

The Later Years: Women Instructors at the Winnipeg School of Art in the 1940s

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Abstract

Women were employed as art teachers at the Winnipeg School of Art in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in unusual numbers from 1940 to 1950. Beneficiaries of a proper art education, they "kept the home fires burning." When the men came back they were let go in what was seen as a return to normalcy.

Résumé

Les femmes étaient employées comme enseignantes d'art au Winnipeg School of Art à Winnipeg, au Manitoba, en nombres exceptionnels de 1940 à 1950. Bénéficiaires d'une formation indiquée en art, elles étaient les "gardiennes du feu au foyer." Lorsque les hommes revinrent de la guerre, elles furent renvoyées à ce qui était vu comme étant un retour à la normale.

Few would dispute the contention that women have not had equal opportunity in the arts for recognition and involvement. As Linda Nochlin and others have concluded, it was really not the case that women artists were incapable of the highest levels of artistic achievement, but rather that they lacked access to art training, education and socialization (Nochlin 1971). What women were up against were the presumptions and prejudices of Western civilization. By the twentieth century, however, important changes in women's situations had made it more possible for them to pursue careers in both the commercial and fine arts areas.

It is true that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries many women in North America and elsewhere were working within a female aesthetic. Some women artists turned to china painting, perfecting their skill at it, exhibiting, and even selling it in order to fulfill their creative and economic imperatives (Berry 1987, 36; 38; 40-41; 45-47). In ever-increasing numbers, however, there were many more women who opted instead to participate in the mainstreams of art. Access to professional art instruction, in classes not segregated from men or dominated by female aesthetics and by directives protective of women's essential femininity, served to ease the way for women's fuller participation in the commercial and fine arts areas (Dodd 1995; Fehrer 1984; Garb 1994, 105-152; 70-104). The Winnipeg School of Art (WSA), founded in 1913, became the point of access for such professional art training in Manitoba. Irrespective of gender, the WSA offered the same course of instruction to one and all.

This paper is an account of certain women art students and art teachers in Winnipeg who attended and taught at the Winnipeg School of Art in the 1940s. They were the beneficiaries of educational opportunities that had become more generally available to artistic women in the twentieth century. They were also the victims of larger trends abroad: when the men went away to war, jobs opened up for these women, but when the men came back, the women eventually lost those jobs or were asked or expected to vacate them in what at the time was regarded as a return to normalcy (Hartman 1982, 101-20; Honey 1985, 19-59; Kinnear 1998). This was indeed the case for the female instructors at the WSA, but the explanation as to why is complicated by the fact that the WSA itself closed in 1950. In other words, we do not know if some or all of the female instructors might have kept their jobs if the WSA had not shut down. What we do know, however, is that when the WSA reappeared as the School of Art at the University of Manitoba in the fall of 1950, those women instructors who had "kept the home fires burning" found themselves easily dispensed with. Albert Henry S. Gillson, then president of the University of Manitoba, appointed William McCloy, an American artist and war veteran with an MA degree, to be the first director of the new School of Art. In what was widely heralded as a significant step forward for art education in the province, McCloy, who had been assigned the responsibility for staffing the new School of Art, chose a faculty with credentials similar to his own, all of whom were male. Prior to 1940 women had not dominated art instruction at the WSA and after 1950 they would not be represented on the faculty of the School of Art.¹ In fact, it would not be until the late 60s and early 70s that women would once again be employed at Manitoba's premier art instruction institution as full-time instructors.

The story of women's prominence in the

delivery of professional art instruction at the WSA during the war and in the immediate post-war period began one year after the war's outbreak, in autumn 1940, when it was announced that two women had been added to the teaching staff: Byllee Lang, who would instruct beginners and more advanced students in modeling in clay from casts or from life, plaster casting and surfacing, the construction of armatures and other essentials necessary to the sculptor's art; and Edith Carter, who would teach classes in interior decoration and wood carving. Alberta-born Lang had aspired at an early age to make a career for herself in art. Seeking out professional art instruction, she enrolled in 1926 at the WSA where she was a student until 1930. With no opportunities to study sculpture in Winnipeg, she left for Toronto and then Europe. By October of 1935, the twenty-eight year old Lang returned to Canada and was back in Winnipeg with examples of recent work which gave evidence of her skill in modeling, as well as of her ability to delve into and capture the personality of a portrait subject.

Winnipeg Tribune reporter Lillian Gibbons was the first to introduce Lang to Winnipeggers and to relate to her readers Lang's chilling experiences in Nazi Germany and Spain, where her Spanish-born husband had now gone missing (Gibbons 1936). Ben Lepkin, another Winnipeg Tribune reporter, did a follow-up story on Lang a year or so later. He concluded that she was a "great" artist and a genius with an unusual dream, which was to become an important Canadian artist (MacDonald 1971). In addition to sending work to Eastern Canadian exhibitions for display, Lang also exhibited regularly with the Manitoba Society of Artists (MSA), and, in March 1940, the MSA's governing board decided to recognize her seriousness and newly minted professionalism by electing her to full MSA membership. In fact, she would join three other organizations while residing in Winnipeg: the Winnipeg Sketch Club, in

which she seems to have had little actual involvement; the Federation of Canadian Artists (FCA), whose local spokesperson she became until at least 1944; and the Sculptors' Society of Canada.

Lang struggled, nevertheless, to make a living. A plaster reproduction of Canadian sculptor Walter Allward's Canadian War Memorial done as an Eaton's window display in July of 1936, and a ceramic portrait of someone's favourite pet were only two examples of the mixed bag of commissions she undertook in an attempt to pay her bills. Eventually she embarked on another time-honoured strategy available to an artist in need of a steadier income when she began to teach, and by 1937 had turned her teaching into what she now called a School of Sculpture. She competed for students with her alma mater ("Free Hand in Clay") and, in a move that was perhaps partially intended to counteract the competition posed by her school, L.L. FitzGerald, the longtime Principal of the WSA, made an offer to Lang (with the concurrence of the WSA's Board of Directors) to teach in the 1940-41 WSA session and to relocate her sculpture studio onto school premises. Primarily a figurative sculptor, with a keen eye for nature and the ideal, Lang was a good fit pedagogically for the school. Her hiring filled a longstanding omission in art instruction at the WSA and her friendliness, relative youth (FitzGerald was now fifty while Lang was thirty-two) and personal exuberance must also have been seen as assets worth acquiring.

Edith Carter, the second woman instructor hired for the 1940-41 session at the WSA, was not as well known as Lang, but she would have the lengthier association with the school. Indeed, Carter's importance to the smooth functioning of the WSA and her admirable delivery of courses within the traditional curriculum is confirmed by the fact that the Board of Directors of the WSA continued to employ her over a ten year period. Carter met FitzGerald when she stopped

briefly in Winnipeg while on a trip from her home in Vancouver to Eastern Canada and visited the WSA. Because Carter had only recently graduated from the Vancouver School of Art and was only twenty-eight at the time, she was surprised when FitzGerald offered her a teaching position and the opportunity to function as his assistant, but very pleased to accept it (Chubb n.d.).

There are no details available on what FitzGerald and Carter talked about on the day of their first encounter, or on any other occasion for that matter, but their art suggests strongly why FitzGerald would have identified Carter as a suitable assistant and, after her first year, retained her as an appealing and acceptable junior staffer. Carter's own art, like FitzGerald's, was more attached to nature than inclined towards abstract experimentation or any kind of extreme form of expression that fractured space, rejected local colour or moved away from realistic models. And there are strong parallels between Carter's own work and FitzGerald's during this period.² In the rendering of essential form and the search for the underlying structures of reality and its rhythms, they were on a similar wavelength, be it in the rendering of trees or in the recording of architectural elements of their built environment. Throughout the forties the Manitoba Legislative Building was a focal point of student assignments in the classes taught both by Carter and FitzGerald. Its complex interior spaces and restrained outer cloaking offered lessons in harmonious proportion and affirmation of the importance and relevancy of the classical tradition. These were WSA values that FitzGerald, Carter, and Lang, as the principal teachers of the 1940s, would maintain and encourage students to build on.

The same year that Lang and Carter were engaged to teach under the Special Courses division at the WSA, the 1940-41 Prospectus also listed Leonard Woods, a recent WSA graduate and a former student at

Lang's School of Sculpture, as someone who would be teaching the first-year classes in what was a three-year curriculum. Men had dominated the teaching staff at the WSA in the 1930s, and the hiring of Woods continued that tradition. By October, however, Woods was gone from the WSA, along with virtually all of the male students, who, like Woods, were now required for war or war-related work. Edith Carter, whose classes in Interior Design and Wood Carving had failed to meet sufficient enrollment, was assigned to take over Woods' classes. Though the students initially labeled Carter dismissively as "the substitute" (Chubb n.d.), she soon gained their appreciation and respect. Thus Edith Carter and Byllee Lang, alongside FitzGerald, became the dominant faces of art instruction in the WSA programmes: two women and one man. The demographics of the student body were also undergoing similar changes. Despite the apparent gender balance suggested by the cover of the 1941-42 Prospectus (Figure 11), the reality was far different since the general WSA day programme enrollment was now in fact made up almost exclusively of women. Unlike their male counterparts, women students still had the luxury of continuing their full- or part-time studies uninterrupted by outside forces and the general call-to-arms. Some of the women students, however, also left the WSA to take advantage of the opportunities for women in jobs vacated by men and newly available to them because of wartime conditions. In the evenings local artists not caught up in the draft or diverted by other war time obligations, many of them from Winnipeg's commercial art firms, both men and women, continued to drop in for special classes, thus preserving some male presence.

In spite of this ongoing student presence, the WSA faced growing deficits and diminishing enrollments during the wartime period, a situation that led the Directors to issue a Report in 1942 reaffirming their dedication to its survival. They would continue to keep

the WSA open because, as they saw it, the WSA was one part of the larger ongoing struggle to maintain civilization's higher purposes here at home. Their commitment ensured the continued employment of FitzGerald, Lang, Carter, and Gissur Eliasson, the male registrar who also taught part time in the commercial program. To demonstrate her own dedication to such a worthy goal, Carter took on duties additional to her teaching, including participation in a twelve-part art history lecture series held at United College under WSA sponsorship. Iona Carr, a part-time WSA instructor and former WSA student who would become Art Appreciation Director for the Winnipeg Elementary Schools in 1943, was also persuaded to participate.

FitzGerald later confirmed that Carter initially taught at the first-year level (as Woods' replacement) and then took over instruction at the second- and third-year levels (FitzGerald 1950). Like FitzGerald, Carter taught five days a week and three evenings, which left her little time to devote to her professional art career. She did participate with three male artists, one of whom was Robert Bruce, in a four-person exhibition in 1943 and thereafter sent a few small works to MSA exhibitions and, in the later forties, to local FCA-sponsored non-jury exhibitions. But it was her teaching, her other duties at the WSA as FitzGerald's assistant, and her involvement with students and former students that took precedence. The fact is, she loved to teach. Isobel Carter recalled that, while still a pre-teen her sister Edith had lined up neighborhood kids whom she agreed to instruct in art for a fee, perhaps believing, even at such a very young age, that she had something to offer (personal communication, Isobel Carter 1994.) There is little doubt that Carter's years at the WSA were rewarding and personally fulfilling (Elarth 1949). For someone whose life revolved around art, the WSA must have been an exceedingly satisfying and even comforting place to be, and soon Carter was

establishing her home away from home and making friends among the art students, with whom she would remain in contact throughout her life.

Peg Milne, who was a student of both Lang and Carter, remembered fondly the circle of women that congregated around them (though Lang had a much wider circle of friends that extended beyond the WSA). The women would sketch on weekends, attend concerts, films, plays and the ballet - when they had money for the tickets - or simply drink coffee together because they liked each others' company, in twos, threes, and sometimes all of them together. If they were particularly lucky, Julia Barnard, "the mother" within the group, supplied the food along with valued practical advice which the younger women sometimes sought out (Iona Carr Hind, personal communication 1994). Photographs from these years record the happy society of these women, who included Doris Pickup, Helen Wodlinger, Julia Barnard, and sometimes Iona Carr. All were current or former WSA students who would become part-time staff on the WSA faculty. Not surprisingly, Carter, who was also a skilled portrait artist, painted one of her finest portraits of Peg Milne with the care and attention to detail and understanding of character that marked her best efforts. Carter herself was represented in an idealized but identifiable way in a plaster portrait bust by Byllee Lang. Iona Carr also painted a portrait of Edith Carter, who had been her teacher and would become her lifelong friend.

During the war and into the post-war period Carter and her friends at the WSA found a satisfying refuge from the larger troubles of their time. Iona Carr, Helen Wodlinger, Peg Milne and Julia Barnard were initially all teachers in the juvenile and children's programmes in what was an ongoing and very successful WSA initiative designed to encourage art appreciation among the young. But the war could not be completely shut out or ignored and, in fact, almost everyone in

their circle seems to have been involved in Robert Bruce's mural project (Peg Milne and Doris Pickup worked on the actual painting of it) for Eaton's Canteen in the United Services Centre, which was a recreational space set up for military personnel on leave ("Artists Will Help"). Indeed it was Lang who had secured the endorsement of the FCA to help bring to fruition this locally funded initiative - art by a Canadian artist in a Canadian public space for the specific benefit and enjoyment of Canadian military personnel (Culjat 1995; Hughes 2004, 87). In stark contrast to Bruce's four-panel project, which was a light-hearted romp, were the sadder but not uncommon reminders of war's realities which students could never ignore altogether. Conspicuous by their uniforms, servicemen made occasional visits to the WSA. Wishing to draw from the model or from the carefully constructed still-life arrangements usually available in WSA classrooms, they slipped in and out with FitzGerald's permission. Service men with no particular artistic inclinations were also invited guests to the WSA for candle-lit evenings and musical entertainments. In the stately Antique room on the third floor of the Old Law Courts building where students drew from casts during the day, these servicemen found dancing partners among the largely female student body and under the watchful eye of one or another of their teachers (Chubb n.d.).

Despite the war, life went on, and in the midst of war, much of the talk at the WSA still managed to stay focused on matters of art. One of the ongoing strengths of the WSA in both peace and wartime was that art really mattered there. Gissur Eliasson, the other continuing male presence at the WSA in the 1940s, whose duties also included the occasional "At the WSA" column for the Winnipeg Free Press, recorded the goings-on at the school as well as the thoughtful and sometimes amusing discussions of teachers and students on art in general. His columns

confirmed the general nature of instruction at the school and its underlying allegiances. Nature held sway as the focal point of much student art work, but it was a nature tempered, and often improved on, by an awareness of form and the essentials of compositional construction. In the classes taught by FitzGerald, Lang and Carter, such priorities were clearly reflected in exercises which encouraged students to look under and beyond the surfaces.

At the end of the 1943 session, which was when Doris Pickup, Peg Milne and Helen Wodlinger all graduated, there was, unfortunately, some sad news to digest. The 1943 Directors' Report explained:

The world war in which Canada has been engaged since the tenth of September, 1939, is now entering its fifth year. The disruption of the normal life of the nation caused by this catastrophe bears heavily upon the educational and cultural community activities and in greater degree as the war drags on. It is a satisfaction to know that despite the falling off in attendance and consequent losses of revenue the school has been able to carry on during these difficult years and has maintained its standards of tuition. Deficits have occurred which had to be met out of reserves...The class in sculpturing was in the capable hands of Mrs. B. Lang de Marin who worked assiduously for the success of the department, and it is with regret that it was found that sufficient students were not available to maintain the class.

(Directors' Report 1943)

And with that announcement it became official that Byllee Lang was out of a job. Certainly Lang's departure from the teaching faculty of the WSA, as well as her

1944 departure from Winnipeg altogether, was a significant loss to the local art community and to her many Winnipeg friends.

In the fall of 1946, however, shrinking enrollments and unbalanced budgets became a thing of the past. Former soldiers and service personnel, including even a few women like Margaret Alcock, not only came marching home, but they also bore with them government subsidies to cover the cost of art school tuition. This benefit available to former service personnel became an opportunity for the school. Enrollments climbed and former women students such as Julia Barnard, Doris Pickup (now Hamill) and Mirren Hazel, who had been star pupils and subsequently hired to teach in the Saturday free-school classes, were now moved into the regular day and evening programme in order to cover the expanding enrollments. Except for those students who were in classes taught by Joseph Plaskett and Bart Pragnell, who served as Acting Principals for the years 1947-48 and 1949-50, respectively, students continued to find women instructors at the head of many of their classes. In a 1994 interview Ernie Underhill - one of the Department of Veterans Affairs men, or DVA men as they were called in the 1940s - had many fond memories of the women teachers. He remembered Carter as a positive presence, but he also pointed to Julia Barnard, who was marching, he always felt, to a different drummer. Julia Barnard, he noted, "was a very pleasant, warm person, not a disciplinarian. Earthy and inventive. She was quite different from Edith Carter and FitzGerald, who were more structured and disciplined" (personal communication, Ernie Underhill, c. 1994).³

Though many older students took classes at the School on a part-time basis, especially those employed at commercial art firms, Barnard must have been something of an oddity: a mature, middle-aged woman just beginning her studies in the regular WSA

programme in 1938 and, as would soon become evident, someone who wanted to make a career for herself outside the home. A wife, mother and a skilled needle-worker, whose own mother had been a dressmaker, Barnard worked in local restaurants to finance her ambitions and for a time also ran a catering business. Unlike Lang and Carter, however, she was not Canadian-born, but an English immigrant who had come to Canada in 1920 at the age of twenty. She and her husband, a returned former Canadian soldier, farmed near Minnedosa, Manitoba. It was a difficult and lonely life and she may have been relieved when the farm failed and she, her husband and their young daughter were forced to move into Winnipeg.

In her early forties, Barnard became a dependable part-time WSA faculty member who, having been a student at the school, understood the requirements of its curriculum and underlying pedagogical objectives. Drawings she did of animal anatomy and human bones and muscles dated 1941 still exist, as do her studies of the architecture of the Old Law Courts Buildings into which the WSA had moved in 1938. Its ceilings, fixtures and mouldings, as well as views out the windows, were all popular subjects among WSA students and faculty through to the closure of the school in 1950. Barnard's best drawings of nature were elegant and fluid and in no way inferior to FitzGerald's, which they resemble. In accordance with the WSA's affection for place and home, Barnard also recorded the scenery in St. James and Winnipeg, the rural areas around Portage and MacDonald, and the former family farm in Minnedosa. Notable among her paintings of this type was one of a forlorn mail box seemingly cast adrift under the big sky of the empty prairies and, on the other end of the spectrum emotionally, one showing the exuberant power lines that signified the coming of electricity to those same lonely stretches.⁴ It was a subject matter that also attracted the attention of Edith

Carter. Though Barnard enjoyed teaching, she also felt it was important to produce and show her work widely. At first she exhibited locally in MSA exhibitions. In 1944, as part of a local FCA-sponsored initiative, she was honoured alongside Carter by having her work chosen for display in Manitoba schools. More ambitious than Carter in her efforts to establish herself professionally, she also sent work for exhibition in shows to Eastern Canada. One of her paintings was included in the Royal Academy Exhibition in 1944, and another at the Montreal Spring Exhibition in 1947. At home Barnard continued to be a regular participant in MSA exhibitions as well as a regular participant in the FCA-sponsored non-jury shows that were held in Winnipeg in the late 1940s.

While much of her art production fitted generally within the categories of nature study and regionalist scene painting, Barnard showed a tendency early on towards personal expression which moved her outside traditional WSA models of art expression, even in opposition to them. Her sketch of local Winnipeg artist Doris Hunt, circa 1947, as she lectures on Emily Carr at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, was a truly inspired bit of social commentary. Barnard portrayed Hunt preaching to a largely female audience - identifiable by their distinctive hats and wraps - as engulfed within an undulating Emily Carr forest which her own words have effectively conjured up. The WSA had recently purchased an Emily Carr painting which was reproduced in the 1947-48 WSA Prospectus and was likely also hanging on WSA walls at the time of Barnard's sketch.

In 1947 WSA officials added another full-time woman teacher. Edna Tedeschi, a former student of A.Y. Jackson at the Banff School of Art and of Arthur Lismer in Montreal, was engaged to cover the overflowing classes (Tedeschi n.d.). She had had previous teaching experience while living in Montreal, where she taught children's art classes, and like Edith Carter, was hired as

a full-time faculty member. But what had been a watershed event in the history of the school in 1940 seems to have garnered little attention in 1947. Edna Tedeschi arrived in Winnipeg without the publicity that had been associated with the hiring of either Lang or Carter in 1940 and was assigned to teach in the traditional curriculum at the third year level. While Tedeschi's own art work was based for the most part on her experiences of nature, her results were very different from both FitzGerald's carefully structured paintings and Carter's generally more literal renditions of trees and prairies. She even went so far as to utilize techniques more common to children's work, such as finger painting, to achieve her more amorphous and distinctly personal renderings of natural forms. If there was any influence to be detected in her work, it was perhaps that of A.Y. Jackson.⁵

That same year, however, the WSA was undergoing major changes on a host of fronts. Joseph Plaskett, a recent graduate from the Vancouver School of Art, and who at twenty-seven was Carter's junior by eight years and Tedeschi's by nine, was brought in to replace FitzGerald who went on leave. As Acting Principal, Plaskett brought new ideas about art and art education to the school during his two-year stay. Acting on initiatives proposed by the WSA Board of Directors and supported by representatives from the University of Manitoba, Plaskett played an important role in helping to lay the groundwork for the closure of the WSA when he drafted an agreement recommending that course of action and the WSA's transformation into the School of Art, University of Manitoba.

Like Tedeschi, Plaskett had studied with A.Y. Jackson in the summer of 1945, but it was his subsequent training with David Park and Clifford Still at the California School of Art in San Francisco and his exposure to New York City artist Hans Hofmann that made him a major force behind the reconsideration of

the WSA's aesthetic priorities and values. Plaskett communicated an excitement about Hans Hofmann's art ideas, which essentially encompassed a form of abstract expression (Plaskett 1953; 1999). Eager to become current with more recent tendencies in international art, numerous WSA students were ready to leave prairie regionalism behind and take that big leap into the "ne plus ultra" of modern art. Even Edith Carter sent two abstract works to exhibition in 1949, thus departing from her more usual subject matter concerns. Nevertheless, student class work that has survived from the late forties - for example, work by DVA student Margaret Alcock (Figure 12) - confirm that Plaskett's enthusiasms were not yet embedded in the curriculum. Alcock's classroom exercises look very much like those produced by Julia Barnard in the late 1930s and early 1940s and by other students even as far back as 1913 (Baker 1984, 37-39; 76).⁶ The changes signaled by Plaskett's activities and influence at the WSA were not just stylistic or aesthetic. The large influx of male students after the war had convinced both WSA board members and key officials at the University of Manitoba that art had an important place in Canadian society and that there were many artists ready and willing to become professionals in this field, but that a more intellectually sophisticated environment would better facilitate their training. As Acting Principal, it became Plaskett's task to point out the benefits of the amalgamation of the Winnipeg School of Art into the university system, which included not only the ability to offer art students experience in liberal arts subjects such as art history and access to programmes in Architecture and Education, but also the advantages of a more dependable funding base, an historic problem at the WSA.

While the benefits of reconfiguring the WSA as the School of Art, University of Manitoba were indisputable, there is no documentation in the WSA

records to indicate that the effect the closure of the WSA would have on the women staff member was even taken into consideration. Ultimately, it was the WSA's all-male Board of Directors that made the decision. Doris Pickup Hamill recalled, however, how the women talked quietly among themselves in those months presaging the actual closure of the WSA. They feared the fall of the ax and finally it came. There was to be no place for the currently employed women staff members in the new School of Art. Only Gissur Eliasson, the male registrar at the WSA, would be retained. He was the sole WSA employee who was permitted to make the transition from the WSA to the School of Art, University of Manitoba. While the women teachers at the WSA lamented their own situation they were glad for Eliasson, who had a family to support, which is likely why an exception was made in his case to the across-the-board restructuring which otherwise retained no one else from the 1940s' WSA teaching roster.

Letters of recommendations from FitzGerald and Bart Pragnell, who was Acting Principal at the WSA in the 1949-50 term, helped ease Edith Carter's transition as she determined to make a new life for herself in Vancouver. After completing the required teacher-training classes, she was hired to teach art this time at the secondary level. In Vancouver she continued to make art in which she focused on the landscapes of B.C. scenery and, as time went by, increasingly colourful studies of its water, trees and branches. Byllee Lang, who had already left Winnipeg in 1944, reemerged as a prominent artist in Hamilton, Bermuda ("In Memoriam"). Her career there followed a similar pattern to the one she had established in Winnipeg. She worked at commercial art assignments, taught art, and involved herself in social action initiatives in support of local art projects and artists. Nor did she ever forget the dream that Ben Lepkin had attributed to her in his Winnipeg article of being a "great" artist. Her last important

commission was for the major Anglican cathedral in Hamilton in which she did the religious statuary, left unfinished by her untimely death in 1966 (Coy 1984, 103-04).

Doris Pickup Hamill married and began a family. In the 1960s she opened an art gallery in Winnipeg called the Fleet Gallery, which was known for its large stable of Canadian modern and Inuit artists whose work spanned the gamut from representational realism to total abstraction. At the time of the gallery's opening she was identified in the media as a wife and mother. She identified herself as a painter when she filled out a Winnipeg Art Gallery Artist's Information Form in 1964. After the gallery's closure in 1988 she turned to printmaking, which she had initially learned as a WSA student. Julia Barnard continued to paint but was identified in an exhibit of her work in the 1950s as one of those housewife artists who could be found on every street ("Housewife," n.d.). True or not, in 1966 she was still promoting her own vision when she too filled out a Winnipeg Art Gallery Artist's Information Form. She wrote: "I am interested in the Canadian scene as it presents itself to me and not as seen through the eyes of Famous Artists" (Barnard 1966). Which famous artists she had in mind she doesn't say. Eventually she moved out to the West Coast to be with her daughter and her family and where she continued to be an artist.

Iona Carr Hind married a preacher and literally traveled the world with him. She never abandoned her art work. A major retrospective of her work in Penticton, B.C. in 1995 included paintings from her art school days as well as more recent work she did while living in Kenya, Africa (Clark 1994). Edna Tedeschi stayed on for a while in Winnipeg but eventually relocated to Montreal where she continued her art career and also taught. Helen Wodlinger Segal, who was also part of the Carter circle, married, raised a family, and was still painting in 1994. Peg Milne Chubb briefly

attended the Art Institute of Chicago. By the 1950s she was the mother of two children and a housewife appreciated for her needlework at home. Eventually she became the editor for the Pembina Post and made writing her medium. Mirren Hazell, who was briefly listed in the WSA roster of part-time women faculty in the late 1940s, is thought to have moved to Texas and little is known about her since that time.

While these women did lose their jobs when the WSA closed in 1950, they did not lose the benefits of their art education or the effects of the benign environment that was an undeniably important characteristic of the WSA, especially under FitzGerald. Nor did they forget the inspiration they had derived from each other while students and colleagues at the WSA in the 1940s. Indeed, as recipients of the kind of art education that women had been routinely denied, they enjoyed their full complement of rights, at least for a time, which feminist historian Gerda Lerner identified as: "The Right to Learn, the Right to Teach, and the Right to Define" (Lerner 1993, 192-219). No doubt they took comfort in and profited from these experiences in forging their post-1950 lives.

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I am indebted to Margaret Milne Chubb's account of her years at the WSA for the insight it gave me into school life, particular incidents, the personalities of the women, their relationships and interactions. Much of this was confirmed and expanded on by surviving

women, their relatives and friends: Doris Pickup Hamill, Helen Wodlinger Segal, Isobel Carter, Iona Carr Hind, Leonard Woods, Joyce Caldwell and family, William and Marion Chubb, Bill Flett, Ernie Underhill, Edythe Holden, Doris Hunt, the Fennessey family, Richard Alcock and others in personal interviews and communications. Crucial to my research was the help I received from Doris Pickup Hamill who identified individuals and their families and enabled contact. Gissur Eliasson's occasional columns for the Winnipeg Free Press were a particularly useful resource about the WSA, its tenor and beliefs. The Vertical files at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of Ontario and the National Gallery of Art provide a wealth of additional information on the lives and activities of the women who are mentioned in this paper.

Endnotes

1. For information about the WSA's pre-1940 teachers see biographical entries on Mrs. G. Baly-Hayes, 87; Phyllis Field Cooper, 94; Vera Man, 105; Lillian B. Allen, 86; V. Lara Borgford Russell, 109 in Baker 1984. Unfortunately omitted was Airdre Bell Cameron who was also briefly an instructor in the 1920s and had studied at the Slade School of Art (WSA, Prospectus 1922-23)
2. In 1995 work by Edith Carter from the 1930s and 1940s was in the possession of her sister Isobel, now deceased. My characterizations of Edith's work from these years are based on an examination of actual work and photographs of work in Isobel Carter's possession. A portrait of Peg Milne in another private collection confirmed Edith Carter's skill as a portrait artist. Personal communications took place with Isobel Carter over an extended period and included an on site visit to Vancouver in June of the summer of 1994.
3. The conversation on which this statement is based

took place in June in the summer of 1994 in Nanaimo, B.C.

4. In 1995 works by Julia Barnard specifically mentioned in this paper were in a private collection in Victoria, B.C. Other work of hers can also be seen in public collections in Winnipeg: in Gallery One One One, University of Manitoba and at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, respectively.

5. My characterizations of Edna Tedeschi's art are based on an examination of examples of her work in a Winnipeg private collection in 1995. The problem with doing research on female artists of this period is the fact that their work is not well represented in public collections and therefore not readily accessible except through special arrangements and sometimes considerable sleuthing.

6. It is possible to view the WSA prospectuses at the Fitz Gerald Study Centre either in the original or as copies. In them are many illustrated examples of student work done over a thirty-six year period. The student work of Margaret Alcock is in a private collection in Selkirk, Manitoba.

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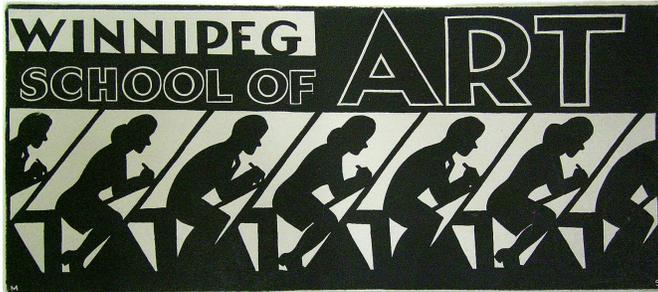


Figure 11. Cover: WSA Prospectus, 1941-42. Initials MS are on the left and right but it is not known to whom they refer. Collection: FitzGerald Study Centre, School of Art, University of Manitoba.

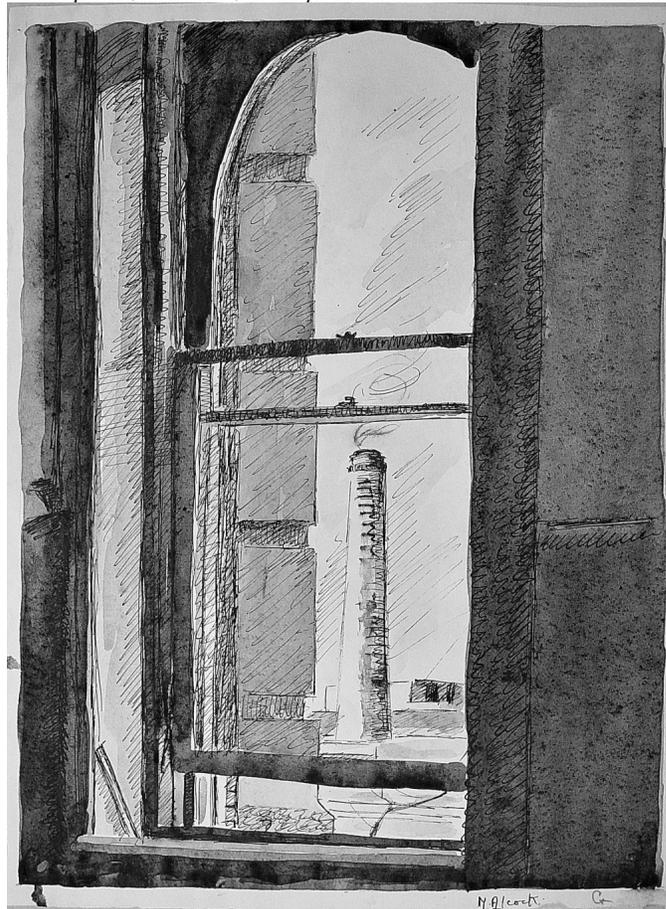


Figure 12. Photo: Margaret Alcock, Student Work, "View Through a Window in the Old Law Courts Building." Collection: Alcock Family, Selkirk, Manitoba.