

Universities Art Association of Canada

Report on the 1978 Annual Meeting Victoria, British Columbia, 22-25 February 1978

The annual meeting of the Universities Art Association of Canada featured papers and panels devoted to a broad range of themes and topics. The programme was co-ordinated by a committee consisting of Alan Gowans, Donald Harvey, and Peter L. Smith, all of the University of Victoria.

Art History before 1400 HELEN DOW, University of Guelph, Chairperson

Sheila Campbell, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, gave *Evidence for 'Regional Standards' in Roman Mosaic Pavements*. She described the method of constructing mosaic pavements in Anamurium in southern Turkey, and contrasted it with the practices found in various other Roman sites and in written manuals. Definite regional characteristics exist, perhaps indicating the presence of regional mosaic guilds.

Helen Dow followed with *The Origin of the Cross as a Symbol of Victory*. She showed the use of cruciform design in Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions, and explained how the meanings of 'saviour' and 'life' entered Early Christian usage. This tradition ultimately led to the adoption of the Latin cross as the imperial standard.

Turning to another kind of cross, Shirley Ann Brown, York University, offered observations on the dissemination of various decorative designs used in the high carved stone *Early Irish Crosses* of the seventh century (Fig. 1). She compared spiral, interlaced, and animal forms to motifs used on metalwork and manuscripts in Ireland and Northumbria, and discussed the movements of artisans between the two regions.

A Thirteenth-Century Ivory Virgin and Child from England was introduced (in absentia) by Malcolm Thurlby, Queen's University. The sculpture, now in Hamburg, is commonly considered to have been produced in northern France, but he attributed it to the West Country of England by stylistic comparison to various examples of sculpture produced there in the first half of the thirteenth century.

Barbara Dodge, York University, spoke on *Tradition and Innovation in the Camposanto 'Inferno.'* She explained the older visual and literary sources that were adopted

by Francesco Traini for his frescoes of hell in the Camposanto in Pisa, painted in the 1330s. Traini must also have used Dante's *Inferno* as an important source for the complex organization of the fresco, marking the first use of the poem in a monumental image in Italian art.

Art History from 1400 to 1750 DAVID BERSHAD, University of Calgary, Chairperson

Joel Brink, University of British Columbia, discussed *The Carpentry and Symmetry of Cimabue's Santa Croce Crucifix*. The carpentry structure of the great crucifix was laid bare during the recent restoration. By adding the missing roundel as seen in the San Domenico version, the original size and proportional relations can be reconstructed. The figure of Christ can be described as a *homo quadratus* employing the Vitruvian system of symmetry.

Debra Pincus, also from the University of British Columbia, addressed the meeting on *The Tomb of Doge Niccolò Tron and Venetian State Iconography*. Representing a high point in the development of the Venetian tomb, the work, carved by Antonio Rizzi, went far beyond its immediate antecedents in the depth of meaning of its elements. Tron appears as the source and model for the religious as well as the secular well-being of the republic.

The Integration of Religious, Alchemical, and Industrial Values in the Isenheim Altarpiece was the subject of a paper by John Stocking, University of Calgary. He traced the striking colouristic effects in the altarpiece to Grünewald's knowledge of the mining and smelting of metals.

Anthony Petti, also from the University of Calgary, introduced *The Engravings of Richard Verstegen (1550-1640)*. Born in England of Dutch stock, this hitherto

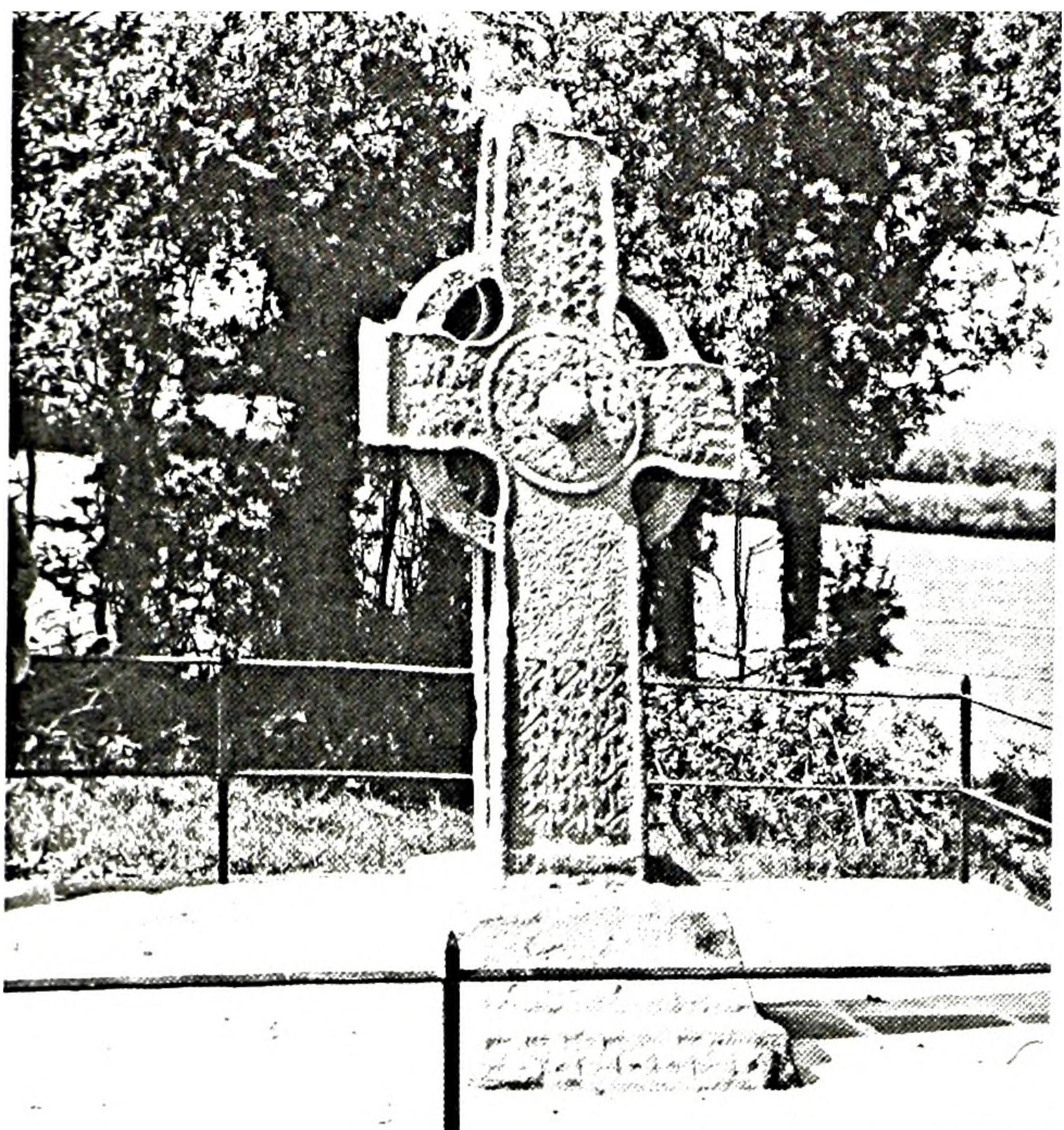


FIGURE 1. Cross, Kilrea, County Kilkenny, ca. 8th century (Photo: S.A. Brown).

overlooked engraver was an author of note who recognized the devotional and propagandistic value of prints and accordingly illustrated many of his own works.

Victor Chan, University of Alberta, showed how the arrangement of figures in Watteau's '*Les Comédiens Italiens*', now in Washington, adopts the 'bridge of life' motif popular in sixteenth-century engravings. He suggested that the figure of Pierrot refers to the Christ usually found in the early prints.

David Bershad concluded by discussing *New Archival Discoveries* concerning earlier attitudes towards restoring antiques. He introduced an unpublished manuscript by Leonardo Retti that reveals his trials and tribulations restoring the antiques at the Villa Belvedere at Frascati in the early 1690s.

Art History since 1750 IDA RIGBY, San Diego State University, Chairperson

Victor Chan analysed *Two Emblematic Portraits in the Early Work of Goya*. In his paintings of the Count of Floridablanca (Madrid, 1783) and Don Manuel del Osorio (New York, 1784), Goya used emblematic sources to produce personal commentaries on the helplessness of man in the face of time and fortune.

The Unknown Ingres was introduced by Tony Urquhart, University of Waterloo. He showed a selection of drawings by J.A.D. Ingres from the Musée Ingres at Montauban, many of them atypical, and discussed the richness and variety of their form and technique.

Gerald Needham, York University, spoke on *Realism and Impressionism: from Object to Process*. He suggested reasons why Impressionism has never been accepted by

the art world. He linked its view of the world to that of the Futurists, and showed how Impressionism captured movement, rather than freezing action in the moment.

Rodin's process of interpretation of his theme and design of his group was reconstructed in *The Iconography of the 'Burghers of Calais.'* Monique Westra, Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, showed the problems with which Rodin would have been faced, and compared his solution to various other treatments of the subject.

Bente Roed Cochran, Alberta Culture, Edmonton, discussed *Alpha and Omega, 1908-1909: Text and Illustrations by Edvard Munch*, a parable executed in a Copenhagen clinic. She suggested an interpretation of Munch's intentions, comparing the twenty-two black-and-white lithographs to others of his works, and relating the text to the artist's psychological state.

Ida Rigby introduced *The Robert Gore Rifkind Collection of German Expressionist Prints, Posters, Periodicals, Oils, Sculptures, and Rare Books*. This rich research collection is housed in the owner's law office in Beverley Hills, California.

Philip Evergood (1901-73) was an American social realist whose paintings stemmed from an inner vision that mingled the observation of current events and street life with impressionistic fantasy. Kendall Taylor, Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, showed his work in *Philip Evergood and the Humanist Intention*.

Basia Irland, University of Waterloo, offered a brief historical sketch of correspondence art in *The Continuing Correspondence Art Caper*. She described the exhibition *Postal Art*, held at the University of Waterloo Art Gallery, 17-27 November 1977.

Patronage CLIFFORD BROWN, Carleton University, Chairperson

Warren Sanderson, Concordia University, showed new evidence to suggest that the late effervescence of Carolingian art in Trier may have come about through the influence of Radbohus, *Archbishop of Trier*. Named archbishop in 883, Radbohus embarked upon an energetic campaign to rebuild a city destroyed by the Vikings.

The Vatican Loggia of Pope Leo X was designed by Bramante and had a third storey added by Raphael, who covered the vaults with Old Testament scenes. Jetske Sybesma Ironside, University of Alberta, showed that the loggia, completed in 1519, glorifies both Leo X and his predecessor, Julius II, both of whose horoscopes are reflected in hitherto overlooked stucco reliefs.

In an attempt to reconstruct the lost decoration of *The Camarino of Francesco Cornaro*, George Knox, University of British Columbia, reinterpreted the meaning of the two major extant panels (Mantegna's *Scipio acting as Host to the Phrygian Goddess Cybele*, London [Fig. 2], and Bellini's *Continence of Scipio*, Washington).

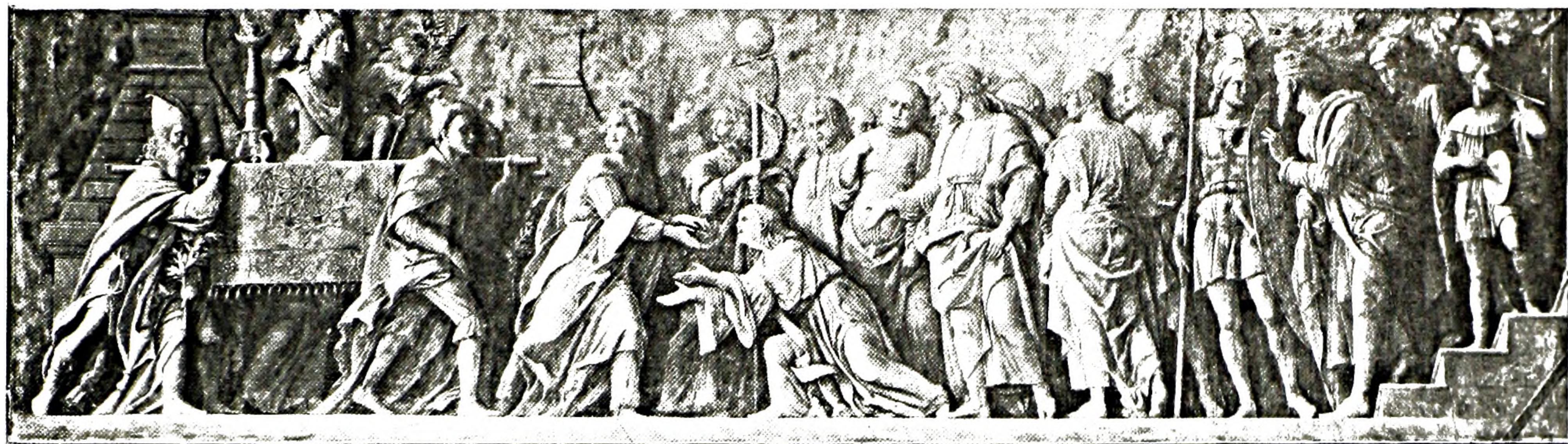


FIGURE 2. Andrea Mantegna, *Scipio Acting as Host to the Phrygian Goddess Cybele*. London, National Gallery (Photo: National Gallery).

Joaneath Spicer Durham, University of Toronto, discussed *Rudolf II in Prague 1600-1612*. At the bidding of this Holy Roman Emperor, a vast army of artists gravitated to the court at Prague, among them Archimbaldo and Spranger. Rudolf's vast collection numbered some three thousand pictures, and was recorded in a catalogue of 1607.

Methods and Approaches GÉRARD LE COAT, Université de Montréal, Chairperson

Luis de Moura Sobral, Université de Montréal, spoke on *La corne du rhinocéros chez Dali: la question de l'interprétation*. Although Surrealist artists presented themselves as being revolutionary, more often than not they relocated traditional symbols. The speaker took as an example Dali's treatment of the rhinoceros horn. Orthodox iconographic investigation, he concluded, remains a valid method for the study of Surrealist imagery.

The time has come to reconsider Bosch's personality, said Rosemarie Bergmann, McGill University, in *A Note on the Problems of Literary Sources in Bosch's œuvre*. The artist has too often been presented as a neurotic individual member of a secret sect. Focusing on the themes of hell and redemption, the speaker demonstrated that Bosch's work (Fig. 3) reflects a perfect knowledge of the literature of modern devotion and of the graphic work of Deguileville.

Bruce Barber, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, followed with *Indexing Problems for the Contemporary Art Researcher*. He offered three primary conjectures. Firstly, the proliferation of 'labels' characteristic of rapid stylistic change in contemporary art demands an equally accelerated system of indexing and classification. Secondly, all labels in art history, especially in the history of contemporary art, are provisional in character. And finally, as art works may beget art works, so labels may beget labels.

Nicolas Poussin et la méthode iconographique, by Jean-François Lhote, Université de Montréal, was concerned with the problem of implicit, or non-defined, signs in Poussin's *Arcadian Shepherds*. He analysed various interpretations of the picture and pointed out the inconsistencies and contradictions. He contended that the work constitutes what was then called a *motto*, or *impresa*.

Canadian Art

Robert Derome, Galerie nationale du Canada, spoke on *La peinture d'histoire au palais législatif de Québec: la contribution de Charles Huot*. He showed a series of unexecuted schemes for decorating the Chambre verte and Chambre rouge of the Legislative Buildings in Quebec. These were finally filled with three monumental patriotic historical paintings executed by Huot between 1910 and 1930. Derome explained the historical, ideological, and artistic sources of the most celebrated of the three, *The Language Debate*.

Six views of the British Columbia landscape by Lucius O'Brien (Fig. 4) were included in the final instalment of *Picturesque Canada* (1884). In *Lucius O'Brien in British Columbia*, Doreen Walker, University of British Columbia, noted that the artist did not visit the province until two years later, and she showed a number of photographs and printed illustrations that he likely used as visual sources for his views.

Nancy-Lou Patterson, University of Waterloo, discussed *The Iconography of the Show-Towel: Swiss-German*



FIGURE 3. Hieronymus Bosch, *The Pilgrim*, ca. 1510. Rotterdam, Boymans-van Beuningen Museum.

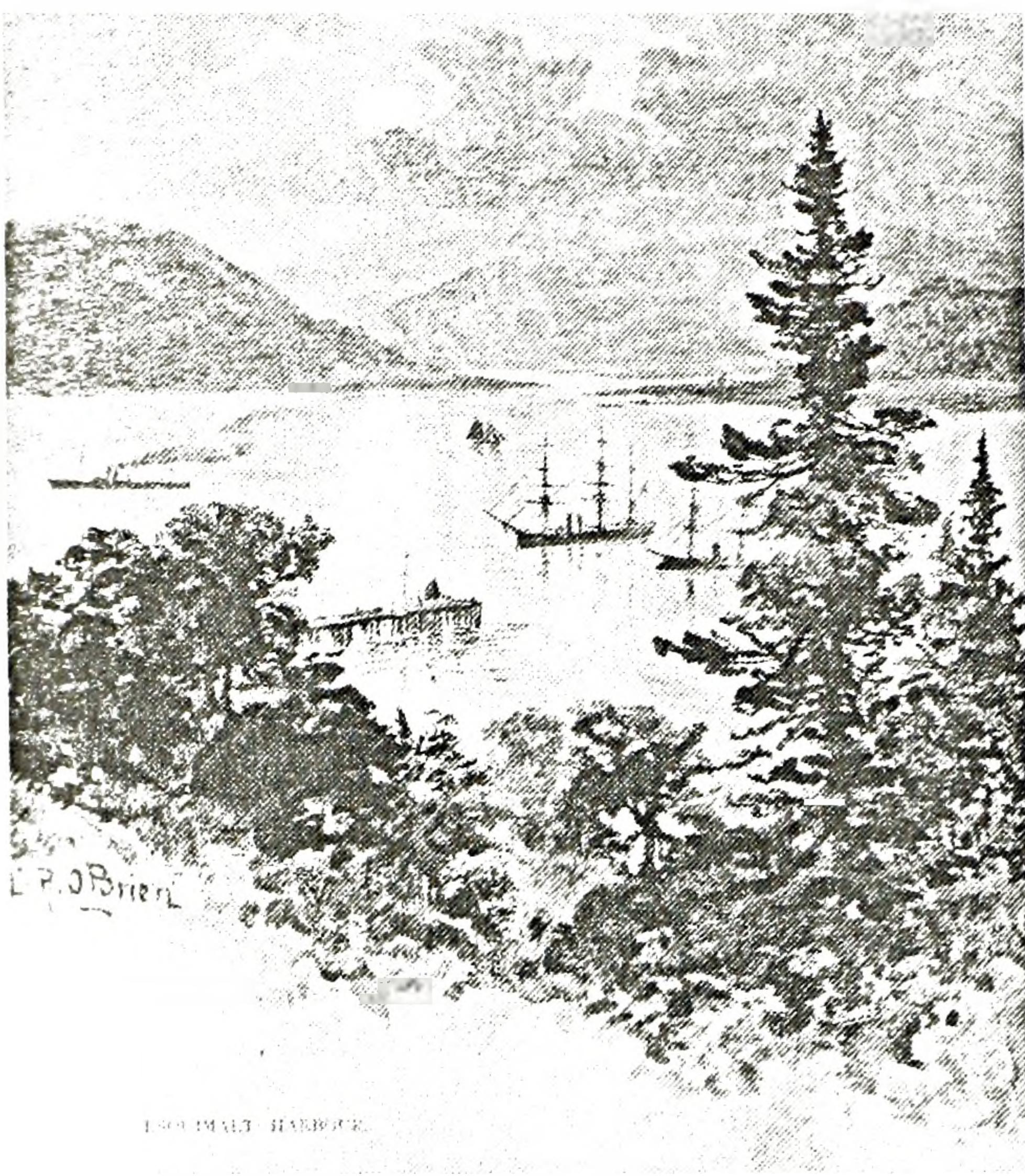


FIGURE 4. Lucius O'Brien, *Esquimalt Harbour*. From *Picturesque Canada*, II, 871.

Paradisal Imagery in Southern Ontario. These decorative towels were embroidered before their marriage by Ontario Mennonite girls, and adopted certain motifs seen in early German and Swiss embroidery and painting.

Peter Shostak, University of Victoria, described a curriculum model that he has developed for elementary education. He entitled his talk *Using Canadian Art in Promoting and Expanding the Scope of Art Activities at the Elementary School Level*.

Native Art as Art History JOAN VASTOKAS, Trent University, Chairperson

François-Marc Gagnon, Université de Montréal, presented *L'iconographie indienne du 'Codex canadensis'* attribué au jésuite Louis Nicolas. He made his attribution of the Codex (Tulsa, Oklahoma) and the related text in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, by showing how closely the drawings (Fig. 5) follow Nicolas's ethnographic experiences as described in Jesuit records. He showed the visual sources of some of the illustrations.

In *African Art: The Aesthetics of the Ashanti*, Daniel Mato, University of Manitoba, offered a method of looking at African art in its full cultural context in order to attain a full comprehension of the symbolic function of aesthetics.

Joan Vastokas argued for the validity of *Native Art as Art History*. She suggested cultural reasons that have inhibited the study of native art and dispelled some common objections to its study. She insisted upon the validity of visual images as historical documents.

Expanded Boundaries of Craft Studies ANN MORTIMER, Georgian College, Barrie, Chairperson

In *Japanese Tea Bowl: Historical Viewpoint*, Richard Perry, York University, discussed the glazes of Japanese tea bowls and attempted to place tea wares into the larger aesthetic of the tea ceremony and its associated art forms. He analysed the significance of non-representational wares and their meditative function.

Christopher Tyler, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, spoke on the problems facing a systematic study of world crafts in *Methodology of Craft Studies*. He proposed various schemes (e.g. generic and cultural) which might be useful. He also called for a more serious consideration of the craft product as an art form.

Robin Hopper, winner of the first Saidye Bronfman Award for Excellence in the Crafts, and now a resident of Victoria, discussed various influences on his wares in *Historical Techniques and Contemporary Art and Information*. These influences include Chinese glaze techniques, colour striation in natural agate, and the landscape of the new environment.

Ch'an and Zen Painting RICHARD PERRY, York University, Chairperson

Richard Stanley-Baker, University of Victoria, discussed the ways in which Japanese monochrome ink painting diverged from the styles associated with Mu-ch'i.

Joan Stanley-Baker, Curator of Asian Arts at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, explained the differences in the brushwork of academic and literati painters.

The iconography of Zen painting and the paradox involved in the development of heroes who espoused iconoclasm were the subjects of *Hero Images and the Development of Style in Zen Painting*, by Richard Perry. He offered a rationale, based upon this paradox, for the development of Zen painting style in Japan from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries.

History of Photography ANN THOMAS, National Gallery of Canada, Chairperson

Andy Birrell, Public Archives of Canada, spoke on *Nineteenth-Century Survey Photography in Canada: Aesthetic and Historical Context*. He suggested that the evaluation and interpretation of photographs according to traditional art historical methods can prove misleading and inadequate. Using survey photographs, he stressed the importance of understanding the technical, technological, and social history that surrounds the making of photographs. In many instances the sole intention and function of the image was informational, and aesthetic consciousness becomes an irrelevant issue.

Ian Wallace, Vancouver School of Art, spoke on *Issues in Contemporary Photography*, referring to the merging of the traditions of painting and photography



FIGURE 5. *Sauvage de la nation outaouais*. From *Codex Canadensis*.

within the past ten years. A distinction was made between 'photographers' and 'artist-photographers.' He observed that the form and the presence of earth-works structures are communicated principally through photographic images (Fig. 6).

The formal and technical relationship between photography and painting in Canada during the latter half of the nineteenth century was explored within the context of William Notman's Montreal studio by Ann Thomas in *Painting and Photography in Canada, 1860-1900: Some Relationships*. She used examples of painted photographs, photographs on canvas, and composite photographs to illustrate the influences that these media exerted upon each other.

New Directions in the '70s CHRISTOPHER YOUNGS, Canada Council, Chairperson

Christopher Youngs began the panel discussion by noting the tremendous growth in art institutions offering training in the visual arts. He said that the emphasis is on productivity, and little attention is being paid to direction, philosophy, or quality.

Guido Molinari, Concordia University, regretted the lack of tradition in Canada, the ease with which new tendencies are assimilated, and the absence of good criticism. He called for a national 'stream of consciousness' about art, and suggested that the spiritual quality in art will outlive the product.

Jo Fafard, Pense, Saskatchewan, noted that galleries should not become mere social places.

Doris Shadbolt, Vancouver, proposed that the emergence of the government as a major patron of the arts is a crucial characteristic of the 1970s. This situation does not allow for 'spiritual feedback' from which the artist can grow with experience. She suggested that the women's movement will also have a profound effect upon art.

BC Art Today

David McWilliams, Vancouver Art Gallery, presented a series of slides showing what he felt to be important in contemporary British Columbia art. In the dialogue that followed, Art Perry, art critic for the *Vancouver Province*, remarked that there is a regional spirit in these works, seen in the strong perception of the British Columbia landscape.

Contemporary Art Events and Current Teaching Models DONALD HARVEY, University of Victoria, Chairperson

Donald Harvey questioned the kinds of responsibilities taught at the undergraduate level, and asked the panelists just what it is that is being taught.

Marcel Braitstein, Université du Québec à Montréal, described his concept of a full and relevant art programme. He stressed the need to teach students professional standards and give them practice in performing objective criticism. Students should also have a thorough knowledge of drawing and of history.

Mowry Baden, University of Victoria, addressed the rôle that journals can play in the education of both students and faculty.

Alan Wood, Vancouver, emphasized the importance of instilling confidence in the students. He said that teachers should work out their new ideas more closely with students.

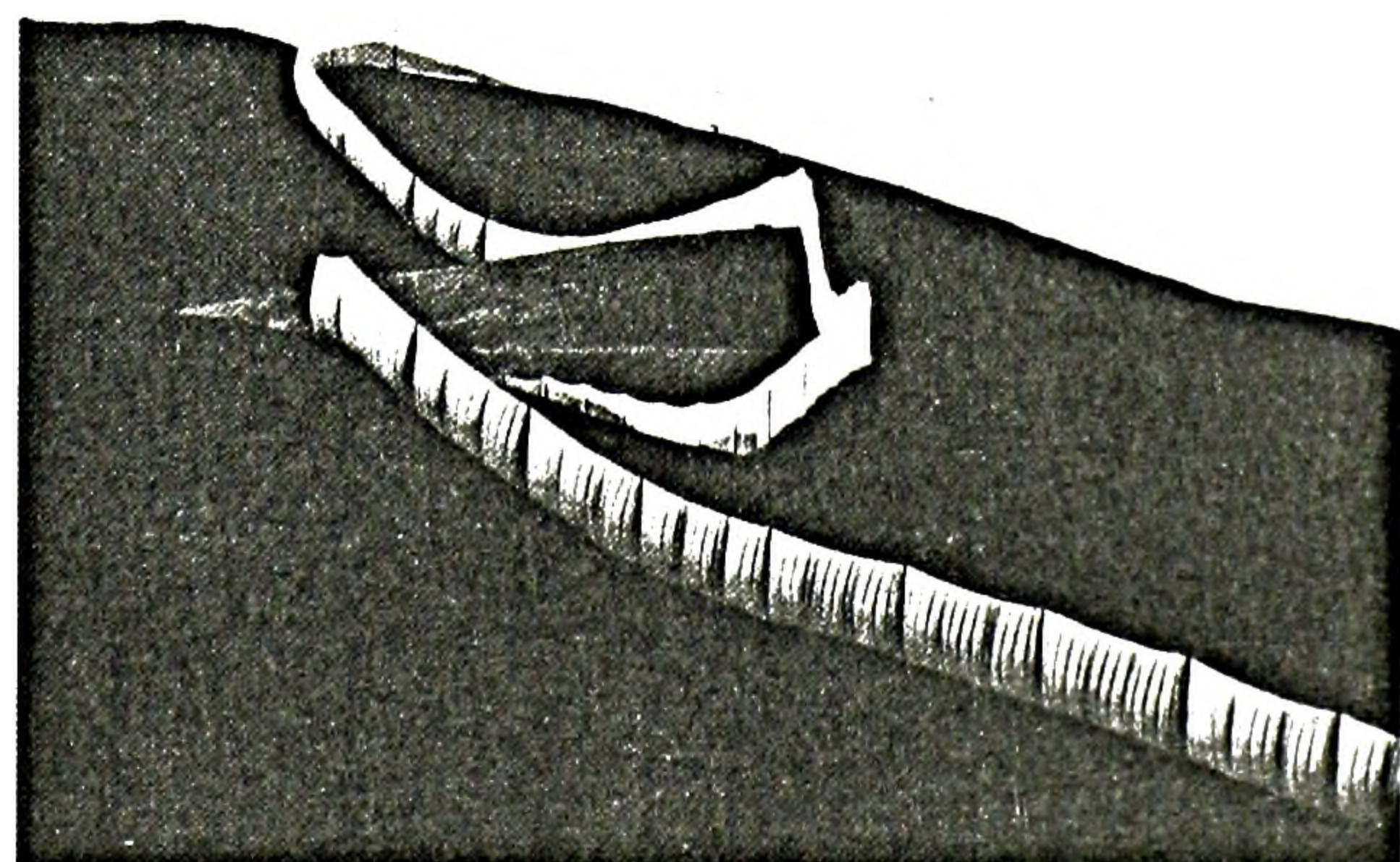


FIGURE 6. Christo, *Running Fence*, 1976-77.

Ted Godwin, Regina, suggested that art schools have a responsibility to present as many alternatives as possible. Students attend for a variety of purposes: some to become artists, others teachers, and some 'artocrats.'

David Zelinger, University of London, England, described his efforts to examine the curriculum at art schools in Canada and the us. He expressed a preference for a more specific approach, and for vigorous visiting artist programmes.

MFA Programmes ERIC CAMERON, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Chairperson

The session was organized so that people might hear the report of the committee of the UAAC that had been established in 1977 to investigate the conditions of MFA programmes in Canada. Eric Cameron discussed the results of a questionnaire that had been sent to the directors of programmes. The committee had intended to formulate a statement of general aims and principles, but the discussion turned to a more general airing of the problems encountered by students in finding time for studio practice, and in securing places in MFA programmes.

Health and Safety in Printmaking CHERIE MOSES, University of Alberta, Chairperson

The speakers made it patently clear that most artists working in printmaking studios are not as concerned as they should be for their own health and that of their students.

Lyndal Osborne, Co-ordinator of the Printmaking Division, University of Alberta, spoke about the research that she has carried out to identify health hazards. She demonstrated gloves, masks, and other protective devices that she and her students use.

Dwight Bowhay, Hygiene Technologist, Alberta Labour, explained the nature of some chemical compounds commonly used in the studio. He stressed that many schools use highly toxic substances as solvents and for other purposes.

The panellists mentioned that every provincial government has a division that will inspect printmaking studios to advise on safety. The audience received copies of Roland Hosein, *Health and Safety in Printmaking: A Manual for Printmakers* (Edmonton, 1978). Copies are available from the Occupational Hygiene Branch, Alberta Labour, Edmonton.

The Rôle of the New Periodicals FRANÇOIS-MARC GAGNON, Université de Montréal, Chairperson

Ghislain Clermont, Université de Moncton; France Morin, *Parachute*, Montreal; and Norah Kembar, Vancouver Art Gallery, presented samples of the many new periodicals that have appeared in the 1970s: *RACAR* and *The Journal of Canadian Art History* in the history of art; and *Parachute*, *Vanguard*, *Criteria*, and others in the criticism of contemporary art. Art Perry, Vancouver, addressed the broader problem of the need for a post-formalist criticism adapted to the diversity of the object. Jo-Anne Birnie-Danzker, Vancouver Art Gallery, discussed the urgency of reconsidering the very structure of the art review if one wishes to radicalize the contents while assuring a certain viability. André Renaud, Canada Council, spoke on the rôle of the government in supporting periodicals.

Slide Librarians LUILLA DU WORS, University of Calgary, Chairperson

Visual resources personnel compared present classification systems and discussed new computerized systems. They toured facilities at the British Columbia Archives and the University of Victoria.

Formation of 'Collections Canada' HELEN DOW, University of Guelph, Chairperson

The incorporation documents for a National Art Collections Fund of Canada, to be called Collections Canada, are in preparation, with the assistance of a grant from the Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Family Foundation.