations, however, I stress once more the colonial, extractive channels that permitted the artist to appropriate material culture in order to further his own career.

to engage his works with the Black community in the city. In highlighting this relationship, I aim to briefly acknowledge how Borduas' appropriations of West- and Central-African cultural belongings have overshadowed Black artistic production of the time. I want to place Borduas' success in contrast with the exclusion and ongoing erasure of Black artists in early twentieth-century Montréal. I also want to recognize the legacies of colonialism that were and are still present in Montréal. I define these legacies as the predisposition of local institutions and governments to engage in exclusionary policies towards specific groups to justify colonial projects. These legacies are rooted in Montrealers' participation in the Canadian colonial project against Indigenous peoples on the island and beyond, and are linked to the historic economic and political participation of citizens in slavery, the transatlantic slave trade, and the trade of goods produced by enslaved labour.

At the time of Borduas' contact with global Indigenous cultural belongings and while he was creating his extractive modernist gouaches, the social norms of Québec were greatly dictated by anti-black racism. Severely affected by the Great Depression, Black Montrealers from 1930 to 1939 survived high unemployment, food shortages, and housing crises. What is more, tensions between Black and white Montrealers grew greatly during the Depression, as the white working class objected to Black citizens "competing with them for jobs."[146] The Second World War brought greater rights and access to social programs for Back Canadians. Canada's war economy was in need of workers, which helped to reverse the trends brought on by the Depression years.[147] Despite these changes, it should be noted that the Canadian Armed Forces remained opposed to enlisting Black fighters until the conflict necessitated greater enrollment.

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[146] Dorothy W. Williams, *The Road to Now: A History of Blacks in Montreal*, Dossier Québec Series (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1997), 79.
[147] Williams, 83.

Furthermore, as historian Dorothy Williams writes, "the fact that blacks were a visible minority continued to prevent their access to a wide range of job opportunities."[148]

The segregation that existed outside the art world in Montréal was reflected within it. As art historian Charmaine Nelson notes, "in general, obstacles like racially segregated art schools or the racial policing of life-drawing classes deliberately impeded the access of Black people to 'high' art production."[149] Yet Montréal's Black community was intensely creative, producing music, theatre, visual arts, and more. Borduas would have undoubtedly been aware of and likely witnessed the jazz culture of Montreal while he lived in the city. "The epicentre of Canadian jazz" (as historian Cheryl Thompson writes), Montreal saw numerous jazz clubs and cafés open starting in the 1920s.[150] Located in Little Burgundy, along Saint-Antoine Street, many Black-owned clubs catered to Black patrons who enjoyed local jazz performers. These spaces were community-oriented and were likely not frequented by Borduas. But the artist may well have visited the clubs on Sainte-Catherine Street or Saint-Laurent Boulevard which had segregated seating and where mainly Black performers played.[151]

The segregation faced by Black artists in Montréal art circles, coupled with the limited known archival records on Black artists in the early twentieth century in Montréal, make it very difficult to highlight the work of a Black artist who was a contemporary of Borduas'. As art historian Joana Joachim writes: "The likelihood of Black visual artists' work being documented or even safely conserved long enough for it to be studied or exhibited a century later is extremely low. Yet these artists surely existed, and hopefully some of their work is tucked away somewhere

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[148] Williams, 86.
[149] Nelson, *Towards an African Canadian Art History*, 5.
[150] Cheryl Thompson, "Montreal Jazz Clubs & Festivals: From the Golden Era to Entertainment District, 1920–2009" (Book Manuscript, Toronto, 2025), 13. I would like to thank Thompson for sharing her manuscript with me. I was a research assistant on this project in the summer of 2024.
[151] Thompson, 15.

unknown for now."[152] Indeed, my own experience looking through archives has made it clear to me that the presence of Black artists within archival institutions in Montréal is severely lacking.[153] It is particularly difficult to find evidence of Black artists working in the period under study in this thesis, given the importance placed on white modernists' developments in art. Pellan and Borduas have long been the main focus of the majority of Québécois art historians writing about the 1940s, which has led to a decidedly white-centered understanding of Québec art history at the time. However, some recent scholarship has started to highlight the artistic contributions of Black artists during the period. Black Art Histories of Montréal, a research and archival group, has worked to highlight, preserve, and share valuable information on the "legacies of Black visual artists active in Montréal before 1995."[154]

Their careful research has called attention to Gertrude Jones (dates unknown) and Cyril Adams (1921-1997).[155] A student of the École des beaux-art in Montréal, none of Jones'

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[152] Joana Joachim, "Black Gold: A Black Feminist Art History of 1920s Montréal," *Canadian Journal of History* 56, no. 3 (2021): 289.

[153] Joachim, "Black Gold"; Frank Mackey, *L'esclavage et les Noirs à Montréal: 1760-1840*, trans. Hélène Paré (Montreal: Hurtubise, 2013); Esther Trépanier, *Marian Dale Scott: Pioneer of Modern Art* (Quebec: Musée du Québec, 2000); Esther Trépanier, *Peintres Juifs de Montréal: Témoins de leur époque 1930-1948* (Montreal: Éditions de l'Homme, 2008). I recall here my experience visiting a smaller archival of ephemeral media. This archive contains a wealth of information on ephemeral print media and audio recordings including concert pamphlets, zines, artist books, and music festival sound recordings. I had asked one of the (white) archivists if they had anything relating to Black artists in Montreal from the 1920s to the 1950s. A little puzzled, the archivist responded: "What makes you think there were Black artists in Montreal at that time?" The archivist then suggested I look at some material on post-1960s Black artists, which they told me made more sense because of the waves of migration from the Caribbean and Africa that would have increased Montreal's Black population at the time. I was completely shocked by the response. But it was indicative of Montrealers' ignorance (or refusal to recognize) the important presence of Black people in Montreal as early as the seventeenth century. What is more, the art historiography of the 1930s, 40s, and 50s in Montreal is almost exclusively dedicated to the Automatistes (although some important studies on women and Jewish artists have been published over the years). The complete lack of any scholarship on Black artists in Montreal during Borduas' career is an important gap that deserves great attention. Although it might legitimately be said that Black artists were not as numerous as their white colleagues, it would be grossly inappropriate not to investigate their presence and highlight any formal innovations that may have marked their careers.

[154] Harlan Johnson, Dorothy K. Williams, Kessie Theliar-Charles, and Jennifer Dube-Andoh, *Bibliography of Black Montreal Artists & Exhibitions 1950-1995* (Montreal: Black Art Histories Montreal, 2024), 2.

[155] The information about Gertrude Jones and Cyril Adams, unless indicated otherwise, was given to me by Harlan Johnson of the Black Art Histories of Montreal research group and Jessica North-O'Connell, Adams' daughter. I thank them both for taking the time to share their stories with me. Little to no archival material has been found about

paintings could be located and no reproductions could be found. Although little is known about her, we know she exhibited at the Coin des Arts at the Windsor Station Gallery in the 1940s.

Adams attended the École des beaux-arts de Montréal in the 1940s before exhibiting more often as of the 1950s. Adams often signed his work with his white wife's name, thinking his art would be better received. This act demonstrates the barriers Black artists often felt in Montréal art circles. In 1945, under his own name, Adams exhibited a watercolour titled *Haile Selassie* at the annual Spring exhibition of the Art Association of Montréal.[156] No image of the work could be found, but the title points to Adams' politically engaged art. He often painted scenes referencing the growing North American civil rights and African independence movements of the 1960s.[157] His 1963 watercolour *The March on Washington* depicts the event from the perspective of an attendee, possibly Adams himself (Fig. 24). The composition is equally divided between the United States' Capitol building, the seat of the country's legislature, and the enormous crowd gathered around it. The force of this crowd and movement it embodies is foreshadowed by the artist, who depicted the Capitol's central dome leaning and shaking under the pressure of the protests. This effect gives vibrancy and presence to the watercolour and may well translate how the artist felt during this historic moment. Unfortunately, most of Adams'

Jones and her art. Little archival evidence has been found about Adams, and his works are mainly kept by family members in their private collections.

[156] Art Association of Montreal, *62nd Annual Spring Exhibition: April 5th to April 29th 1945* (Montreal: Art Association of Montreal, 1945), 3.

[157] Robin J. Hayes, *Love for Liberation: African Independence, Black Power, and a Diaspora Underground* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2021); Salem Press, *The Civil Rights Movement* (Pasadena, Cal.: Salem Press, 2000). Space does not allow me to discuss these movements in great detail. Suffice it to say that the 1960s were a period of great change for African and diasporic peoples across the globe. On the continent, European colonial possessions were fighting for and obtaining internationally recognized independence for their countries. Examples include Mali (1960), Côte d'Ivoire (1960), Nigeria (1960), and Republic of Congo (1960). In the United States, the Civil Rights movement was a social justice movement that demanded greater rights for African Americans. Their efforts culminated in the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968, among other steps towards greater justice for Black Americans.

paintings are undated and it is difficult to determine which works were done before Borduas' death.

In highlighting how difficult it is to present Jones' and Adams' work, Black artists that painted at the same time as Borduas, I want to demonstrate the extent to which Borduas and his appropriations may have overshadowed Black artist colleagues. The archival and institutional gaps—which are not the fault of any one artist—are the result of the systemic neglect of institutions to collect and archive the art and histories of Black artists in Montréal. This neglect in turn denies historical Black artists a place in Montréal's art history. Although it can be criticized as institutional, biased, or oppressive, this history has and continues to inform the institutions art historians must turn to in order to study the past. To consider Black artists in 1940s and 1930s Montréal is to break away from institutions such as municipal, provincial, and university archives to look through everything else: that which has not been "archived."

Indeed, word-of-mouth and familial relations are the main sources we can draw on in order to piece together this "minority history." Art historians must thus trouble established methodologies and sources to highlight what has been overshadowed for so long. Such a rich topic merits deeper and further research, but must be left for a later time. As more information comes to light about Black artists in the 1930s and 1940s in Montréal, Borduas' appropriations will be adequately and fully discussed in relation to local legacies of colonialism in the city.

Analizing Borduas' Own Words: "*Je préfère* […] *les œuvres moins évoluées*"

Borduas' appropriations of African cultural belongings can be situated within a wider tradition of extractive Modernism as exemplified in European surrealist circles. Surrealism's development coincided with a growing interest in global Indigenous cultural belongings among European artists which often translated into extractive modernist artworks. Surrealist interest in global

Indigenous cultural belongings was predicated on an understanding that these objects were examples of uncivilized thoughts transposed via plastic means into an analyzable medium. Clifford has coined the term "ethnographic surrealism" to describe the juxtaposition of global Indigenous cultures and Surrealism. He notes that "surrealists were intensely interested in exotic worlds […]. Their attitude, while comparable to that of the [ethnographic] fieldworker who strives to render the unfamiliar comprehensible, tended to work in the reverse sense, making the familiar strange."[158] By othering global Indigenous cultures, surrealists attempted to hang on to a view of such cultures as distant and different. This complex and interlaced relationship between global Indigenous cultures and surrealist artists was often expressed through an atemporal understanding of the geographically distant. In 1959, Borduas would participate in this discourse when he wrote that

> *Dante, Nietzsche, Ducasse, Rembrandt, sont parfaitement déterminés et dans le temps et dans l'espace. Ils sont le fruit (et le symbole, inconscient peut-être) d'un peuple—dont tous les individus sont reconnaissables—à un moment de son évolution universelle. Un* [*Inuk*]*, un Noir d'Afrique, ou si vous préférez, une sculpture* [*Inuit*]*, un masque* [*africain*]*, ne sont déterminés que dans l'espace. Dans le temps ils sont interchangeables comme les anneaux identiques d'une chaîne immuable. Je ne sais si c'est clair pour vous? Pour moi ça l'est drôlement*.[159]

For Borduas, art and artists are situated within time and space paradigms. Although situated within a specific place of origin, for Borduas, Inuit and African cultural belongings are temporally untethered. This atemporality is contrasted with Northern European thinkers and

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[158] James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 121.

[159] Paul-Émile Borduas, *Écrits II: 1954-1960*, ed. André-G. Bourassa and Gilles Lapointe, vol. 2 (Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1997), 1042. "Dante, Nietzsche, Ducasse, Rembrandt, are perfectly determined in time and space. They are the fruit (and the symbol, perhaps unconscious) of a people—all of whose individuals are recognizable—at a moment in its universal evolution. An [Inuk], a Black African, or if you prefer, an [Inuit] sculpture, an [African] mask, are determined only in space. In time they are interchangeable like the identical links of an immutable chain. I don't know if that's clear to you? For me it is strangely so."

artists who are "perfectly determined in time and space." Borduas created a temporal dichotomy whereby European, American, and Canadian cultures are perceived as modern, and Indigenous cultures are considered temporally distant to this modernity.

This belief is demonstrated further when Borduas conflates evolutionary theory with global Indigenous cultural belonging. In 1942, he wrote that "*Je préfère* […] *les œuvres moins évoluées*."[160] Although it is not entirely clear what he meant by "less evolved" artworks, that same year he wrote that certain civilizations are described as barbaric "*parce que moins évoluées*," thus supporting a barbaric/civilized dichotomy.[161] Borduas also wrote that "*Depuis longtemps déjà mes préférences vont aux époques archaïques n'ayant ni la mesure, ni la patience, ni la sécurité, ni la prétention classiques*."[162] The artist asserted his interest in archaic time periods, understood to apply to contemporaneous global Indigenous communities and their cultural belongings. As Vigneault writes: "*Suivant la logique manichéenne (ou logique binaire oppositionnelle), les univers périphériques ou non occidentaux sont d'emblée associés au passé, tandis que le Sujet issu du passé lointain est associé à l''enfance' et à la genèse de la civilisation occidentale*."[163] In the above passage, Borduas eluded to descriptions of global Indigenous cultural belongings as somehow frozen in time, not-yet-evolved, or otherwise of the past.

Borduas' writings cited above demonstrate the artist's perception of global Indigenous peoples and their cultural material. As atemporal, global Indigenous cultural belongings—including African cultural belongings—were, for Borduas, the marker of a previous civilization. This analysis must have come to the artist while he was reading surrealist writings which often

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[160] Borduas, *Écrits I*, 195. "I prefer […] less evolved artworks."
[161] Borduas, 192. "because [they are] less evolved."
[162] Borduas, 532. "For a long time now my preferences have been for archaic periods which have neither the moderation, nor the patience, nor the security, nor the pretension of the classical ones."
[163] Vigneault, *Identité et modernité dans l'art au Québec*, 118. "Following Manichean logic (or oppositional binary logic), peripheral or non-Western universes are immediately associated with the past, while the Subject from the distant past is associated with 'childhood' and the genesis of Western civilization."

equated the unconscious thoughts of contemporary white Europeans with the conscious actions of contemporary global Indigenous people. Borduas would indeed write that "*Les civilisations passées, en maintenant l'accent sur les valeurs spirituelles, affinèrent nos perceptions sensibles et découvrirent spontanément, comme malgré elles, le monde physique*."[164] The artist thus associates unconscious spontaneity with past civilizations, which not only refer to Greek and Roman societies, but also to global Indigenous societies.

European surrealists also believed that by "looking back," an artist would achieve a *tabula rasa*, which equated to forgoing European traditions that had come to blur the traditions that were believed to originate in all mankind, traditions that were still considered alive and well among global Indigenous peoples. Borduas would support such logic when, in 1956, he wrote that

> *Face à cette prise de conscience douloureuse* [*celle de la difficulté de la jeune école du Canada à s'intégrer dans la communauté parisienne*] *que reste-t-il à faire? Lui tourner le dos et poursuivre la table rase de* [*19*]*43 en créant la plus parfaite étanchéité possible autour du mouvement et refaire à notre seul profit, au cours du temps, des expériences formelles depuis si longtemps révolues? Nous aurions ainsi un art original, la preuve en est faite par ces tableaux anachroniques, petits cousins inconscients d'un art étrusque, et par ceux d'un de mes amis qui, s'autorisant de la même attitude de* [*19*]*43, a produit des œuvres apparentées à l'art des Incas qu'il ignore, et par cet autre jeune Canadien à la série de tableaux juxtaposant inconsciemment en quantité égale un art africain et indien*.[165]

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[164] Borduas, *Écrits I*, 279. "Past civilizations, by maintaining the emphasis on spiritual values, refined our sensitive perceptions and spontaneously discovered, as if in spite of themselves, the physical world."

[165] Borduas, 537. "Faced with this painful awareness [that of the difficulty of the young Canadian school to integrate into international communities], what remains to be done? Turn our backs to it and continue the clean slate of 43 by creating the most perfect seal possible around the movement and redo for our own benefit, over time, formal experiences that have long since passed? We would thus have an original art, the proof of which is given by these anachronistic paintings, little unconscious cousins of an Etruscan art, and by those of one of my friends who, authorizing himself with the same attitude of 43, produced works related to the art of the Incas that he is unaware of, and by this other young Canadian with the series of paintings unconsciously juxtaposing in equal quantity an African and Indian art." It is interesting that Borduas would imply that the developments that characterized his art in 1943,

Borduas directly linked his early experiments with Automatism to Etruscan, Incan, African, and North American Indigenous cultural belongings. For Borduas, the works he created around 1943 were done using the same technique younger artists had adopted when creating works "related" to African cultural belongings. Borduas claimed that it was by starting anew, from a clean slate, that he was able to juxtapose global Indigenous cultural belongings in his early automatist works.

Much like other surrealist thinkers, Borduas likely would not have understood his art to be appropriation. As a humanist and an anarchist, Borduas wrote about his belief that the cultural production of one person was the cultural production of all mankind.[166] As he put it in 1957: "*Ce que voudrait l'artiste d'aujourd'hui c'est établir une relation entre l'homme et son milieu qui ne soit plus seulement visuelle mais qui englobe tout ce que l'humanité a appris de l'univers*."[167] Despite the little probability that Borduas would have regarded the 1942 gouaches under consideration in this thesis as appropriation, we must allow such an analysis to add to our understanding of the artist. The colonial channels that informed Borduas' appropriations demand that we consider some of the 1942 gouaches with a critical analysis. However much Borduas was "of his time"—and his art a reflection of this time—we must learn to contend with his legacy today, and engage with the art that forms part of our current cultural heritage.

Borduas' Doubly Transnational Modernism

The formal similarities between some of Borduas' 1942 gouaches and the West- and Central-African cultural belongings he saw in literature and exhibitions are striking and remarkable. An

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including a more solidly automatist approach, was done by turning his back to international movements. Although it is true that Borduas was a late participant in international surrealist movements, it is difficult to claim that such developments happened thanks to the artist's own experimentations shut off from the rest of the world.

[166] Vigneault, *Identité et modernité dans l'art au Québec*, 103 and 111; Jean-Louis Gauthier, *Paul-Émile Borduas* (Montreal: Art Global, 2011), 149–54.

[167] Borduas, *Écrits I*, 669. "What today's artist would like is to establish a relationship between man and his environment that is no longer just visual but encompasses everything that humanity has learned about the universe."

important aspect of Borduas' oeuvre has now been analyzed and we can place the Québécois surrealist within a transnational Modernism, in so much as he engaged with extra-Canadian material to create hybrid African/Canadian artworks. However, I argue that Borduas' extractive Modernism is doubly transnational: first as it appropriates West- and Central-African cultural belongings, and second as it participates in a tradition of extractive Modernism prevalent in European Modernism and which the artist was well aware of.

Borduas' time in Paris served him in more ways than one. Along with continuing his education in church decoration and encountering African cultural belongings, the young artist also discovered European Modern Art and specifically extractive Modernism. As previously mentioned, Borduas saw works by Picasso, Modigliani, and Matisse, among others, in Guillaume's gallery in January of 1930. Borduas' diary entry for January 3, 1930 notes that the artist went to the gallery specifically to study Picasso. On that same day, he also went to Pierre Loeb (1897-1964)'s Gallery on the rue des Beaux-Arts, where Ray, Jan Arp (1886-1966), Paul Klee (1879-1940), Joan Miró (1893-1983), Max Ernst (1891-1976), and many more were exhibited. When visiting these exhibitions, Borduas saw European extractive Modernism in action and may have first considered it as a technique he could undertake himself. In this context, Borduas would have realized that African cultural belongings are available for appropriation and that it was artistically legitimate to do so.

Once back in Montréal, Borduas would participate actively in the development of the CAS and the organization of *Art of Our Day*, a 1939 exhibition of European Modern Art from Montréal collections. The exhibition presented works by Modigliani, Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), Maurice de Vlaminck (1876-1958), and André Derain (1880-1954), among others.[168]

[168] Contemporary Arts Society/Société d'art contemporain, *Loan Exhibition Art of Our Day, Presented by the Contemporary Arts Society from May 13th to the 28th, 1939* (Montreal: Contemporary Arts Society, 1939).

Although the works were not the best representation of each artist's production, the value of the idea behind such an exhibition should be noted as Borduas recognized the importance of disseminating modern European art to a Montréal that had scarcely heard of it.[169] With *Art of Our Day*, Borduas further demonstrated his interest in European art and extractive modernist artists.

This interest was also reflected in the literature Borduas read. I have already mentioned Maurice Gagnon's *Peinture moderne*, which contained chapters citing works by European modernists such as Picasso, Matisse, Modigliani, Gauguin and Paul Cézanne (1839-1906). Another important book Borduas kept in his library is a copy of Alfred H. Barr, Jr.'s 1948 *Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art*. Barr was MoMA's curator at the time and his book makes frequent mention of Gauguin, Picasso, and Modigliani, and describes Cubism as "influenced by certain archaic and primitive forms."[170]

This comment on the origins of Cubism is worth highlighting as it was undoubtedly known to Borduas when, in 1956, he wrote that: "*Les gouaches de 1942, que nous croyions surréalistes, n'étaient que cubistes. Il a fallu cinq ans pour le voir*."[171] The association Borduas makes between the 1942 gouaches and Cubism is noteworthy. Given the strong links between the developments of Cubism in the 1910s and appropriations of African cultural belongings by artists such as Picasso and Derain, Borduas' belief at having made gouaches that were—according to him—cubist hints at the artist's own recognition of the extractive Modernism present in his corpus.

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[169] Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, 2013, 83.
[170] Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: The Museum of Moder Art, 1948), 84.
[171] Borduas, *Écrits I*, 531. "The 1942 gouaches, which we thought were surrealist, were only cubist. It took five years to see it. All the oils from 43 to 53 that were considered excessively 'modern' are bathed in a light and a faith prior to Christianity: similar to Etruscan art"

Although it is true that Borduas may have been inspired to appropriate African cultural belongings after surveying European extractive Modernism, this thesis has demonstrated that the artist's appropriations were based on West- and Central- African cultural belongings he would have seen himself. Borduas' appropriations are his own, even if the root of his technique was inspired by European movements. It is difficult to say that Borduas was simply copying white European modernists and their appropriations.

Considering Borduas' appropriations of African cultural belongings in the context of his knowledge of similar European modernist appropriations, we can read Borduas' extractive Modernism as doubly transnational. Not only does the Quebecois artist engage with African cultural belongings, he also engages with European modernist traditions. In creating his hybrid African/Canadian gouaches, Borduas was participating in transnationalisms that would be highly consequential for Québec art history.

Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated that in 1941 and 1942, Borduas appropriated West- and Central-African cultural belongings he encountered in literature he read, and in exhibitions he saw in Paris and Montréal to create some of a series of gouaches. Borduas read the surrealist magazine *Minotaure* from which he drew on to create some of his works. The artist also went to exhibitions of African objects at the Musée d'éthnographie du Trocadéro and the Paul Guillaume Gallery in Paris and possibly at the Exposition Missionnaire and McGill's Redpath and Ethnological Museums in Montréal. By seeking out these experiences with global Indigenous cultural belongings, Borduas was likely feeding his personal interest in global Indigenous cultures. By participating in extractive Modernism, the artist was not only engaging with the African cultural belongings he appropriated, but was also participating in a well-established tradition in European Modernism.

An important question remains to be elucidated: why did he do it? It is important to question why Borduas came to the decision to appropriate African cultural belongings in the first place. I argue that Borduas likely appropriated West- and Central African cultural belongings in order to assert his identity as a radical and different artist in 1940s Québec. Co-author of *Refus global*, co-founder of the CAS, anarchist, and humanist, Borduas was no stranger to being different and asserting his independence. By appropriating West- and Central-African cultural belongings at a time when these works were scarcely considered art in the beaux-arts circles of Québec, Borduas proclaimed his independence and his modernism, inspired by Europe. Although appropriating African cultural belongings was no longer considered *en vogue* in Europe by the time Borduas was participating in extractive Modernism, for the Québec art scene, the artist's appropriations would have been highly innovative. Borduas' modernism was rooted in a desire to

break from Quebec's artistic tradition. As Vigneault has proposed: "*De manière à rompre avec une réalité culturelle qu'il jugeait opprimante, l'artiste a cherché à établir un espace culturel spécifique et un art autochtone libre des modèles traditionalistes et régionalistes*."[172] This rupture is a central aspect of Borduas' work, both literary and plastic. From his extractive modernist gouaches to *Refus global*, the artist-author consistently tried to be different, radical, modern. Vigneault has summarized the situation thus: "*Plus qu'un simple retour à l'ancien, le primitivisme permet d'effectuer une mise à distance radicale des normes prescrites par l'idéologie clérico-nationaliste et par l'autorité séculaire de la métropole française*."[173] Borduas' appropriations can thus also be situated in a desire for the artist to distance himself from the suffocating environment of 1940s Québec.

Borduas' assertion of radical identity is ultimately rooted in a process of appropriation. In order to be different, radical, and independent, Borduas relied on West- and Central-African cultural belongings. In so doing, the artist was imposing his art as an acceptable medium to bring global Indigenous cultural belongings into Québec's artistic circles, and denying the objects he appropriated such a right. A hierarchy was thus created whereby Borduas' hybrid art was celebrated while African cultural belongings still lay in display cases at the Exposition missionnaire or McGill's museums, and local contemporary Black art was largely ignored, undocumented, and rejected by the establishments of Montréal's art milieu. This act as well as subsequent art historians' disregard for recognizing Borduas' appropriations are ultimately rooted in a white supremacy based on the hierarchy the artist created.

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[172] Vigneault, *Identité et modernité dans l'art au Québec*, 101–3. "In order to break with a cultural reality that he considered oppressive, the artist sought to establish a specific cultural space and an indigenous art free from traditionalist and regionalist models."

[173] Vigneault, 121. "More than a simple return to the old, primitivism allows for a radical distancing from the norms prescribed by the clerical-nationalist ideology and by the secular authority of the francophone metropolis."

Borduas' extractive Modernism can be found throughout his career. His interest in global Indigenous cultural belongings means that the artist appropriated Indigenous American, Asian, Oceanic, as well as African cultural belongings in over sixty of his works. Although increasingly abstract by the mid-1940s, Borduas' paintings can be characterized by a pervasive extractive Modernism that merits a full investigation. The impressive corpus of Borduas' extractive modernist works is noteworthy and begs the question: why has a critical examination of Borduas' appropriations not yet been undertaken? In Borduas' online catalogue raisonné, François-Marc Gagnon makes a single remark on the subject as it relates to *Tête casquée d'aviateur, la nuit* [*Aviator's Helmeted Head at Night*] (1941; Fig. 25): "*c'est un des rares tableaux de Borduas qui semble avoir quelque rapport avec l'art* [*africain*]."[174] This thesis has argued that Borduas' "connection to African art" is more than "rare," but is rather persistent. The lack of any critical analysis of Borduas' extractive Modernism stems from the artist's place within Québec's nationalist discourse. Inscribed in the province's Registre du patrimoine culturel and designated a "Personnage historique" by the Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication in 2023, Borduas and his works (literary and artistic) have been solidly enshrined in Québec's historical canon. In failing to critically address Borduas' appropriations, the gap created by sixty years of scholarship ultimately serves to uphold the white supremacist discourse in Québec art history. The dominance of Borduas' work at the time and to this day is indicative of the long shadow the artist has cast on global and local African communities and their diasporas. This material impact of Borduas' appropriations demand that we approach this topic with the criticality required to make space for African and African-diasporic makers.

[174] "Tête casquée d'aviateur, la nuit," *Paul-Émile Borduas Catalogue Raisonné* (blog), n.d., https://borduas.concordia.ca/en/catalog/2220. "This is one of the rare paintings by Borduas that seems to have some connection with African art."

The colonial channels through which Borduas encountered the West- and Central-African cultural belongings he would later appropriate are central to our understanding of his 1942 gouaches. The colonialism that allowed for literature about and exhibitions of African cultural belongings, as well as the colonial nature of the presentation of the objects through these means had a deep impact on the way Borduas perceived and understood African cultural belongings. To claim that Borduas appropriated African cultural belongings is to recognize that the artist did not have any known links to African artists, did not engage with African communities, and kept a distance between himself and African cultures *except* for exhibitions of and literature on African objects which he encountered thanks to the colonization of the continent. The point is not to claim that Borduas' gouaches somehow participated in the economic exploitation of Africa, but to acknowledge and accept that the artist's engagement with African cultures was accomplished through colonial channels (even if the artist himself may not have recognized them as such). This engagement allowed for Borduas to overshadow artists like Jones and Adams all the while appropriating African cultural belongings to the benefit of his career. This has only helped to exacerbate the erasure of Black artists from Montréal archives and uphold the white supremacy that allowed for Borduas' appropriations in the first place.

The link between Borduas and colonialism also adds a new perspective to the history of colonialism. It proposes a wider understanding of colonial dynamics beyond a simple metropole/colony relationship. Québec never had colonies in Africa and thus Borduas' extractive Modernism complicates binary dynamics by demonstrating how the effects of colonialism can be seen outside a two-party relationship.[175] The availability of colonially informed channels, most of which were either European or inspired by European traditions, allowed a non-European to

[175] As the Exposition missionnaire has demonstrated, Quebec's participation in colonial projects in Africa was mainly achieved through evangelical commitments.

appropriate visual material from European colonies. Through Borduas' appropriations, we can begin to understand how global colonial dynamics can be reflected beyond the colonizer/colonized relationship and can be adopted by external viewers. This reading helps to situate Québec art history at large within local legacies and global dynamics of colonialism.

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FIGURES

Figure 1: Photographer unknown to me. *Paul-Émile Borduas with Henri Girard and Charles Doyon at* Œuvres surréalistes, April, 25 1942, photograph, dimensions unknown.

Figure 2: Paul-Émile Borduas, *Abstraction no. 28*, 1942, gouache on paper, 25.4 x 35.6 cm. Photo: Borduas Catalogue Raisonné.

Figure 3: Paul-Émile Borduas, *Abstraction no. 36* or *Deux Masques* [*Two Masks*], 1942, gouache on paper, 41.8 x 55.7 cm. Photo: Borduas Catalogue Raisonné.

Figure 4: Paul-Émile Borduas, *Abstraction no. 51* or *Les deux masques* [*The Two Masks*], 1942, gouache on paper, dimensions unknown to me. Photo: Borduas Catalogue Raisonné.

Figure 5: Paul-Émile Borduas, *Abstraction no. 52* or *Les deux têtes* [*The Two Heads*], 1942, gouache on paper, 42.55 x 58.10 cm. Photo: Borduas Catalogue Raisonné.

Figure 6: Paul-Émile Borduas, *Le musicien* [*The Musician*], 1942, gouache and graphite on cardboard, 72.5 x 57 cm. Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, gift of the National Museums of Canada, D 73 60 GO 1. Photo: Borduas Catalogue Raisonné.

Figure 7: Canadart after Paul-Émile Borduas, *Curtains*, 1949-1950, printed cretonne, 172 cm x 113 cm (each panel). National Gallery of Canada, gift of the family of Dr. Paul Dumas, 41775.1-2. Photo: National Gallery of Canada object file 41775.1-2.

Figure 8: Artist unrecorded, *kore hyena mask*, before 1931, wood, vegetal fibres, and metal staples, 44.6 x 17 x 16.8 cm. Musée du Quai Branly—Jacques-Chirac, 71.1931.74.1771. Photo: © Musée du Quai Branly—Jacques-Chirac.

Figure 9: Marcel Griaule, *Rite de la société Kore*, 28 November, 1931, print on Baryté paper mounted on cardboard, 22.5 x 17 cm (print). Musée du Quai Branly—Jacques-Chirac, PP0031561. Photo: © Musée du Quai Branly—Jacques-Chirac.

Figure 10: Artist unrecorded, *sirigue mask*, before 1931, wood, 56.5 x 22 x 21 cm. Musée du Quai Branly—Jacques-Chirac, 71.1931.74.1996. Photo: © Musée du Quai Branly—Jacques-Chirac.

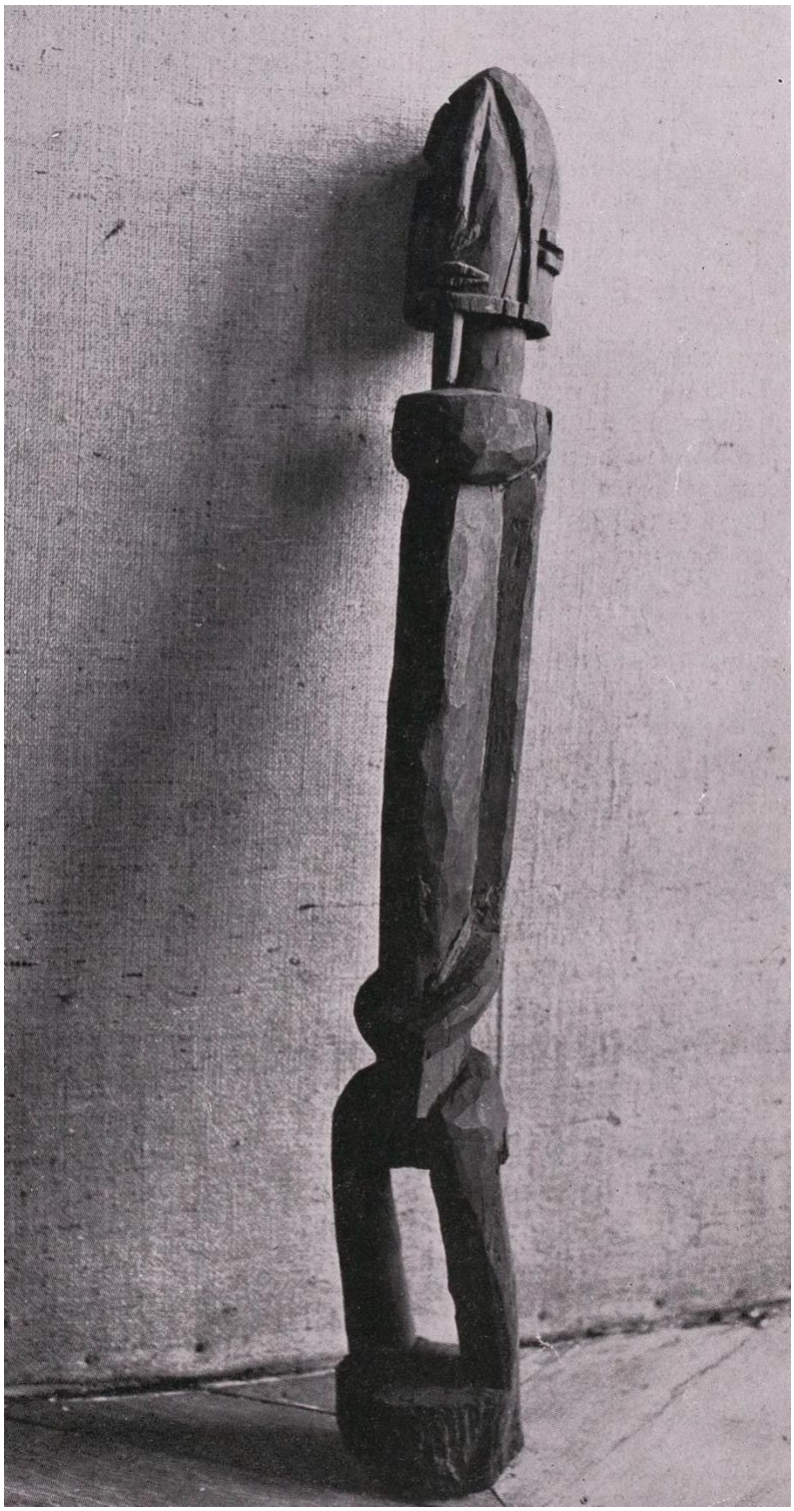

Figure 11: Photographer unknown to me, "*dege sculpture*," in Minotaure 2, vol. 1, 1933, p. 29.

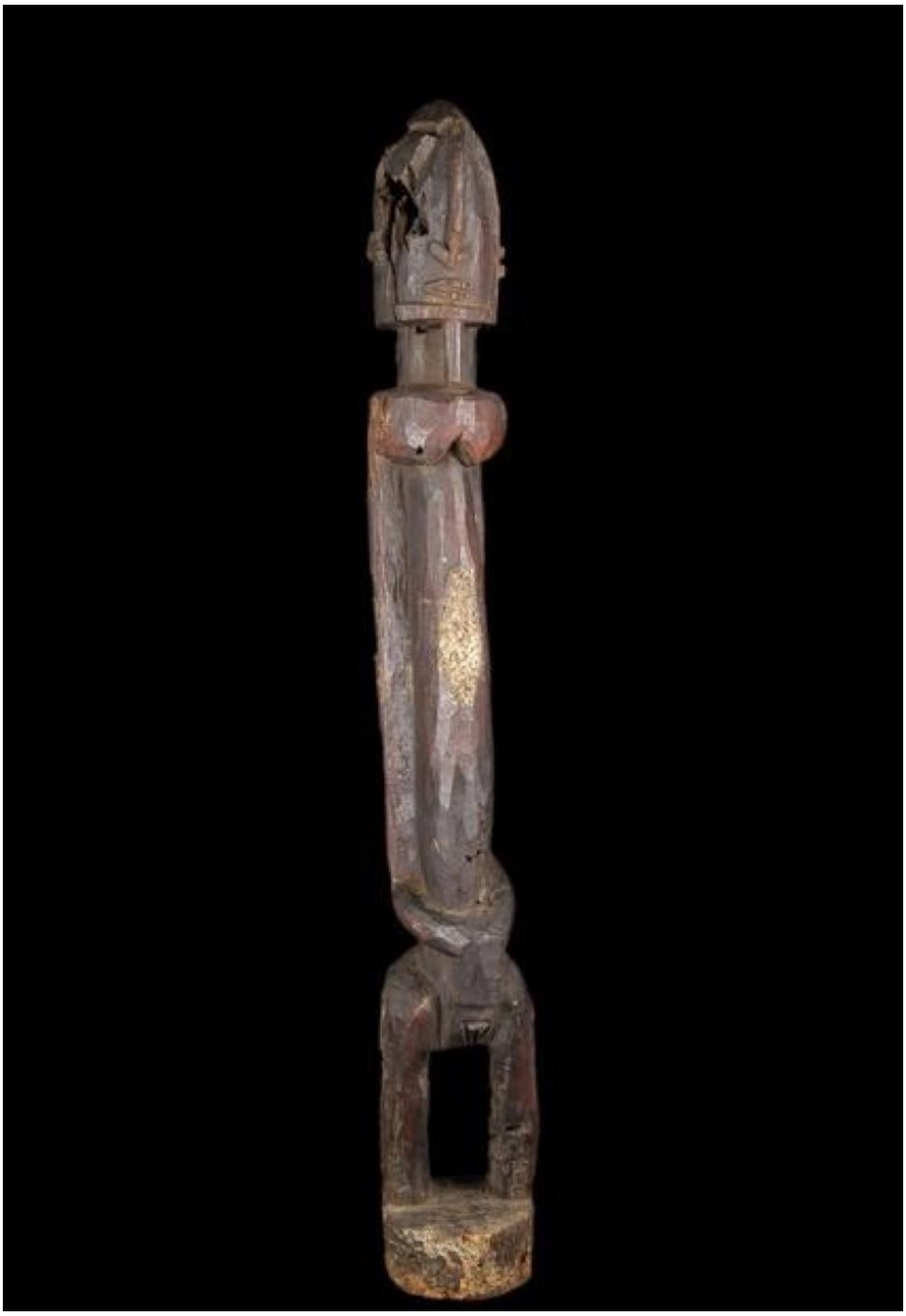

Figure 12: Artist unrecorded, *dege sculpture*, before 1931, wood, 86 x 12.5 x 14 cm. Musée du Quai Branly—Jacques-Chirac, 71.1931.74.2048. Photo: © Musée du Quai Branly—Jacques-Chirac.

Figure 13: Photographer unkown to me. *Exposition de la première mission Dakar-Djibouti*, c. 1933, photograph, 6 x 6 cm. Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée, PH.1940.105.2. Photo: © Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée.

Figure 14: Pablo Picasso, *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1907, oil on canvas, 243.9 x 233.7 cm. Museum of Modern Art, acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest (by exchange), 333.1939. Photo: © Museum of Modern Art.

Figure 15: Artist unrecorded, *baoulé mask*, before 1900, wood, pigment, 38 x 23 x 14 cm. Musée du Quai Branly—Jacques-Chirac, 71.1900.29.2. Photo: © Musée du Quai Branly—Jacques-Chirac.

Figure 16: Photographer unknown to me, *Two gelede masks*, 1878-1900, silver gelatine-bromure positive on glass plate. Musée du Quai Branly—Jacques-Chirac, PV0061024. Image in the public domaine.

Figure 17: Artist unrecorded, *nkisi nkondo*, before 1883, wood, textile, metal, glass, and pigment, 58 x 23 x 18 cm. Musée du Quai Branly—Jacques-Chirac, 71.1892.70.2. Photo: © Musée du Quai Branly—Jacques-Chirac.

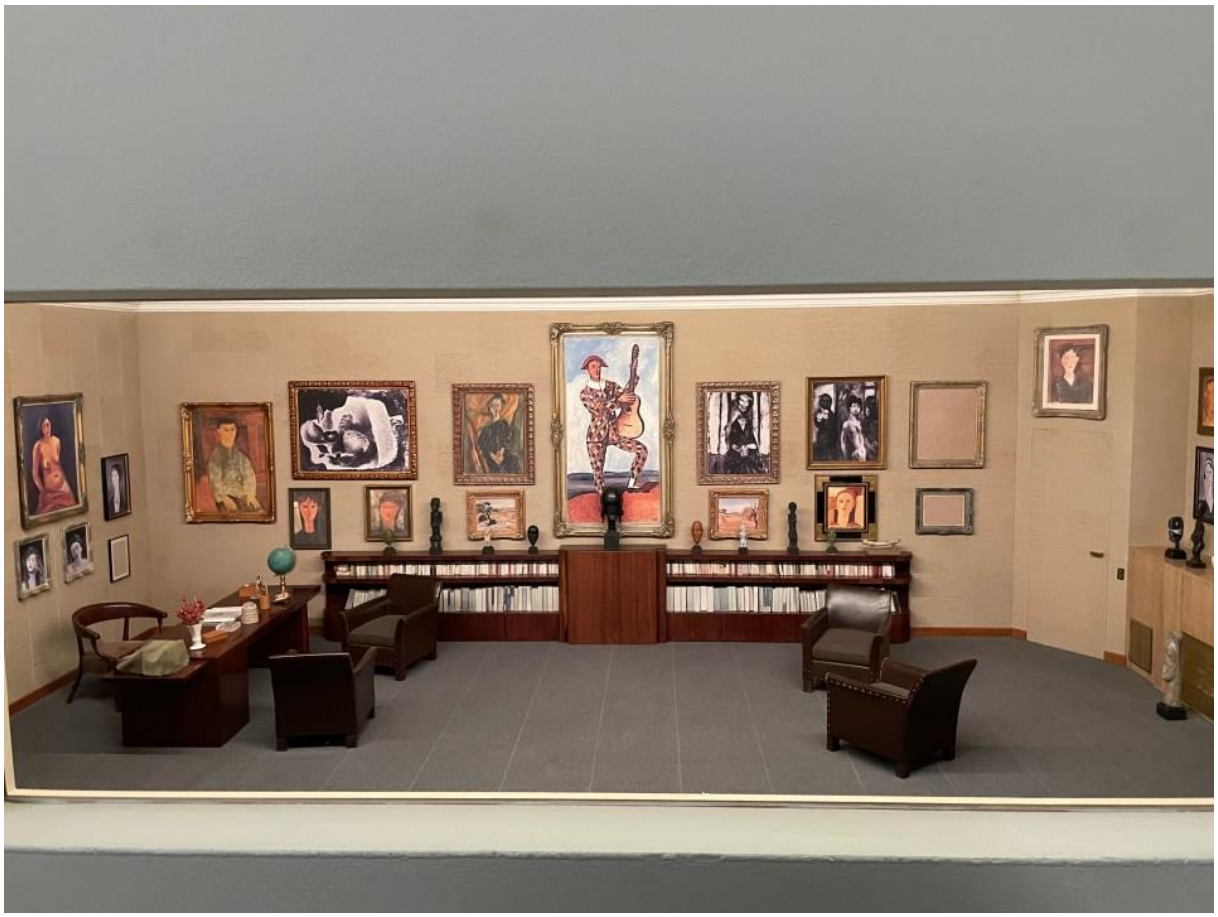

Figure 18: Rémi Munier, *1/10 Scale Model of Paul Guillaume's Office at 22 ave. Foch, Paris, 1930*, 2023, materials and dimensions unknown to me. Photo: © Benoît Gausseron

Figure 19: Artist unrecorded, *gu face mask*, before 1923, wood and pigment, 31.1 x 13.6 x 11.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979, 1979.206.293. Photo: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 20: Unknown to the MACM, *Untitled,* n.d., graphite on paper, dimensions unknown to me. Documents collection, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Fonds Paul-Émile Borduas (MACM), FA1973.1.S3-1.D3.9

Figure 21: Photographer unknown to me, *The Pères Blancs' Kiosk at the 1930 Exposition missionnaire*, in *La Semaine missionnaire de Montréal*(Librairie Beauchemin, 1931), 164.

Figure 22: Photographer unknown to me, *McGill Ethnological Museum*, dimensions and medium unknown to me. McGill University Archives.

Figure 23: Artist unrecorded, *maiden mask*, before 1928, wood and pigment, 28 x 39.5 x 17.5 cm. Redpath Museum, 2966. Photo: © Redpath Museum, McGill University.

Figure 24: Cyril Adams, *The March on Washington*, 1963, watercolour, dimensions unknown to me. Private collection. © Estate of Cyril Adams. Photo: © Harlan Johnson.

Figure 25: Paul-Émile Borduas, *Tête casquée d'aviateur, la nuit* [*Helmeted Aviator by Night*], 1941, oil on canvas, 21.59 x 36.83 cm. Photo: Borduas Catalogue Raisonné.