

A black and white portrait of Carl Fellman Schaefer, a man with dark hair and a mustache, wearing a suit jacket and a patterned scarf. The image is the background for the text.

The Library of
Carl Fellman Schaefer
(1903–1995)

National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives
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The personal library of Carl Fellman Schaefer (1903–1995) consists of more than a thousand titles, assembled during a lifetime of collecting by one of Canada's distinguished artists. Generously donated to the National Gallery of Canada in 1996, the library is rich in association copies as well as volumes annotated by Schaefer. These documents provide an insider's view of Schaefer's vocation as an artist and the milieu in which he worked.

Materials in the Schaefer library include catalogues of exhibitions, collections, and art sales in addition to monographs, periodicals, pamphlets, exhibition announcements, technical materials, and printed ephemera. The collection reflects major developments in Canadian art and preserves fine examples of Canadian illustration and typography since the 1920s. It encompasses not only the history and theory of art in Canada and abroad, but also the methods and materials of artists and the work of specific individuals, particularly Thoreau MacDonald (1901–1989), a lifelong friend. Aspects of Schaefer’s personal experiences are also evident: service as an official war artist in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), his years as a teacher at the Ontario College of Art (OCA), and longstanding friendships with Canadian artists and poets.

Rural roots

Born in Hanover, Ontario, Schaefer found his primary inspiration in the rural landscape. The souvenir booklet *The Story of Hanover, Our Home Town* [2] bears an inscription from the Old Home Week Committee and a tribute to the artist. Schaefer’s handwritten note, inserted in the book, refers to his grandfather, Samuel Fellman, whose Hanover roots date to the nineteenth century.

Student and teacher

From 1921 to 1924, Schaefer studied at the Ontario College of Art in Toronto under the direction of J.E.H. MacDonald (1873–1932) and Arthur Lismer (1885–1969), who were members of the Group of Seven. He began teaching at Toronto’s Central Technical School in 1930, and subsequently held a number of teaching positions, including a long tenure at OCA from 1948 to 1970. Documents that reflect these activities include a calendar [3] designed and printed by students of the Central Technical School, daily register books recording student attendance and grades at OCA [4], teaching notes [5], and program descriptions for fine arts summer schools where Schaefer served on faculty [6].

Methods and materials

An array of technical materials, such as studio manuals, paper samples, and artists’ supply catalogues, provides insight into Schaefer’s working methods. His copy of A.P. Laurie’s standard text *Materials of the Painter’s Craft* [7], a gift from Thoreau MacDonald, is accompanied by a pencil sketch with annotations, folded and inserted into the book. Schaefer preserved issues of *Paper on Parade* [9], published by the Howard Smith Paper Mills, Montreal, to advertise their products. He also tested paper samples from the French firm Canson & Montgolfier with brush strokes of watercolour [8].

Artistic formation

Schaefer was closely associated with members of the Group of Seven, and occasionally exhibited with them. His copy of F.B. Housser’s *A Canadian Art Movement* [10] is signed by A.Y. Jackson (1882–1974), and Thoreau MacDonald, and accompanied by Schaefer’s handwritten notes. *Contrasts* [11], a book of verse by Lawren Harris (1885–1970), is annotated with a pencil sketch initialled “C.S.”. *The Far North* [12], a book of drawings by A.Y. Jackson, is signed by the author. When the Group of Seven disbanded in 1933, Schaefer became a charter member of its successor, the Canadian Group of Painters. Throughout his career, he held memberships in a number of artistic societies. Long runs of catalogues document his participation in the National Gallery’s annual exhibitions of Canadian art, as well as exhibitions

with groups such as the Canadian Society of Graphic Art and Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour [13–18]. In the 1930s his work was exhibited at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto [19] and the New York World's Fair [20–21]. Among numerous honours, he received a Guggenheim fellowship in 1940, the first awarded to a Canadian.

War experiences

In 1944, while serving as an official war artist in the RCAF, Schaefer attended the opening of the first exhibition of Canadian War Art, held at the National Gallery in London [22]. His work was included in this exhibition, and subsequently shown at the National Gallery of Canada [23]. In 1972 his work was displayed among selections from the Canadian War Memorials (First World War) and Canadian War Records (Second World War) in the National Museums of Canada exhibition *Aviation Paintings*. The catalogue [24] is accompanied by extensive handwritten notes, suggesting profound and lasting memories of his experiences as a war artist (1943–1946).

Associations

Schaefer's library is rich in publications that highlight his many associations with painters and poets. More than sixty titles are associated with Thoreau MacDonald [26], a friend since Schaefer's student days at OCA. Jean Chauvin's *Ateliers* [25] is an inscribed presentation copy from the author to MacDonald, given to Schaefer in 1932.

Schaefer assisted Charles Comfort (1900–1994) in painting a large mural for the North American Life Assurance Company, Toronto, in 1932. The same year, Comfort painted *Young Canadian* (Hart House, University of Toronto), the first of his three portraits of Schaefer. Schaefer's library includes a copy of *Charles Comfort* [27], with Comfort's inscription, "Autographed for my old and dearest friend Carl Schaefer."

George Johnston (born 1913), a poet and friend whom Schaefer met in 1934, inscribed more than a dozen volumes, including the Penumbra Press publication *Ask Again* [29]. The poet E.J. Pratt's (1882–1964) *Towards the Last Spike* [28] was presented to Schaefer with a personal inscription signed, "from Ned." *Canadian Aspirations in Painting* [30] was a gift from Walter Abell (1897–1956), then professor at Acadia University, where he founded Canada's first university fine art department. *The Robber* [31], a novel by the artist and writer Bertram Brooker (1888–1955), bears the inscription, "To Carl and Lillian in appreciation of their early encouragement." *Canadian Drawings and Prints* [32] is inscribed by Paul Duval and signed by a dozen Canadian artists, including Louis Muhlstock (1904–2001), who contributed a caricature, "For a very dear old friend."

Tributes

In addition to Schaefer's participation in a long roster of group exhibitions, he was honoured during his lifetime with solo exhibitions that travelled to Canadian galleries across the country. His library includes invitations and catalogues such as *Carl Schaefer: Retrospective Exhibition, Paintings from 1926 to 1969* [33], edited by J. Russell Harper, and *Carl Schaefer in Hanover* [34], with an introduction by Christopher Varley. In 1986 Schaefer's long-time friend George Johnston published *Carl: Portrait of a Painter* [35], drawn from letters and reminiscences. It is inscribed, "for my old friend Carl, his book at last."

Checklist

- 1 Carl Fellman Schaefer, 1938. Photograph by Charles Comfort.
- 2 *The Story of Hanover, Our Home Town, 1849–1947: Souvenir Booklet and Programme, Hanover Old Home Week, August 2nd to 8th, 1947.* [Hanover, Ont., 1947].
- 3 *A Calendar for Nineteen Thirty-five, Designed, Cut on Blocks and Printed by Students of the Central Technical School, Toronto, Ont.* [Toronto, 1935].
- 4 [Daily Register Notebook]. Ontario College of Art attendance and marking records of Carl Schaefer, 1948–1950.
- 5 [Notebook]. Carl Schaefer's notes from various courses, 1930?–1951?
- 6 Doon School of Fine Arts. [Calendar], 1953.
- 7 A.P. Laurie. *The Materials of the Painter's Craft in Europe and Egypt from Earliest Times to the End of the XVIIIth Century: With Some Account of Their Preparation and Use.* London: T.N. Foulis, 1910.
- 8 [Paper Sample Books]. [Canson & Montgolfier, n.d.].
- 9 *Paper on Parade*, no. 44. Montreal: Howard Smith Paper Mills, 1939.
- 10 F.B. Housser. *A Canadian Art Movement: The Story of the Group of Seven.* Toronto: Macmillan, 1926.
- 11 Lawren Harris. *Contrasts: A Book of Verse.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart [1922].
- 12 A.Y. Jackson. *The Far North: A Book of Drawings.* Toronto: Rous & Mann [1928?].
- 13 Canadian Society of Graphic Art. [Annual Exhibition Catalogue], 1935.
- 14 National Gallery of Canada. *Annual Exhibition of Canadian Art.* Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1931.
- 15 Canadian Group of Painters. [Annual Exhibition], 1933.
- 16 Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour. [Annual Exhibition], 1938.
- 17 *Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour Travelling Exhibition.* [Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada], 1942.
- 18 Canadian Group of Painters. [Annual Exhibition], 1966.
- 19 Canadian National Exhibition (Toronto, Ont.). [Catalogue of the Annual International Exhibition], 1931.
- 20 The Canadian Group of Painters. *Exhibition of Canadian Art, New York World's Fair, 1939.* Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada [1939].
- 21 The Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour and Sculptors' Society of Canada. *Exhibition of Canadian Art, New York World's Fair, 1939.* Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada [1939].
- 22 Margaret Gray, Margaret Rand, and Lois Steen. *Carl Schaefer.* [Agincourt, Ont.]: Gage, 1977.
- 23 *Exhibition of Canadian War Art.* Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1945.
- 24 R.F. Wodehouse. *Aviation Paintings from the Art Collection of the Canadian War Museum.* Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1972.
- 25 Jean Chauvin. *Ateliers: Études sur vingt-deux peintres et sculpteurs canadiens: Illustrées de reproductions d'oeuvres.* Montreal: L. Carrier, 1928.
- 26 Thoreau MacDonald. *The Group of Seven.* Toronto: Ryerson Press [1944].
- 27 Margaret Gray, Margaret Rand, and Lois Steen. *Charles Comfort.* [Agincourt, Ont.]: Gage, [1976].
- 28 E.J. Pratt. *Towards the Last Spike.* Toronto: Macmillan, 1952.
- 29 George Johnston. *Ask Again.* Moonbeam, Ont.: Penumbra Press, 1984.
- 30 Walter Abell. *Canadian Aspirations in Painting.* Quebec [City], 1942. Reprinted from *Culture III* (1942): 172–182.
- 31 Bertram Brooker. *The Robber: A Tale from the Time of the Herods.* Toronto: Collins, 1949.
- 32 Paul Duval. *Canadian Drawings and Prints.* Toronto: Burns and MacEachern, 1952.
- 33 *Carl Schaefer: Retrospective Exhibition, Paintings from 1926 to 1969.* Edited by J. Russell Harper. [Montreal: Sir George Williams University, 1969].
- 34 *Carl Schaefer in Hanover.* Introduction by Christopher Varley. Edmonton: Edmonton Art Gallery, 1980.
- 35 George Johnston. *Carl, Portrait of a Painter: Carl Schaefer.* Moonbeam, Ont.: Penumbra Press, 1986.
- 36 Carl Schaefer, *Sunflowers*, 1926, linocut with watercolour on japan paper, laid down on cardboard. National Gallery of Canada.

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