

# Women Artists and the Canadian Art World:

## A Survey

by Avis Lang Rosenberg

I began this survey two years ago. I was interested in having some "hard" facts about the inclusion and representation of work by woman artists in Canadian artworld artspaces (by "artworld" I mean the places whose activities tend to be chronicled by artmagazines and/or whose exhibitions and operations are considered worthy of public funding) and about changes in the situation, if any, over time. The material was intended to provide a dose of close-to-home present-day reality to match up with or set against

some of the more general, theoretical, historical and non-Canadian tracts we were reading during the first term of a 1977-78 seminar at the University of British Columbia on Women Artists in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, a course given once with no particular prospect of being repeated.

### The Survey Itself

Different questionnaire forms and explanatory letters were drawn up for each of three categories: 1) Commercial

Galleries, 2) Parallel/Association of National Non-Profit Artists Centres (ANNPAC)/Artist-run Galleries, and 3) Museums and Public or University Galleries (referred to hereafter as Museums). Individual letters were also sent to Art Bank and Canada Council Arts Awards. The form letters were run off on university letterhead, with space left to type the individual names and address of each institution; these letters were all signed individually. Questionnaire forms were sent in duplicate. The desired effect was an air of seriousness and conscientiousness; in a world rife with formal affiliations, institutional letterhead is invaluable for this purpose, and accounts at least in part, I would guess, for the respectable percentage of replies. A combination thank-you and preliminary-overview letter was sent to all replying institutions.

The questions concerned the numbers of  
--one-woman shows during the 1970s  
--women artists in permanent collections in 1960, 1970, 1976  
--works by women artists in permanent collections in 1960, 1970, 1976  
--women artists handled by commercial galleries in 1970, 1973, 1976, 1977  
--women-only group shows  
--women artists in selected group shows 1975-1977

For each question, figures were requested for several different years so as to determine possible genuine shifts or possible one-shot International Women's Year (1975) flurries.(1)

### The Response, The Sample, & Several Examples

The director of a good-sized city gallery said to me not long ago--when I told him that there was a response rate of over 50% from an important component of my sample--that of course my results would be quite useless because the returns were so poor. On the other hand, a pleasant mathematician at UBC of whose free statistical consultation services I took advantage seemed positively zesty about the response rates being anything over one-quarter. His primary caution concerned my sample; I must feel good about my sample. I would say I feel not wildly enthusiastic but quite satisfied with both the sample of respondents and the overall level of response.

There is much information in the 56 numerically-usable replies,(2) both in the form of completed questionnaires and accompanying statements. There are even some quite usable aspects to the 6 refusals and promises and the 1 outraged, hysterical phone call. For one thing, almost everyone is overworked; to take the time to acknowledge a request and explain that it is impossible to fulfill is indeed a genuine response, quite different from the circular file method of dealing with requests. Thus, out of 134 requests sent out, there was a 47% overall response.

The results from the museum sector were quite substantial. Letters were sent

to 65 institutions and there were 31 usable replies. There were also 5 refusals of various degrees of politeness; my favorite one ended with the following statement:

I should explain that, apart from part-time secretarial help, I operate this gallery entirely single-handed in addition to teaching duties. In the past few years the volume of correspondence, much of it with new departments of government whose sole occupation appears to be the drafting and distribution of questionnaires, has increased to the extent that my own work is seriously handicapped. The fact gathering profession will

soon suffocate any acts worth gathering.

To the specific requests sent them, Canada Council Arts Awards replied very graciously and rather extensively by way of telephone and letter, and Art Bank replied with a copy of the March 1975 catalogue of works plus a regretful letter indicating that their biographical forms do not request information on sex or marital status, that some names do not give away the gender of their bearers, and that perhaps I could get somewhere simply slogging through the catalogue listings, which I did and turned up with the following figures:

ART BANK/MARCH 1975 -- WORKS BY WOMEN ARTISTS(3)

Category of Work	Total # Works	# Works by Women	% Works by Women
Painting	767	130	16.9%
Sculpture	279	53	19.0%
Works on Paper	2205	544	24.7%
TOTAL WORKS	3251	727	22.4%

Art Bank's commitment to contemporary work (recently dealt a fiscal death

blow by the Federal government) might initially seem to account for the above

percentages as compared to, say, the picture for the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), where the 1976 total of works by women was 7.2% (434 of 6007). But as you will see just below, Art Bank is well above the commercial galleries--who are also involved with contemporary work--in its representation of women artists; the difference is in part due to notions about saleability. As the catalogue itself states:

One of the key objectives of the program is to supplement the income of professional Canadian artists at a time when the Canadian art market is in a formative stage of development [read: nobody buys Canadian]. The program is also intended to provide a stimulus to those commercial art galleries which have long made, or are making, an important contribution to Canadian art [read: the commercial galleries are not doing much].

We will be more ready to discuss such

factors several paragraphs hence. What we are talking about here is primarily the response to the survey from the public sector: 67 requests, 33 usable replies, 5 refusals/promises.(4)

If one wanted to quibble with my sample, the place to do it would be Commercial Galleries. I initially sampled them roughly inasmuch as some of them carry fluctuating proportions of saleably framed and mounted nothingnesses which have more directly to do with paying bills and attractively filling spaces than with the breakthroughs, strategies, major statements, achievements and humanism that the art-world (whose measure it is I am taking) feels to be its provenance. In any case, of the 47 galleries approached, 17 (36.1%) replied(5) in a usable way. The sample is strong enough to show that the slow steady increase in the number of women artists on their rosters from 1970 to 1977 can be taken as a sign of actual change:

WOMEN ARTISTS IN COMMERCIAL GALLERIES

Year	# Gall. Replying	Total # Artists	# Women Artists	% Women Artists
1970	10	345	47	13.6%
1973	12	435	60	13.8%
1976	14	483	73	15.1%
1977	16	563	94	16.7%

The response of the third segment of the sample, the parallel/ANNPAC galleries, was 6 usable replies and 1 polite promise out of 20 letters sent. (6) Several ANNPAC galleries were too new to ask, several are no longer in existence, several others have been formed. 'The fragmentary data from this group is best handled in combination with that from the other two groups on questions common to all three, as for instance, part of the overall total of solo shows. As with the other two categories, some information could have been obtained by other means--Parallelogramme, for example--but consistency demands that one use only this data offered.

#### Quality, Life, & Women-Only

Limited as the numerical response was from the parallel galleries, two men in two of them, 2800 miles apart, sent two of the most revealing comments of all the ones received:

I can't stress enough the emphasis here on collaborative activity, in which I think women are involved to at least the same extent as men, and probably half the time the groups are of mixed gender. I don't think anyone has ever deliberately set up an all-woman show here at--; the notion would probably be insulting to many women who are involved in our activities. . . .

I find the recent mania on Women and Women's this and that quite

beside the point. I am interested in the quality of work and nothing else. It has been suggested that we have a women's show, and I would refuse as strongly as I would refuse to curate a show of work by blue eyed artists (and I'm blue eyed). As a general note, few women are ever enrolled in my photographers courses.

There is at least one message that both statements share: Good art and women-only situations are mutually exclusive. Time and again, in one place and in one form or another, we hear that groupings by race or gender are anathema to notions of quality and merit. The claim is myopic, absurd and twisted; to engage in lengthy refutation would be to dignify it by accepting its framing as viable. One factor that makes even the structure of this claim questionable is the implied equivalence/interchangeability between extrinsic and intrinsic aspects, between personal criteria for judgment on the one hand and attributes of the work on the other. Another implication is that such groupings are groundless and far-fetched (unlike Czechoslovakian Art Since 1945 or Artists Under Thirty-five(7) or conversely, that they unhealthily brand the work by constituting a classification that eliminates the possibility of all others. Speaking subjectively, I would say there seems to be a certain hysterical fear here that one's already tenuous command over the elusive and questionable but highly prized factor called Quality is

being still further loosened, criticized or ignored.

Women everywhere are being immensely productive. Mutations, transplants, atavisms, resurrections and parthenogenesis abound. Blood is rushing again. My own standards for importance and excellence have of late been satisfied more often around recent art made by women than around that my men, and although it may be the case for the female owner of a major Eastern commercial gallery that "I never pay any attention whether an artist is male or female," it is not so for me. I am rather of the belief that art,

. . . imaginative work that is, is not dropped like a pebble upon the ground. . . [it] is like a spider's web, attached ever so lightly perhaps, but still attached to life at all four corners. Often the attachment is scarcely perceptible . . . . But when the web is pulled askew, hooked up at the edge, torn in the middle, one remembers that these webs are not spun in mid-air by incorporeal creatures, but are the work of suffering human beings, and are attached to grossly material things, like health and money and the houses we live in. (8)

Since Virginia Woolf is here speaking to the subject of women and fiction, sex can be taken to be an implicit member of that list in the last sentence.

To be in search of quality does not mean to be in disregard of all else. That is the equation so often made; it is made in the following statement by the director of a major public gallery in the prairies:

We are aware of and endorse feminist goals. Five out of seven of the Curatorial staff are women. However [author's italics], our collecting and exhibitions are based on quality not sex. There is a general increase in female representation in both acquisitions and exhibitions of contemporary art proportionate to the increase of female artists who produce art at a significant quality and art historically important level.

It is unlikely that either art or art history float so high and free above the world as appears to be assumed here. It may do so for a viewer for a moment or an hour. The rest of the time there is constant commerce with life. My gender, my job, my upbringing, my finances are never absent long.

Let us return to our point of departure, the question of women-only situations. Reservations on this were expressed not only in the ways we have already seen, but also from further inside the issues, by two women whose organizations had demonstrably over time been in support of women artists. The first quotation is from Mary Sparling, director of the art gallery at Mount Saint Vincent University, which has by intention a

maximum 10% male enrollment, and the second is from one of the triumvirate of women who currently runs the Artists Gallery in Vancouver.

I have been director here a little over 4 years. We have no stated policy in the gallery about women artists, except my conviction that the program of exhibits and activities must ensure that women are strongly represented. It is my belief that this gallery's program would be weakened if it served only women artists and that women artists themselves would not be as well served if we were exclusively female. . . .

. . . The gallery has not emphasized 'women only' shows. Because of our non-sexist policies, we feel that would be redundant.

Of course a number of galleries put on a women's group show during International Women's Year, funds and pressure both being more available than usual. In some cases this decision might be seen, particularly with several years' distance from those events, as greater evidence of tokenism than of commitment. In any case, my questionnaire included a questionnaire included a question about women-only group shows; there were 30 galleries replying to the question, 20 said yes they had had such a show, and taken together they had put on 36. (Six of these were at Mount Saint Vincent and

six at the University of Waterloo's Art Centre.)

One of those 36 shows was Woman as Viewer subtitled "An International Women's Year Project Independently [*my italics*] Presented by the Committee For Women Artists, Winnipeg." The first paragraph of the well-done catalogue states:

The title of this show "Woman as Viewer" emphasizes woman as one who sees rather than is seen, who does rather than is done to, woman as active rather than passive. The show includes only works by women in an effort to equalize past exclusion of woman artists from major art exhibitions.

The exhibition was physically housed by the Winnipeg Art Gallery from 26 November to 14 December 1975, and it was funded by the three levels of government, but its conception, curating, coordinating and funding arrangements were the sole responsibility of the Committee for Women Artists, which was

. . . formed to protest another International Women's Year project [formulated by the Women's Committee of the Winnipeg Art Gallery] which proposed an exhibit of paintings depicting the roles of women through the past few centuries. Because such historical pieces merely describe the traditional roles of women, such a show would only enforce stereotypes from which

women are attempting to break away. The effects of such an exhibit would be to maintain the status quo rather than to transform it.

works, but it could at least be safely said that their conception was probably due to need rather than an excess of available funds.

The most striking women-only group situations are of course those with the most complete terms of reference, the feminist work-exhibition-support groups and spaces, Powerhouse in Montreal being a central and large-scale example. With all the resentment, rigamarole, time-waste and other evils that attend attempts to improve the situation of women within established contexts, it is not surprising that some women artists have chosen to establish alternate and separatist structures. This choice sometimes reflects disenchantment, sometimes hope, ease, and energy, sometimes fear, sometimes fury. It is another article entirely to discuss these feminist frame-

### Solo Shows

We all realize how important the one-person show is. Regardless of the various ways of handling the data on this question, it emerges that there have been changes. In 1970, 30% (3 of 10) of those commercial galleries replying had had no one-woman shows; by 1977 the percentage had decreased to 11.8% (2 of 17). Museums, too, had changed in this regard: the corresponding percentages were 47.1% (8 of 17) in 1970, decreasing to 13.6% (3 of 22) in 1977. (9)

A more positive way of presenting the picture is the following pair of tables:

#### ONE-WOMAN SHOWS IN MUSEUMS

##### Change over Time

Year	# Museums Replying	Total # Solo Shows	# 1-Woman Shows	% 1-Woman Shows
1970	21	127	24	18.9%
1975	22	189	42	22.2%
1976	27	194	48	24.7%
1977	27	205	65	31.7%

ONE-WOMAN SHOWS IN COMMERCIAL GALLERIES

Change over Time

Year	# Gall. Replying	Total # Solo Shows	# 1-Woman Shows	% 1-Woman Shows
1970	10	87	15	17.2%
1973	12	112	15	13.4%
1976	15	139	23	16.5%
1977	17	152	32	21.1%

We may say on the basis of the above pair of tables that there has been a clearer and greater commitment to the actual promotion and recognition of women artists by museums, as a group, than by commercial galleries as a

group.

The following table indicates what a hypothetical, active, cross-Canada viewer could have seen during the 1970s; it provides averages for each of the 4 types of galleries surveyed.

ONE-WOMAN SHOWS -- 1970s

Type of Gall.	# Gall. Replying	Total # Solo Shows	# 1-Woman Shows	% 1-Woman Shows
Commercial	17	490	85	17.3%
Museums & Public Galleries	17	488	116	23.8%
University Galleries	11	227	63	27.8%
Parallel Galleries (10)	5	172	49	28.5%
TOTAL GALLERIES	50	1377	313	22.7%

A "progress report" published in 1972 on the U.S. version of this situation highlights a few figures from Time, viz., out of 1000 solo shows in 43 years, the Museum of Modern Art had put on 5 by women, and the Whitney had put on 8 out of 129 over a 10-year span. (11) Looking at a few of the larger institutions across Canada for the four years 1970, 1975, 1976 and 1977, we see considerable variation in the numbers of one-women shows:

- Art Gallery of Ontario: 4 of 28(12)
- Art Gallery of Ontario (Extension Services): 0 of 21
- Vancouver Art Gallery: 7 of 51(13)
- London Art Museum: 37 of 91
- Edmonton Art Gallery: 4 of 71(14)

### Women in Group Shows

The degree of commitment to a particular artist is naturally far greater in the case of a solo show than in that of inclusion in a group show; the institution is giving its stamp of approval in a quite conspicuous way.

Group shows can be 3 people or 30, and because they have such various points of departure, they inevitably include a wider range of art and artists.

There are more younger, stranger and generally "other" artists represented, more new work, more women.

I asked the museums to select several group shows spanning 1975-1977 and to indicate theme, year and numbers of men and women. Roughly one-third of the

shows--having roughly one-third the total number of artists--fall into the 15-25% range in their representation of women artists (32 of 113 group shows, representing 1133 of the total 3347 artists).

We can get some perspective on this 15-25% figure by keeping in mind the results of the major 1970 protest launched by several groups against the Whitney Museum's Annual group show of what's-really-on-in-America-today. (15) The demand was for 50% women in that year's Annual. What they were reacting against were levels in previous years of 9.7%, 8.2%, 7.3%, and especially the new low of 1969: 5.6% or 8 women of the 143 exhibitors. What they got for 1970 was 20.4%, 21 women out of 103 exhibitors. As the handbill passed out to the viewing public said, "An interesting possibility is emerging. Perhaps there are more." Whether or not there are more, Lippard could write in late 1975 that established institutions seemed to have set a 20% quota for female representation in group shows. (16)

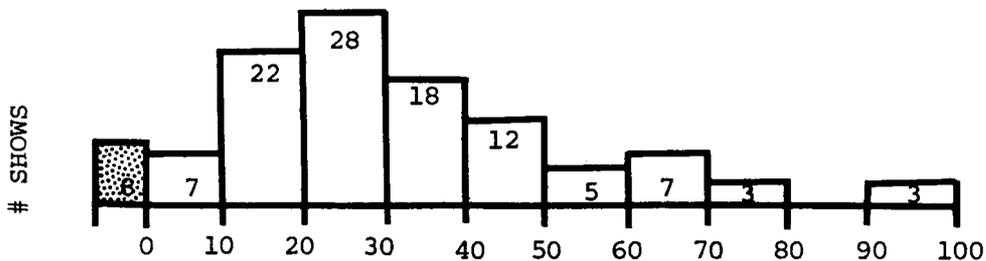
The following graph about group shows is based on material that is probably fairly random in the best sense, and in the end, fairly representative of a diversified situation--not literally descriptive of, but representative of, the state of affairs. If anything, the picture probably errs more on the rosy side than on the grim, since institutions would presumably prefer to release information that made them appear

acceptable rather than culpable in the eyes of pressure groups. All shows included had 3 or more exhibitors. The total number of shows surveyed was 113,

and of the 3347 total number of artists, 29.8% were women. Note that 8 of the 113 shows had no women in them (45 men).

SELECTED MUSEUM GROUP SHOWS 1975-77

% Representative of Women



% Women

artists emerge from art schools and those schools are overwhelmingly staffed by men; this has generally not been conducive to women seriously pursuing. It should come as no great surprise that women were strongly represented in certain media: ceramics, graphics, textiles. One reason that should not be overlooked is that a number of women have tended to move into areas where the prestige and the resultant competition and denigration have been limited. It must not be forgotten that many

using the heroics of steel beams, not, to take it several steps further, the allure of silk fibres or pink sequins. And if silks and sequins are newly and conspicuously in evidence, it is partly because materials with such feminine associations have become not only sanctioned but lauded from within segments of the snowballing feminist art community as being expressive and effective vehicles for the conveyance of the female content which is now also (newly) "allowable." Again we are on

PERMANENT COLLECTIONS OF MUSEUMS  
WORKS BY WOMEN ARTISTS -- 1976

Institution	Total # Works	# Works by Women	% Works by Women
<hr/>			
Under 500 Works			
University of Manitoba	310	29	9.4%
Université de Moncton	95	9	9.5%
Art Metropole	113	13	11.5%
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia	323	37	11.5%
University of Waterloo	127	17	13.4%
Concordia University	433	67	15.5%
The Gallery/Stratford <sup>o</sup>	176	28	15.9%
Laurentian University	338	65	19.2%
University of New Brunswick	445	150	34.0%
Mount Saint Vincent University	253	103	40.7%
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500 - 1500 Works			
Beaverbrook Art Gallery	812	41	5.0%
Edmonton Art Gallery	500	41	8.0%
Simon Fraser University Gallery	588	60	10.2%
Confederation Centre Art Gallery	577	93	16.1%
Robert McLaughlin Gallery	773	131	16.9%
London Art Museum	1085	190	17.5%
University of Alberta (Edmonton)	570	162	28.4%
Saskatchewan Arts Board	681*	264	38.8%+
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Over 1500 Works			
Agnes Etherington Art Centre	1849	124	6.7%
Art Gallery of Ontario	6007	434	7.2%
Vancouver Art Gallery	2233	351**	15.7%
Art Bank <sup>o</sup>	3251	727	22.4%
National Film Board--			
Still Photo Division	2282	702	30.8%
Greater Vancouver Artists			
Gallery	2512	932	37.1%

<sup>o</sup>Figures are for 1975

\*52 are by unidentified artists

\*\*208 or 59.3% of the works by women are by Emily Carr; a majority of these were a gift to the people of B.C. in the form of a perpetual trust

the threshold of another full-scale separate article, and must instead recommend two classics for further reading: Judy Chicago's Through the Flower and Lucy Lippard's From the Center. (17)

#### Works in Permanent Collections

There are many reasons why permanent collections include what they do; probably all of them are skewed in one way or another because of bequests, attention to certain local artists, availability of particular works at times when funds are available, social connections of trustees, storage facilities, and so on. The proportion

of a collection due to direct acquisition will of course vary. Here, simply, are the 1975 figures for each of the 24 museums who replied to the question on permanent collections; several said they simply did not have the personnel or information retrieval setups to be able to fulfill the request. Investigation of the causes for each particular situation may be done in part by consulting past annual reports in which gifts and recent acquisitions should be enumerated. reports in which gifts and recent acquisitions should be enumerated. (see Table 7) And a much more succinct way of looking at the issue is as described in the following table:

#### WORKS BY WOMEN IN PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

##### Change over Time

Year	# Museums Replying	Total # Works	# Works by Women	% Works by Women
1970	18	12,823	1902	14.8%
1976	24	26,318	4770	18.1%

A number of observations may be made here. Museum holdings have increased, more than doubling in six years. The number of works by women in these holdings have, of course, also increased;

more exactly, a greater percentage of the works being purchased are by women. Prior to 1970, 14.8% of the works bought were by women. Between 1970 and 1976, 13,495 works were bought, and of

these, 2868 or 21.3% were by women. The 18.1% figure for 1976 simply tells us the state of affairs as to quantity. The proportion of funds committed might well have been different, lower if many of the works are by younger artists or if they are small and/or prints, for example. Another separate consideration is the frequency or prominence of displaying those 18.1% works by women. The former issue relates to the viability of a woman supporting herself as an artist, which is even harder than for a man (the availability of teaching positions is another--and a notorious--side of this). The latter issue--display--relates to what the viewing public has a chance to see, and the consequent erosion or confirmation of prevailing attitudes. Both issues are relevant to far more than simply museum collections.

Artists' Representation

One of the productive comparisons one

could make concerns representation of women in permanent collections and commercial gallery stables with numbers of women in art schools and studio programmes. Roughly speaking, we could say the following:

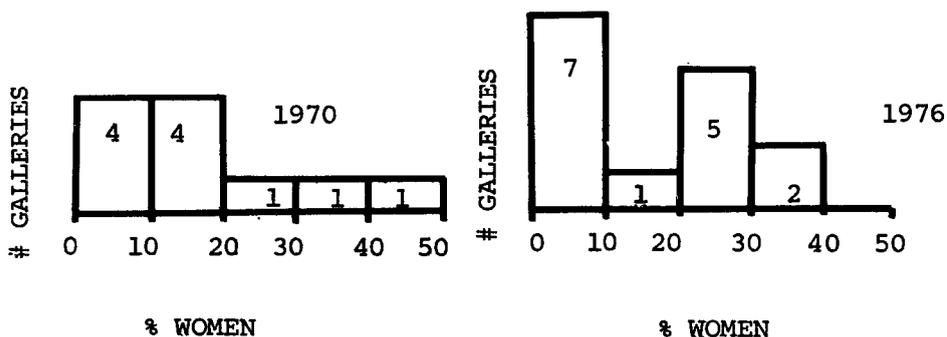
- 18% of the works owned by museums in 1976 were by women
- 17% of the artists handled by commercial galleries in 1977 were women
- over 50% of the students in art schools are women(18)

Thus we begin to get some idea of the size of the gap between aspiration and legitimation. Furthermore, attrition is attributable to more than just the usual run of unimpeachable institutional verdicts about quality.

There is nothing spectacularly encouraging about the following quartet of graphs showing 1970 and 1976 levels at which women artists were represented in places at which their work might be seen and enjoyed.

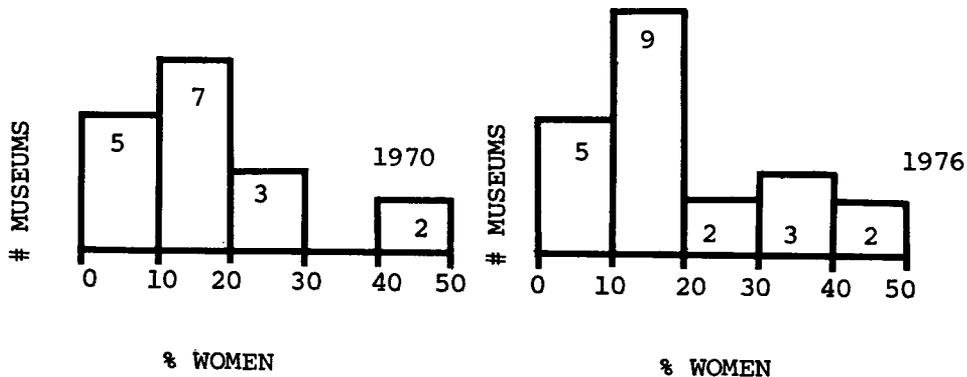
ROSTERS OF COMMERCIAL GALLERIES

% Women Artists



PERMANENT COLLECTIONS OF MUSEUMS

% Women Artists



The weighting in all cases is below the 20% mark, although as we can see in other tables and graphs included in this article, the commercial galleries are proportionally lower in their promotion of women artists.

Galleries more concerned with curating present-day art activity than with proven commercial viability (a catch-22) are the places to expect to see art by women; this means parallel galleries, Art Bank and the newer museums. It's hardly a surprise; a business is a business, private patronage of the arts in Canada is rare even for more authenticated commodities and Canadian businesses do not have a reputation for being adventuresome.

Estimations of the situation in the United States seem to vary. A 1972 article indicated that ". . . it's nearly impossible to force a gallery to change its policies. About the best feminists can hope for is a reversal in the pattern of museum exhibits. If this happens, galleries will probably follow suit, since they must sell what museums show."(19) On the other hand, Lucy Lippard wrote in late 1975, "While commercial galleries have done more for women (for obvious reasons), other organizations have resisted all but the most minute changes."(20) If both statements were true when written, it would mean that at least some U.S. commercial galleries had quickly adjusted themselves to new commercial possibilities.

A protest leaflet from Women in the Arts Foundation (WIA) handed out all over New York in spring 1976 tells a different story. Its statistics derive from a 1975 compilation; out of 11 major galleries handling 237 artists, 9.7% (23) were women. Some of the specific figures were:

--Castelli: 1 of 30  
--O.K. Harris: 5 of 47  
--Janis: 2 of 9  
--Pace: 2 of 16  
--Marlborough: 2 of 26

The Toronto gallery circuit(21)is the closest equivalent to New York that Canada has. The 1977 percentage for the 11 Toronto galleries who responded is getting close to double the 1975 percentage for the 11 New York galleries: 17.4% women, or 50 of 288 total artists. Again, some of the specifics:

--Carmen Lamanna: 4 of 20  
--Mira Godard: 3 of 32  
--Isaacs: 2 of 25  
--Sable-Castelli: 3 of 10

There is insufficient information here to say that Toronto galleries are way ahead of New York galleries on this issue, but it seems possible that things have been slightly better for women here because the stakes have been slightly, or more than slightly, lower. People are still going to New York to really make it.

### The Ago

Archivist, David Harris, did a massive amount of investigation and tabulation arising from my questionnaire which had been relayed to him by his superior, Roald Nasgaard, and when I requested permission to publish it, it was granted. Dr. Nasgaard, by so doing, was serving the interests of knowledge far more decisively than those of his own institution.

The Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) has no peers in size, structure, budget and function, except the National Gallery in Ottawa, and we can learn a lot by seeing what is in their card files. We should not, however, imagine that we have learned more than we have; the picture of such a huge collection is incomplete without information on how things got to be that way, what the alternatives were, who decided what.

The AGO's information on their collection is organized not by artists' names but by medium into six categories--painting, drawing, sculpture, prints, posters and photographs. The same artist would appear under, say, both painting and prints if the gallery owned one of each. So, whereas it was possible to determine that in 1960, 183 or 5.5% of the 3346 total works in the permanent collection were by women artists and that by 1976 the figure had become 434 or 7.2% of the 6007 total works, it was not possible (given the time available)(22)to determine

how many women artists in total accounted for those works.

The data provided was so extensive that I would like to present it twice over, first in the form it was given to me and then in excerpted and rearranged form so that certain distributions

might be seen. It should be noticed that the figures for each category were listed separately for Canadian and non-Canadian factors; this, of course, lends an absolutely major additional dimension that is unfortunately beyond the scope of this article to discuss properly.

THE ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

Permanent Collection

		Painting		Drawing		Sculpture		Prints		Posters		Photos.	
		C.	N.C.	C.	N.C.	C.	N.C.	C.	N.C.	C.	N.C.	C.	N.C.
Total Artists	a) 1960	231	266	60	42	29	25	63	369	-	-	-	-
	b) 1970	335	375	102	130	52	69	155	554	-	37	-	-
	c) 1976	380	439	129	195	74	104	229	625	-	37	1	4
Women Artists	a) 1960	43	11	3	2	7	1	5	31	-	-	-	-
	b) 1970	58	23	12	3	7	11	16	41	-	2	-	-
	c) 1976	65	34	20	5	13	13	32	43	-	2	-	1
Total Works	a) 1960	861	432	195	85	40	33	225	1475	-	-	-	-
	b) 1970	1101	545	309	185	92	76	405	1623	-	46	-	-
	c) 1976	1435	684	444	393	149	294	555	1917	1	47	1	87
Women's Work	a) 1960	95	11	6	2	11	1	8	49	-	-	-	-
	b) 1970	127	23	25	3	19	13	51	63	-	2	-	-
	c) 1976	160	34	36	5	28	27	74	66	-	2	-	2

TOTAL WORKS IN ALL MEDIA  
 a) 1960 3346  
 b) 1970 4382  
 c) 1976 6007

WOMEN'S WORK IN ALL MEDIA  
 a) 1960 183  
 b) 1970 326  
 c) 1976 434

Large beasts move slowly and sometimes backwards. The percentage of works by women was 5.5% in 1960, up somewhat to 7.4% in 1970, and back down in 1976 to 7.2%, the slippage probably due in part to all those recent new Henry Moores.

Between 1960 and 1976, 2661 works had been acquired; 9.4% were by women.

The following table attempts to put the 1976 figures into a more manageable form:

THE CANADIAN COLLECTION OF THE AGO

Works by Women -- 1976

Medium	Total # Works	# Works by Women	% Works by Women
Painting	1435	160	11.1%
Sculpture	149	28	18.8%
Prints	555	74	13.3%
Other Works on Paper	446	36	8.1%

The Canadian collection formed 43.0% of the AGO's permanent collection in 1976. Painting is the medium in which women are most substantially represented; paintings by Canadian women accounted for 7.5% of the total number of paintings, which themselves are a third (35.3%) of the entire collection. Lastly, although the percentage (18.8%) of women is highest in the Canadian sculpture category, it should be kept in mind that the actual number of works (28) is small.

Canada Council

The Canada Council supports the arts at all levels; their direct support to artists is what we will be examining here. We are interested in the general picture and also the more specific one; however, because of year-to-year variability that can be misleading, we have chosen to use the two-year period 75/76-76/77 where possible for the purpose of seeing recent trends. Something that might be borne in mind is that you cannot get a grant unless you apply. It

would be very interesting to be able to compare figures for applicants with those for recipients, and also to see if the number of women applying for the lesser plums is generally greater,

since self-abnegation is felt to be one of the fruits of our conditioning. Note that the term 'all fields' used below refers to visual arts, photography, film and video taken together.

CANADA COUNCIL ARTS AWARDS 1970-1977

Percentage of Women Recipients

Type of Grant	Time Period	Total # Recipients	# Women Recipients	% Women Recipients
Senior Arts (all fields)	70/71 thru 76/77	197	24	12.2%
Senior Arts (all fields)	75/76 + 76/77	56	9	16.1%
Senior Arts (visual arts)	75/76 + 76/77	41	8	19.5%
Arts Grants (all fields)	70/71 thru 76/77	641	148	23.1%
Arts Grants (all fields)	75/76 + 76/77	179	38	21.2%
Arts Grants (visual arts)	75/76 + 76/77	121	27	22.3%
Short Term (all fields)	76/77	125	36	28.8%
Project Cost (all fields)	76/77	91	25	27.5%

## Conclusions

Close to finally finishing this article, I called up a friend of mine, a very serious painter, to see if she also needed to take a break. Deep in her own deadlines, she could only talk on the phone. What did my article say, she wanted to know. "Judy, it's 25 pages long and it's full of tables and details. How can I tell you in 25

words or less?" She was insistent. "Tell me in three minutes, you can do that."

What I came up with was this: "Well, you'd have a hard time finding many examples of over 30%, and you'd find a whole lot of them of under 20%." That's probably a fairly generous way of summing things up. The rest you've already read.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### NOTES

1. The span of years varied depending on the category since, for example, parallel galleries are a more recent phenomenon than museums.
2. Not all replies were usable for all questions, which accounts for the variations from section to section in total number of galleries.
3. I am interested in Art Bank's curatorial aspect, rather than its lending service aspect. Therefore, whether single or multiple copies of a print were bought is not considered. Each catalogue entry (with any given title, etc.) was counted as one work.
4. Respondents included the following: (a) Those with permanent collections of under 500 works--U. of Manitoba, U. de Moncton, Art Gall. of Nova Scotia, U. of Waterloo, Concordia, Gallery/Stratford, Laurentian U., U.N.B., Mt. St. Vincent U., and Art Metropole [ . . . We are not exactly a museum or a gallery . . . However, we do operate as a library and archive and information/curatorial service (in addition to our retail operations) and this does involve specific choice of artists. . . ]; (b) Those with 500-1500 works--Beaverbrook, Edmonton A.G., SFU, Sask. Arts Bd., Confederation Centre/Charlottetown, Robt. McLaughlin Gall., London Art Museum, U. Alberta (Edmonton); (c) Those with over 1500 works (in order of increasing size)--Agnes Etherington, VAG, NFB Still Photo Div., Artists Gallery/Vancouver, Art Bank, AGO; (d) Others with no or no info on permanent collections--National Gallery, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Dunlop Art Gallery, Saldye Bronfman Centre, AGO Extension, Fine Arts Gall. UBC, U. de Sherbrooke; (e) Canada Council Arts Awards. Plus (f) Refusals/promises--York U., Dalhousie, Musée de Quebec, St. Mary's U., (VAG).
5. Carmen Lamanna, KAR, Mira Godard, Issacs, Prince Arthur, Marianne Friedland, Sabla-Castelli, Electric, Moos, Dresdnere, Roberts, Bernard Desroches, Dominion, Walter Klinkhoff, Bau-Xi, Fleet, Beckett. Plus one phone call.
6. A Space, Hamilton Artists' Coop, Optica, Powerhouse, Shoestring, Secession. Plus polite promise--Western Front. Art Metropole has been tabulated with Museums and Public Galleries. See footnote 4(a).
7. Lucy Lippard, From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art, p. 45.
8. Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own (London: Penguin, 1965), p. 43.
9. It would initially appear from this that the commercial galleries were being more supportive of women artists than the museums, but this is misleading. If one considers these figures in connection with others in this article that detail the degree of action, rather than inaction as is the case here, commercial galleries are seen to be the less actively supportive of the two.
10. Excluding Powerhouse.
11. Diane G. Cochrane, "Women in Art: A Progress Report," American Artist, Dec. 1972, p. 52.
12. The longer view of the AGO is of interest: 25 one-woman shows from 1922 to March 1977, including Hepworth, Kollwitz, Prudence Heward, Pegi Nicol MacLeod, An Whitlock Christiane Pflug, and 4 of Emily Carr.
13. Including Exploratory Space and Alternate Space, which were fairly open experiments in exhibiting beginning or unknown artists.
14. One of the comments accompanying the Edmonton data sheet: In all cases, since 1971 when the Gallery staff was radically changed, the chief criterion for any work shown was quality.
15. This protest seems to have been a very public turning point in the stance of Lucy Lippard, now an extremely active spokesperson for feminism and the need for humanizing the artworld.
16. Lucy Lippard, From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art (New York: Dutton & Co., 1976); Judy Chicago, Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist (New York: Doubleday, 1975).
17. Intentionally women-only shows not counted. Also, when there were repeat listings of a show, it was counted as many times as listed, because this is an accurate reflection of what viewers actually see. Travelling exhibitions form an important part of museum programs.
18. This fact is repeated in numerous sources. Two are Elizabeth C. Baker, "Sexual Art-Politics," Art News, Jan. 1971, p. 48, AND Sandra Packard "Tottering on the Brink: The Future of Women Art Faculty in Higher Education," in National Council of Art Administrators Report 1976, reprint p. 5. The sources are U.S., but the situation is North American.
19. Cochrane, op. cit., p. 54.
20. Lippard, op. cit., p. 55.
21. Several galleries have more than one location.
22. Harris requested that this problem be specified, but in fact it detracts virtually not at all from the completeness of the overall statistical picture.