the Act of Union of 1840, which united Upper and Lower Canada (now Ontario and Quebec). Such historical specificity is uncommon in photography scholarship, where political context is often abbreviated or assumed. Here it provides essential scaffolding while reinforcing Langford's central claim: that something consequential can be learned by attending closely to the Canadian frame itself.

More complex and contested histories of the nation emerge in photographs such as Louis Riel addressing the jury during his trial for treason, which Langford reads as "not a timeless image of the 'vanishing race' but a turning-point image in the history of race relations in Canada, at that point unfinished" (308). While one might argue that this history remains unfinished, such moments make visible the unstable terrain on which the nation-state rests. Langford moves from the Riel trial to the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, linking displacement and territorial expansion through the logic and materiality of the railroad. Rather than treating Canada as a neutral container for photographic practice, she demonstrates how photography and the nation developed in tandem. The careful alignment of images with legislative milestones, demographic realities, and territorial consolidation strengthens the argument that photographic history gains explanatory power when grounded in the particularities of place. In this respect, *Anticipation to Participation* makes a persuasive case for revisiting national histories as historically contingent frameworks through which photography was produced, circulated, and understood.

Elegantly written and full of surprises, the book is magisterial in scope and rich in insight. Throughout, Langford resists overdetermined readings of images as transparent documents. Her framing of both the nation and the medium allows contradictions, uncertainties, and uneven developments to remain visible. Photography emerges as both instrument and experience, implicated in governance and memory alike. Characterized by archival rigor and conceptual clarity, *A History of Photography in Canada* will stand as a defining reference for the field for decades to come.

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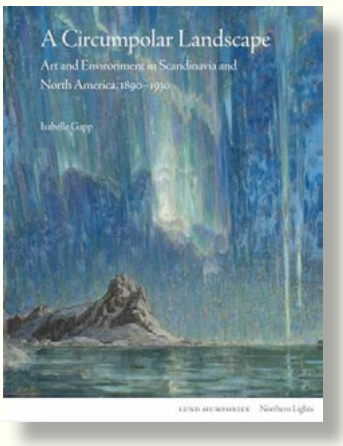

Isabelle Gapp
A Circumpolar Landscape: Art and Environment in Scandinavia and North America, 1890–1930

Lund Humphries, 2024
208 pp., 32 colour and 18 b/w illus.
$134.00 CAD (cloth)
ISBN 9781848225886

Vanessa Bateman

Canada's Group of Seven and Scandinavia's National Romantic painters have enjoyed more than a century of celebrated prominence in galleries, scholarship, and the public imagination, and yet this very staying power has become a point of contention, with critics arguing that the study and display of historic landscape painting by white artists remains "stagnant and self-referential," fixated on nationalism and symbolism at the expense of fresh thinking (10). In the Canadian context, landscape painting has generated more scholarly attention than perhaps any other genre. This raises legitimate questions: has the field exhausted its generative potential? And what new contributions might the study of historic landscape painting in Canada and Scandinavia still offer? One mode of interpretation is urgently suggested by the world outside the gallery: with the accelerating climate crisis and biodiversity loss, it is no longer possible to look at a landscape in the same way—let alone the circumpolar region, whose melting glaciers and lone polar bears are icons of the Anthropocene.

It is in this context that environmental art history has emerged as a thriving and generative field contributing revisionist histories of Western art. The environmental turn in art history was particularly evident in 2024, with the publication of Siobhan

Angus's *Camera Geologica* (Duke University Press), Jessica L. Horton's *Earth Diplomacy: Indigenous American Art, Ecological Crisis, and the Cold War* (Duke University Press), and Michael Lobel's *Van Gogh and the End of Nature* (Yale University Press). Although focused on different historical periods, these studies examine how artistic representations both reflected and shaped changing relationships between humans and the environment, while also meaningfully reframing those histories considering today's ecological crises. Likewise, environmental historians have increasingly adopted methods drawn from art history, including the close analysis of photographs and other visual sources—as demonstrated by Jarrod Hore's *Visions of Nature: How Landscape Photography Shaped Settler Colonialism* (University of California Press, 2022). The field has also expanded to encompass broader visual culture, through such projects as Isabelle Gapp's six-part *Visual Cultures of the Circumpolar North* series for the Network in Canadian History & Environment (NiCHE). Collectively, this scholarship underscores the growing importance of visual representation within interdisciplinary environmental research.[1]

It is into this conversation that Isabelle Gapp's *A Circumpolar Landscape: Art and Environment in Scandinavia and North America, 1890–1930* makes its most significant intervention. With a sweeping ecocritical history of northern circumpolar landscape painting, Gapp expands beyond the representational to address the environmental context in which landscape painting was made, encompassing interdisciplinary perspectives from the humanities, sciences, and social sciences to re-examine art history in the context of the growing climate crisis. In doing so, *A Circumpolar Landscape* draws "attention to the ideological beliefs that informed not just the depiction and meaning of landscape imagery but, more importantly, what had already materialised in the actual environment" (14). Rather than a chain-of-influence historiography, Gapp asks how two very different regions might contribute to a broader understanding of the Circumpolar North. Her transnational and ecocritical methodology of "latitudinal thinking" reveals the "fluidity of art and environment" (179) across northern nations and cultures, arguing that their shared circumpolar geography—its mountains, glacier-melt lakes, and old-growth forests—underlies the mutual subject matter, style, and composition of the Group of Seven, Emily Carr, and Scandinavian painters like Gustaf Fjæstad, Alex Sjöberg, and Helmer Osslund.

Taking seriously what it means to "think of landscape painting as environmental history" (10), Gapp contributes something new to a field that has focused on the Group of Seven's mythologizing of nature (especially through their perpetuation of the idea of *terra nullius*) and their depiction of resource extraction as picturesque (10). *A Circumpolar Landscape* models how environmental historians grappling with the Anthropocene increasingly draw on the past to better understand present environmental concerns, positioning landscape painting as a mediator across temporal contexts while integrating close visual and material analysis with environmental humanities methodologies across six thematic chapters: wilderness, woods, water, mountain, sky, and ice (10).

The first chapter, "Taming the Wilderness," problematizes the romanticization of the northern wilderness perpetuated by landscape painting and commercial printmaking. By way of Ontario, Canada and Norrland, Sweden, Gapp contrasts depictions of empty and pristine landscapes with the reality of Indigenous dispossession and industrial expansion. The tourism industry—which artists partook in and encouraged—shaped wilderness environments with the establishment of national and provincial parks, illustrated by A.Y. Jackson's advertisements for Bon Echo Inn (later Provincial Park). Environmental change wrought by settler colonialism may also be hidden in plain sight: the row of loggers' pointer boats in the foreground of both Tom Thomson's *The Pointers* (ca. 1915) and J.E.H. MacDonald's *Mist Fantasy, Northland* (1922) document "anthropogenic factors in reshaping the environment of Algonquin Park" (36). The second chapter, "Into the Woods," builds on this deconstruction, tracing the work of Emily Carr and Gustaf Fjæstad across the Pacific coastal forests of British Columbia and the boreal forests on Norway and Sweden's national border—environments that were, and are, under threat from "constant human demand and devastation" (60). Carr's later focus on British Columbia's forests is framed through the effects of the logging industry and biodiversity in the past and present, Gapp maintaining a claim throughout the book that landscape painters created imperfect, yet important, records of their immediate environments. At the same time, Gapp points out that

the ethnographic or anthropological turn in landscape painting in the early twentieth century by Carr, Emilie Demant Hatt, and others simultaneously codified "the woods as a white person's space" and maintained the wilderness ideal (50).

"Aqueous Atmospheres," the third chapter, addresses bodies of water across the Circumpolar North, from Franklin Carmichael's paintings of Lakes Huron and Superior to Otto Hesselbom's iconic *Our Country* (1902), depicting western Sweden, and Kitty Kielland's studies of weather and light in the Norwegian landscape. Here, Gapp develops an "elemental ecocriticism" through the blue humanities, a term that recognizes the "interrelatedness of modern Western culture and the sea" and "the notion of landscape meteorology" (82), or what is now called cultural climatology, a field in physical and human geography that examines the impact of climate on culture and vice versa. Gapp makes a compelling case that while the "ecology of lakes is rarely entertained in an art historical discussion of Nordic and Canadian landscape painting" (102), it should be. When considering such familiar paintings as Lawren Harris's *North Shore, Lake Superior* (1926) within the environmental context in which they were made, what emerges from beneath the expanses of colour and brushstroke are the social, cultural, and climate histories of lakes—histories that these works obscure and that have taken on renewed urgency as many of these lakes now face ecological crisis.

While mountainous regions are often misunderstood as remote or wild, Gapp focuses on their long histories of culture and extraction in the fourth chapter, "Moving Mountains." Mountains, Gapp shows, become part of national or transnational iconographies even if they drastically change over time. This is best illustrated by Osslund's *Autumn Afternoon at Stora Sjöfallet* (1914) and Sjöberg's *The Great Falls, Luleå River* (1920), which depict the waterfalls that once comprised Stora Sjöfallet, the greatest natural attraction in Sweden, before they ran dry after a hydropower dam was installed in 1923, reinforcing landscape paintings as imperfect yet important "records of an anthropogenic environment" (106).

The final two chapters challenge the pictorial convention of the Arctic as a tonally white landscape. Attention to tonality and colour, Gapp argues, unsettles nineteenth-century Anglophone discourse that framed the Arctic as both racially and tonally "white," which contributed to the dispossession and erasure of Indigenous and non-human inhabitants of the region. Anything but "pure" or "empty," these circumpolar landscapes instead archive dense histories of human and animal presence, from "blood-stained snow and water that would have followed whaling expeditions and Inuit hunting" (166) to dust and dirt staining ice and snow surfaces found in paintings from Frederick Varley to Anna Boberg.

The fifth chapter brings together the science, art, mythology, and spiritualism of atmospheric molecular interactions to examine the aurora borealis, asking "how science might shift our understanding of visual manifestations of a phenomenon that is often framed by art historians and polar explorers as mystical or otherworldly" (127). It also considers the practicalities of observational drawing in the Circumpolar North, from freezing watercolours and malfunctioning photographic equipment to humidity preventing oil paintings from drying. The final chapter, "Icy Imaginaries," makes glaciers and "cryoscapes," a term used to consider glaciers within epistemic, social, and cultural practices, "the centre of their own story" (177). Shifting the focus away from a romantic or sublime reading of glacial landscapes, Gapp joins anthropologists, glaciologists, and geographers who recognize the agency of glaciers, now considered an endangered species, within their social, cultural, and environmental contexts.[2] From Johan Christian Dahl's *View of Nigardsbreen in Jostedalen* (1844) to Boberg's paintings of Engabreen and Øksfjordjøkelen, Gapp show how these works are pictorial sources that chronicle a glacier's fluctuation and the temporality of ice.

Concluding the book, Gapp uses a 2023 exhibition, *Kvinnliga pionjärer – Visionära landskap* (Female Pioneers – Visionary Landscapes), to remind readers that, despite an environmental turn, art history remains stuck on -isms, its discourse still fixated on "symbolism, mysticism and National Romanticism" (178). What *A Circumpolar Landscape* does differently, Gapp reiterates, is introduce readers to the possibilities of an ecocritical history of landscape art: a transnational and latitudinal methodology that critically engages with the history of settler colonialism and Western ideals of wilderness, recognizes Indigenous histories and voices,

and meaningfully "re-centres the importance of the land" (180). "When we start to think of landscape ecocritically," Gapp writes, "we must similarly extend this ecological morality to the women and underrepresented communities existing within these regions" (86). In this regard, the book challenges the narrative of the Circumpolar North as a male-gendered space, or polar exploration as hypermasculine, recovering the overlooked contributions of Boberg and Kielland alongside Carr and the writings of women mountaineers and travellers. At the same time, while settler-colonial narratives that falsely depicted the northern landscape as depopulated and untouched are squarely addressed, the inclusion of Inuit and Sámi histories is not fully extended to centring Indigenous artists or voices. There are notable exceptions, including chapter five's discussion of how Sámi stories, daily lives, and fascination with the aurora borealis were recorded in scratch drawings made by Sámi men on the Swedish–Finnish border between 1927 and 1962—drawings collected by, and then wrongly attributed to, the German artist Gustav Hagemann.

A Circumpolar North opens the possibilities of ecocritical interdisciplinary methods so that future studies of North American and Nordic landscape painting can continue this revisionist project. Gapp is candid in her introduction that this is neither a comprehensive study of all circumpolar art histories nor an all-encompassing assessment of non-Arctic nations—such as Russia, Finland, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands—that scholars have recently made efforts to brand as Arctic (20). Nor, she acknowledges, does the book fully correct how histories of the circumpolar north have been exclusionary. Self-critique aside, *A Circumpolar Landscape* makes an important and timely contribution to the history of Canadian and Scandinavian art—one that will be welcomed in Canadian and Western art history courses for its relevance today.

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1 See https://niche-canada.org/tag/circumpolar-north/.

2 See, for example, Julie Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imaginations* (UBC Press, 2005); M. Jackson, *The Secret Lives of Glaciers* (Vermont: Green Writers Press, 2019).

Marie Antoinette Style

Victoria & Albert Museum, Londres, 20 septembre 2025 au 22 mars 2026, commissaire : Sarah Grant

Marjorie Charbonneau

Encore une exposition à propos de Marie-Antoinette ? En fait, *Marie Antoinette Style* est la première rétrospective consacrée à « la reine des modes » en sol britannique et, de surcroît, le premier événement qui célèbre la reine de manière aussi contemporaine. En salle du 20 septembre 2025 au 22 mars 2026, l'exposition, commissariée par la conservatrice du Victoria & Albert Museum, Sarah Grant, est composée de onze thèmes divisés en deux sections. Ceux-ci sont conçus tels des tableaux narrant la création du style Marie-Antoinette, qui s'incarne notamment par des artéfacts du XVIII^{e} siècle, auxquels Grant et son équipe ont choisi de joindre d'autres objets issus de l'art moderne et de la culture populaire. La commissaire réussit un tour de force à condenser autant de thèmes dans l'espace si restreint dévoué aux expositions temporaires. Par sa muséographie spectacle et le choix des objets et des œuvres exposés, Grant pose les fondations de sa démonstration, à savoir que le « style Marie-Antoinette » s'est construit au fil des années, depuis son arrivée à la cour de France en 1770 jusqu'à aujourd'hui.

L'entrée de l'exposition, *Marie Antoinette: The Origins of a Style 1770-1793*, permet d'établir les intentions de la première et plus ambitieuse partie, soit la constitution du style Marie-Antoinette à travers huit thématiques : les origines du style, la mode, les bijoux, les coiffures, le Petit Trianon, les parfums, la calomnie et la mort. Le ton de l'exposition est rapidement donné par la reprise au plancher des motifs noirs et blancs de la cour de marbre du palais de Versailles, ainsi que par la couleur rose pastel des murs, clin d'œil muséographique au film de Sofia Coppola qui a fixé l'esthétique populaire de la reine en 2006. Le propos contemporain de Grant se matérialise dans la projection du portrait animé *Marie-Antoinette dauphine, 1771-1773* de Joseph Siffred Duplessis, tel un fichier GIF ou une image produite par intelligence artificielle, activant les traits du portrait. On y voit la souveraine posant un regard rieur sur le public qui s'apprête à découvrir la richesse du style