INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

UMI[®]

**Taking a Bite Out of “The Big Apple”:
The 49th Parallel: Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art,
1981-1992**

by

Ellen Cunningham, B.A.

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in Canadian Art History**

Carleton University

OTTAWA, Ontario

December 2001

©2001, Ellen Cunningham

**National Library
of Canada**

**Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services**

**395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

**Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada**

**Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques**

**395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-72040-3

The undersigned recommend to the Faculty
of Graduate Studies and Research acceptance of the thesis

**Taking a Bite Out of "The Big Apple:" The 49th Parallel: Centre for Contemporary
Canadian Art, 1981-1992**

Submitted by Ellen Cunningham, B.A. Honours (University of Victoria)
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts.

Michael Bell, Thesis Supervisor

Alan Gillmor Acting Director: SSAC

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

December 2001

ABSTRACT

In 1981, the Canadian government established “49th Parallel: Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art,” in New York City in order to foster a new perception of Canada for American and international audiences, and to project an image of Canada as a modern, innovative and progressive nation. Funded and administered by the Department of External Affairs, this SoHo venue displayed the work of close to three hundred Canadian artists. This thesis constructs a chronological narrative of the gallery's history. It explores selected nationalist ideologies prevalent in Canada during the 1960s and 1970s that laid the foundation for the creation of the 49th Parallel. It then discusses the efforts of Guy Plamondon, the gallery's creator and founding director, and explores the creation of the gallery and its early years. Finally, it analyzes the gallery's programming in the mid- to late-1980s, details the obstacles to its success, and outlines the reasons for its demise in 1992. The gallery's hybrid mandate and status—was it an official diplomatic space or a commercial venue designed to promote and sell Canadian art?—plagued it from the start and proved to be its ultimate failing.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, thank you to Carol Payne for planting the seed of inspiration for this paper. To Cyndie Campbell at the National Gallery of Canada Archives, thank you for all your assistance with my research. To Ted Kelly in the Historical Division at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, I appreciate your dedication to this project.

Thank you to all my interviewees: Guy Plamondon, France Morin, Glen Cumming, Marc Mayer, Yves Gagnon, Robert Johnstone, and Allan Gottlieb. Plamondon's enthusiasm, both for the 49th Parallel and my thesis, was particularly influential and encouraging. His vivid memories carried me to New York City, providing a unique understanding of this remarkable story in the history of Canada's visual arts.

Immense thanks to my parents, for without their support this goal could not have been realized. To my sisters, who serve as constant inspiration for me in all my endeavours. To Sarah-chan Foy, who buttressed me every step of the way. My master's experience was a joy because of you.

My deepest gratitude goes to Sandra Dyck, whose time and knowledge, in the final weeks, made this thesis happen. Sandra, you taught me the wonders of em dashes, and so much more.

Finally, with respect and gratitude to my supervisor, Michael Bell, who has been tenacious in his support and believed in my ability to see this project through to the end.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Notes to Introduction	15
 Chapter One: Setting the Scene.....	 16
Notes to Chapter One	36
 Chapter Two: More Than "Toques and 'Two-Fours:'" 1980-1984.....	 38
Notes to Chapter Two	71
 Chapter Three: Canadian Art Gets Down to Business: 1985-1992	 75
Notes to Chapter Three	99
 Conclusion	 102
Notes to Conclusion	107
 Appendix A: List of exhibitions at the 49th Parallel.....	 108
Appendix B: Summary of exhibitions at the 49th Parallel, by year and type.....	116
Appendix C: The geographical origin of artists featured in solo and two-person exhibitions at the 49th Parallel.....	117
Appendix D: Map of select galleries in SoHo, including the 49th Parallel.....	123
 Bibliography	 124

INTRODUCTION

In 1981, a gallery opened in the SoHo district of New York City (NYC) that was to be a nexus between Canadian visual art and the world. Located at 420 West Broadway, this gallery displayed the work of avant-garde Canadian artists. It served as a promotional venue, galvanizing interest in Canadian artists in the local and international art communities and stimulating the sale of their work. It was called the "49th Parallel: Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art," referred to in this thesis simply as the 49th Parallel. The name, of course, refers to 49°, the degree of latitude separating Canada and the United States (US), the world's longest undefended border. The 49th Parallel was the first Canadian government-sponsored art gallery in NYC, and indeed all of the US, making it a cultural project like none other.

The 49th Parallel was the brainchild and creation of Guy Plamondon, Counselor for Cultural Affairs at the Canadian Consulate in NYC, and for most of its existence, was funded and administered by Canada's Department of External Affairs (DEA) through its International Cultural Relations division. Plamondon was a remarkable visionary who campaigned tirelessly to win support for the creation of a contemporary Canadian gallery in NYC and without him, the 49th Parallel would never have come into being. Plamondon was the gallery's founding director (1981-83), followed by France Morin (1983-89), and Glen Cumming (1989-92).

The 49th Parallel existed for eleven years, from 1981 to 1992. It survived a change in government, continual threats of closure, widespread criticism, conflicting agendas, and drastic cutbacks. It was well received by NYC's art cognoscenti, despite their suspicions of its government sponsorship. In Canada, those who opposed the 49th Parallel saw it as a drain on the public purse.¹ Many members of Canada's visual arts community, however, supported the federal government's bold initiative on its behalf.

NYC offered enormous opportunities for artists. Since World War II, it had replaced Paris as the centre of the international arts scene.² Artists from around the world gravitated to NYC for inspiration, recognition, and ideally, commercial success. Canadian artists were no exception and the government, as I will demonstrate, endeavoured to assist them in succeeding there.

The story of the 49th Parallel is fascinating and complex. The gallery was a product of the nationalistic policies of its time. Its goals were multifold: cultural, presenting Canadian artistic achievements; political, to forge ties with the US by establishing a strong presence in NYC; and commercial, a place for artists to promote and sell their work. This thesis constructs the history of the 49th Parallel—its founding, flourishing, and demise—from the gallery's point of view. It argues that the 49th Parallel, an unprecedented experiment in Canadian cultural diplomacy, was established in a period distinguished by conditions favourable to its creation: government policies endorsing nationalism, funding in support of the arts, and the growing desire to promote internationally Canada's cultural

achievements. It further argues that the rhetoric of commerce in the gallery's founding vision was the seed of its demise. A detailed critical assessment of the gallery's exhibitions is beyond the scope of this thesis: the 49th Parallel is instead viewed as a manifestation of, and response to, broad cultural and political policies and pressures.

In Chapter One, I set the scene for the 49th Parallel's creation by discussing aspects of the political climate and influential nationalist ideologies of the 1970s. I also describe the origins of Canada's cultural relations programs and policies, and the facets of its cultural diplomacy. In Chapter Two, I explore the founding of the gallery and consider its early years. Finally, in Chapter Three, I examine the 49th Parallel from 1985 through 1992, the year it closed.

Can a "nation" and its "culture" be represented coherently and "wholly" within a 7500 square foot gallery? Can a culture be presented in a foreign setting and still be a "true" representation of that which it signifies? Can modernist artistic goals be achieved successfully in a space at once commercial and diplomatic? These questions and tensions surfaced continuously as I researched the history of the 49th Parallel.

Historian Eric Hobsbawm's notion of "invented traditions" is useful in responding to these questions. "Invented traditions," he contends, are an important area of study as they are, "symptoms and therefore indicators of...developments which are otherwise difficult to identify and to date. They are evidence."³ The 49th Parallel is evidence of Canada's effort to employ the visual

arts to represent the nation symbolically, to invent an image of Canada as a progressive and innovative nation with cutting-edge art. Canada's history is not long and its image is not fixed. It has, as a result, lacked clear self-definition, beyond periodic snapshots like Expo '67. The image 49th Parallel directors tried to project was not based on historic art—Group of Seven landscapes, Northwest Coast totem poles, or soapstone sculptures by Inuit artists, the most common bearers of the image of Canada internationally—but on the most progressive works of its contemporary artists. It was a bold and unprecedented experiment, carried out in the hotbed of contemporary international art. At the 49th Parallel, innovative contemporary art was to serve as a sign of a new tradition, a metonym for Canada.

The 49th Parallel was a direct manifestation of the nationalist policies introduced by the federal government during the 1960s and 1970s, and grew out of increased government intervention in Canadian culture. Under the leadership of Liberal prime ministers Lester B. Pearson (1963-68) and Pierre Elliott Trudeau (1968-79 and 1980-84), the government developed economic, political and cultural policies to promote national unity. The 49th Parallel exemplifies the government's use of cultural diplomacy to project an image of the nation onto the international stage and to promote Canada as strong and modern—economically, culturally and politically.

In this thesis, my primary goal is the construction of a working chronology of the 49th Parallel's history. To construct this narrative, I consulted a wide range

of primary and secondary sources. The key primary sources for any history of the 49th Parallel are the archives of the National Gallery of Canada (NGC), and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), known formerly as the Department of External Affairs. The records at the DFAIT were accumulated over the course of the gallery's existence. They are arranged chronologically and include correspondence between DEA officials in Ottawa and individuals at the 49th Parallel and the Canadian Consulate in NYC. There are also inter-departmental memos between DEA's International Cultural Relations and United States divisions, which demonstrate the conflicting agendas within the department: i.e., the 'hard' agenda (economics and trade) and the 'soft' agenda (the arts and education). I was denied access to certain classified DFAIT files associated with cabinet members, as there is a twenty-five year exemption to the *Access to Information Act* on documents involving the federal cabinet.

Following the closure of the 49th Parallel in 1992, its archives were acquired by DFAIT on behalf of the government of Canada.⁴ The title of ownership of these records was then transferred by Order In Council, P.C. 1992-1056, to the National Gallery of Canada. At the NGC, the clipping files and administration files were the main resources for my research. The clipping files contain articles from art periodicals related to the 49th Parallel, including exhibitions reviews, critiques, and general commentary, all important to gauge the gallery's reception. The administration files contain the correspondence of important individuals, and documents related to gallery activities, budget and

funding, corporate sponsorship, committees, legal documents, and its opening, restructuring, and closure.

My interviews with the gallery's key players greatly enhanced my knowledge of the 49th Parallel, and became an invaluable part of my research. Guy Plamondon, the gallery's first director, offered details about and insights on the gallery's founding, the role it fulfilled for Canada, and the limitless opportunities he saw for Canadian art in NYC. France Morin was director of the 49th Parallel for the majority of its existence, and her work at the gallery was integral to its success. Morin provided much information regarding the inner workings of the gallery and the cultural climate in NYC. Glen Cumming, the third and final director of the 49th Parallel, oversaw its closure. He explained that he worked primarily with the Canadian commercial art dealers to bring their artists to NYC, and was less involved with the Consul General and the DEA than Plamondon and Morin. Although there were warnings, Cumming recalled, the gallery's closure was "abrupt."⁵ Marc Mayer worked with France Morin and Glen Cumming as assistant director at the 49th Parallel from 1985 to 1990. Mayer described the details of the gallery's day-to-day activities and provided a balanced critical assessment of its positive and negative aspects.

Yves Gagnon was director of the International Cultural Affairs division at DFAIT from 1997 to 2001, and has worked with the Department for over twenty years. Mr. Gagnon discussed his views on the importance of stable cultural policies, and outlined the difference between cultural relations today and the

situation in the 1970s and 1980s. Robert Johnstone was the Consul General in NYC from 1984 to 1988. He and his wife Popsy, an art patron, were strong supporters of the gallery. Johnstone described lobbying his superiors in Ottawa to maintain funding for the 49th Parallel and praised the indefatigable Morin. He also shed light on the gallery's dual nature—an instrument of cultural diplomacy and a launching pad for Canadian artists. Allan Gotlieb was instrumental in the creation of the 49th Parallel. His long-standing interest in the visual arts, and his belief that Canada should promote contemporary art, made him an essential ally for Guy Plamondon. As ambassador to the US (1981-89), furthermore, he was very influential in advancing Canada's interests there.

Nationalism

The theoretical basis of this thesis is derived from contemporary notions of nationalism. I will examine nationalist writings from the 1970s through the 1990s—much of which were produced concurrent with the gallery's existence—in order to explore the political and ideological climate of the day. During this time, Canada struggled to differentiate itself from the US and to carve a unique niche for itself among the nations of the world. Canada has employed cultural diplomacy in order to achieve these ends, creating cultural promotion programs in an effort to define and demonstrate “Canadianness.”

The construction of Canada's cultural identity was a deliberate enterprise motivated by nationalist ideologies and policies. Nationalism, the foundation of

the Canadian government's endeavours in cultural diplomacy, was the force that motivated the creation of the 49th Parallel. At the gallery, nationalism was part of a political agenda manifested in the cultural realm. As a complement to the gallery's history, and as a means of understanding the conceptual evolution that took place from the 1970s to the 1990s, a review of selected literature on nationalism follows.

I. The 1970s

Close the 49th Parallel etc (1970), is a compilation of essays by prominent Canadians who argued for the necessity of drawing virtual boundaries around Canada to protect its uniqueness and to maintain its distinctive character in the face of American domination. Gail Dexter's essay, titled "Yes, Cultural Imperialism Too!" captures the nationalist fervour that seized Canada in the 1970s. Dexter, a Toronto art critic and journalist, like many Canadians of the time, extolled the virtues of cultural autonomy and nationalism.

Dexter examined the art world as an industry and described art works as products. She characterized the American art market as a profit-motivated industry, and argued that this model was incongruous with the rarefied world of government-supported art in Canada, itself based on a European model in which governments fund art because it is seen as a "public good." Dexter's economic perspective is useful in considering the blurred status of the 49th Parallel—it was a state-supported Canadian gallery existing in a market-driven American city.

Dexter described Canadian artists as being “bound in cultural servitude” to their American counterparts.⁶ She offered as a resolution to this “Americanization” of Canadian art the possibility of a distinctly Canadian style of art. She stated, “aesthetics in the age of [American] imperialism are questions of politics.”⁷ Dexter went on to describe the “unspoiled” state of Canadian art, declaring that the incursion of American commercialism would constitute a “vulgar influence.”⁸ She conceded, however, the difficulty of using art to promote Canadian nationalism, and disputed any claims of an identifiable, pre-existing “Canadian” style or spirit, a notion widely maintained in government policies at the time. “[The] bourgeois notion of art as the objectification of some transcendent spiritual value divorced from content, style, and political consciousness,” she asserted, “has been linked to the naïve assumption that paintings painted in Canada will be ‘Canadian.’”⁹

The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (1949-51), known commonly as the Massey Commission, made recommendations in its 1951 *Report* to foster the arts, sciences and scholarship that had an enduring effect on Canadian cultural policies and institutions. Dexter analyzes the position of the report’s authors, who defined Canadian culture in opposition to American counterpart:

The anti-American stance of the commissioners was not a political position. It derived from their valuation of American culture as commercialized and vulgar. Their exhortations that Canadians in broadcasting, publishing, and scholarship develop “Canadian” traditions were firmly planted in the aristocratic British and European past. Whereas the United States had developed a mass

culture based on the imperatives of buying and selling commodities through advertising, Canadians should simply popularize ruling-class European culture—the rightful heritage of Canada's colonial élite. In promoting “Canadian” culture the commissioners were, in great part, defending their own cultural interests against American intrusions.¹⁰

The Massey Commission articulated the anti-American sentiment that fuelled Canadian nationalism in the 1970s and continues in some quarters today. Dexter usefully outlined the distinction between American and Canadian perceptions of culture: the American model is economically based and market-driven; the Canadian model is a bourgeois, even aristocratic, tradition. The “commodified” American culture Dexter described was the “medium” in which Plamondon proposed that a government-sponsored gallery of contemporary art would “grow” to become an effective advocate for Canadian visual artists in NYC.

II. The 1980s

In the 1980s, different approaches were applied to the study of the concept of nationalism. Earlier studies were often based on the premise that nationalism fuelled the process of nation-building, itself seen as intrinsic to the process of modernization.¹¹ With publications such as Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), Anthony Giddens' *The Nation-State and Violence* (1985), Anthony D. Smith's *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (1986), and Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), theories became more sophisticated. Nationalism in the 1980s centered on the

“substance” of a nation, the substance being comprised of a distinct “culture.” National symbols, myths, values, and traditions make up what authors like Smith and Giddens argue are the ethnic core of nations, and are embedded in public consciousness. Giddens characterizes nationalism as, “an affiliation of individuals to a set of symbols and beliefs emphasizing communality among the members of a political order.”¹² The cultural character of a nation—rather than its geographical or political realities—became the most important aspect determining its self-definition.

The 1980s also saw the rise of postmodernism, a complex set of ideologies characterized generally by difference and heterogeneity. Mike Featherstone defines postmodernism in the following terms:

Postmodernism is both a symptom and a powerful cultural image of the swing away from the conceptualization of global culture less in terms of alleged homogenizing processes (e.g. theories which present cultural imperialism, Americanization and mass consumer culture as a proto-universal culture riding on the back of Western economic and political domination) and more in terms of the diversity, variety and richness of popular and local discourses, codes and practices which resist and play back systemicity and order.¹³

Postmodernism, in other words, privileges many local, diverse discourses over the single, totalizing discourse of modernity. In an attempt to project a singular, cohesive image of Canada, therefore, the 49th Parallel was somewhat of an anachronism, even at its zenith.

The theoretical stance of the 1980s most relevant to this thesis is found in Hobsbawm's “Introduction” to *The Invention of Tradition* (1983). According to the authors, in many nations traditional practices are “modified, ritualized and

institutionalized for new national purposes.”¹⁴ Invented traditions of the period since the Industrial Revolution, argues Hobsbawm, belong to three types:

- a) those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities;
- b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority, and;
- c) those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour.¹⁵

The new image Canada aspired to advance through the 49th Parallel—a legitimizing institution, in effect—is consistent with Hobsbawm’s notion of establishing “status” through invented traditions. The adoption of contemporary art as characteristically Canadian was by no means widespread in the 1980s. Contemporary art had been recognized and institutionalized in Canada in the limited public sphere of the cultural elite, but the presentation of it outside national borders was still limited to “art” venues like the Venice Biennale. The representation of Canada by its contemporary visual art in NYC, more importantly, was symbolic on a deeper ideological level: the art bore witness to a sophisticated cultural avant-gardism that could only exist in a nation of innovation and distinction.

III. The 1990s

In the 1990s, the indistinct nature of the “nation,” and as a result, “nationalism,” became an issue of debate in theoretical discourse. In *Theories of Nationalism*, Umut Özkirimli asserts that developments such as the women’s movement, and the changing nature of Western societies as a result of migration,

caused the study of nationalism to become more focused on “internal (within nations) and external (among nations) hierarchies of power.”¹⁶ In the 1970s, nationalism was focused inward, and did not, as a result, deconstruct the hegemony of the state. In the 1980s, students of nationalism began to look critically at the construction of the state, but from an essentially Western point of view. In the 1990s, theoreticians argued that nations should not be defined as singular, homogeneous bodies. This theoretical model resonates with Canada's particular circumstances—two “founding” cultures, official multiculturalism, and diverse Aboriginal cultures—is strong.

Nationalism, writes cultural theorist Jessica Evans in her introduction to *Representing the Nation: A Reader*, is a cultural ideal that is “expressed in the motivation to unify, to create a congruence between membership of the political nation-state and identification with a national culture, a way of life.”¹⁷ “In recent years,” she argues, “the ‘nation’ has come to be seen not merely as the object of political, geographical and economic analysis, but as one of *cultural* analysis.”¹⁸ Canada is a rich subject and object of such analysis. In the 1990s, theorists also looked beyond broad sweeping interpretations and recognized that the everyday manifestations—the quotidian fragments such as federal post boxes—play a critical role in building a country or community's character and unity.

The 49th Parallel brought together diverse pressures; it was a place where culture, economics, and politics converged. The founding vision contained within it latent conflicts and contradictions. An official “Canadian” gallery located in NYC

in the midst of the world's most vital commercial art district establishes the primary tension underlying its existence. The 49th Parallel's vision included the rhetoric of the marketplace, but it was government-funded, an instrument of cultural diplomacy. The DEA strove to represent Canada as a modern, innovative twentieth-century country on an equal footing with the world's most advanced nations. Using contemporary art to represent Canada, however, was a risky enterprise. An inherently elitist form, it was always limited in its ability to serve broadly as "a set of symbols and beliefs emphasizing communality among the members of a political order."¹⁹

Endnotes

¹ National Gallery of Canada Archives (NGC), 49th Parallel Fonds (49PF). Letters included in these files from members of the public to Members of Parliament and the Minister of External Affairs criticize the misuse of public funds for a Canadian art gallery located in a foreign nation.

² See Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*, (Chicago 1983).

³ Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction," in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge 1983), 12.

⁴ NGC/49PF, Finding Aid.

⁵ Glen Cumming, interview with author, Toronto, Ontario, 10 October, 2000.

⁶ Gail Dexter, "Yes, Cultural Imperialism Too!" in Ian Lumsden (ed.), *Close the 49th Parallel etc.* (Toronto 1970), 165.

⁷ Ibid., 166.

⁸ Ibid., 166.

⁹ Ibid., 159.

¹⁰ Ibid., 158.

¹¹ Umut Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism*, (New York 2000), 2.

¹² Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence*, (Cambridge 1985), 219.

¹³ Mike Featherstone, "Global Culture: An Introduction," in Mike Featherstone (ed.), *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, (London, reprint, 1996), 2.

¹⁴ Hobsbawm "Introduction," 6

¹⁵ Ibid., 9.

¹⁶ Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism*, 192.

¹⁷ Jessica Evans, "Introduction: Nation and Representation," in David Boswell and Jessica Evans (eds.), *Representing the Nation*, (London 1999), 1.

¹⁸ Ibid., 1.

¹⁹ Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence*, 219.

CHAPTER ONE

Setting the Scene

In order to understand the significance of the 49th Parallel, it is necessary to look beyond the gallery and place it within a wider historical, political, and cultural context. Canada's culture is derived from the traditions of Britain, France, its First Nations peoples and more recently, American popular culture. A goal of the Canadian government since the mid-twentieth century has been to build a culture that is distinctly Canadian, a struggle that was exemplified by the creation of the Massey Commission in 1949.¹

The federal government invested in Canada's cultural development for political and nationalistic reasons. In the mid-twentieth century, when the government began investing in the arts on a large scale, the modern art market in Canada was nascent and small. From the government's perspective, funding the arts was a means to build a national identity that would be recognized both nationally and internationally. Charles Comfort, artist and later director of the National Gallery of Canada, asserted in 1951 that, "The question of whether or not there exists an authentic and apprehendable spirit, symbolic of Canada and Canadian life, leaves no doubt in my mind....The characterful Canadian spirit [is] essentially northern, individualistic, conservative, loyal, independent, virile, and industrious."²

In this chapter, I outline the origins of Canada's cultural policy and explore how the federal government became a central player in the workings of the arts

in Canada, at home and abroad. I will first discuss the Massey Commission and the resulting creation of a federal program for funding the arts. Gail Dexter has characterized the Massey Commission *Report* as "one of the sternest warnings to Canadians about the danger of the Americanization of our culture."³ The Commission thus provides a distant but necessary background for the creation of the 49th Parallel; it is a direct manifestation of the desire of influential individuals in the Canadian government and Canada's cultural elite to combat Americanization and to assert its cultural autonomy.

The Second World War generated new levels of internationalism, as seen, for example, in the creation of the United Nations in 1945. Canada was championed on the international level by Lester B. Pearson (1897-1972), who served as Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs (1948-57) and Prime Minister (1963-68). As Canada's representative on the international stage, Pearson was a consummate diplomat who believed that Canada could, "most effectively influence international affairs not by aggressive nationalism but by earning the respect of the nations with whom we co-operate, and who will therefore be glad to discuss their international policies with us."⁴ The arts, to Pearson, played an important role in projecting Canada's international image. He supported the Massey Commission, and the DEA's International Cultural Relations program was established while he was prime minister. I review Pearson's contribution to international affairs and outline the increasingly important role that culture played in Canada's foreign relations during this period.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau (1919-2000), Prime Minister of Canada (1968-79 and 1980-84), was also critical in projecting Canada into the international political, economic, and cultural spheres. He was a nationalist and federalist who believed in a distinct, independent Canada. At the same time, he enacted policies to strengthen Canada's position internationally. The 49th Parallel, founded in 1981 while Trudeau was prime minister, represents, in symbolic and real terms, his parallel national and international interests.

Finally, a summary of Canada-US relations during the period leading up to the 49th Parallel will provide insight into the choice of NYC as its location. Political scientist Michael Tucker contends that Canada can achieve significant objectives through cultural relations with the US. He states that,

Public internationalism on the part of spirited Canadians has long been most profuse and intense within the Canadian-American relationship. The cross-border collaboration by like-minded Canadians and Americans has been aimed at influencing the decision-making processes within one or the other, or both, of the governments of the two countries.⁵

As will be revealed, attracting American interest became a specific goal of the Canadian government in the late 1970s, and culture was to play a major role.

The Massey Commission

All nations now recognize as public responsibilities both the issue of information about themselves and cultural exchanges with other states. Canada is assuming these responsibilities along with her new international importance....It is obvious that the Canadian voice is listened to most attentively when the hearer has some familiarity with the Canadian scene and with Canadian achievements.⁶

Massey Commission Report, 1951

The 49th Parallel grew out of the cultural policies stimulated by the recommendations of the Massey Commission. The recommendations were based on the notion that constructing a national identity by funding the arts was a social responsibility best met by government. In his 1992 book *The Muses, The Masses and the Massey Commission*, Paul Litt wrote that, "the Canadian state had an obligation to support the cultural activities which legitimized its very existence."⁷ Federal policy and funding were seen as essential in developing a cohesive and confident Canadian identity, distinctive from the American one. The Canada Council, ostensibly founded in 1957 as a result of the Massey Commission, established vital support systems for Canadian artists, dispensing funds broadly to artists and performers in all parts of the country. Furthermore, this support for national cultural development in Canada was, in essence, a form of resistance to the ubiquitous American popular culture.

During World War II, a relationship developed between the state and the arts when governments, particularly Britain's, employed the arts as a measure of propaganda and to entertain their troops. Democratic nations believed that state sponsorship of the arts would combat the dissemination of false propaganda by dictatorial regimes.⁸ The role of the British Council, founded in 1935, was to promote the work of British artists abroad through touring exhibitions and lectures.⁹ France promoted education, information and culture through its Director General of Cultural Relations, an office founded in 1945. Governments realized that supporting—and thereby managing—the arts would serve the

interests of the state. These ideas were based on the belief that, in the words of George Woodcock, "a nation's arts are the most reliable signs of its real nature and that they can therefore be used as political tokens both internally and in relations with foreign countries."¹⁰

Canada set out to follow the example of Britain and France in 1949 with the creation of the Massey Commission. Since the early 1940s, a movement had been afoot among Canada's artists and art supporters to create a non-political government body to support the arts.¹¹ In 1949, after years of persistent pressure, arts organizations convinced the government to take action. With the endorsement of prominent figures such as Lester Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs, and reluctantly, Prime Minister Louis St.-Laurent (1882-1973), the federal government established the Massey Commission.¹² Vincent Massey, a great patron of the arts and the former Canadian High Commissioner to Great Britain, was instrumental in the creation of the Commission and was chosen as its chairman. The Commission's mandate was to enquire into and make recommendations on the

...encouragement of the arts and sciences, research, the preservation of our national records, a national library, museums, exhibitions, relations in these fields with international organizations, and activities generally which are designed to enrich our national life, and to increase our own consciousness of our national heritage and knowledge of Canada abroad.¹³

In other words, its purpose was to recommend to the federal government the conditions and initiatives necessary to foster a vibrant and innovative national culture.¹⁴

The Massey Commission also addressed international cultural relations. The commissioners received briefs from various sources; the most pertinent to this discussion was that submitted by Charles Frederick Fraser and Garnet Thomas Page in July of 1949.¹⁵ The Fraser-Page *Submission* argued eloquently that Canada, a country committed to advancing its involvement in international relations, would be served by encouraging cultural relations with other nations. The reasons for this, according to Fraser and Page, were:

1. Because the promotion of better understanding among the peoples of different nations is so obviously of critical importance today and in the years that lie immediately ahead.
2. Because one of the most fruitful and least costly ways to promote such understanding and to open the way for the freedom that has its roots in open access to truth, is through the interchange of people.
3. Because the connection between international cultural relations and international trade has been demonstrated to be direct and significant, and Canada perhaps more than any other country depends on the sale of its products abroad for international prosperity.¹⁶

While Fraser and Page acknowledged the value of various aspects of cultural relations—such as the touring of art exhibitions, and drama, musical and other groups—they emphasized the exchange of foreign students and scholars as an important means to familiarize non-Canadians with “Canadian ways and Canadian commodities.” The authors stated that,

Individuals and organizations alike are now manifesting a desire to reach beyond our borders and establish links with their opposite numbers in the intellectual and cultural life of other lands. Through the medium of an organized pattern of personal interchanges one more step can be taken to minimize the forces which tend to separate and embitter men because they remain strangers.¹⁷

That these new friends could become business associates was not lost on Fraser and Page. Foreign visitors would develop, "an interest in and affection for Canada, which they would carry back into the business, professional and governmental life of their own countries [which] would naturally result in their later turning to Canada for the advice and the commodities required from abroad."¹⁸ Fraser and Page's stress on the link between personal interchanges and business opportunity was a concept which ultimately served to justify the creation of cultural centres abroad, the 49th Parallel in particular.

That the Massey Commission *Report* included a section entitled "Cultural Relations Abroad" demonstrates the strength of the Fraser-Page *Submission*.

This section begins:

Ignorance of Canada in other countries is very widespread. People in many countries are aware of our material resources, it is true; but our rapid growth as a world state, and our assumption of world responsibilities, have naturally outstripped the knowledge among other nations of Canadian institutions, habits, people, geography, and especially of our subtle and important relationship with the Commonwealth of Nations. It is not unnatural that Canada has been frequently called "the unknown country." Most striking of all is the ignorance of Canada among the people of our nearest neighbour, whose unfamiliarity with our affairs is equalled only by their friendliness.¹⁹

The *Report* contended that the efforts then being made to elevate the awareness of Canadian culture abroad were not proportional to Canada's international status. Canada's support of its cultural activities was thus out of step when compared to that of other nations, even when population was taken into account. The commissioners criticized Canada for lagging behind other democratic nations in promoting cultural exchanges and for relying too heavily on the efforts

of volunteer groups and organizations.²⁰ The *Report* also maintained that information about Canada would serve to stimulate its international trade. In addition to cultivating Canada's prestige and opportunity in the world of nations, the promotion of cultural exchanges would, "give the worker in the creative arts a wide export market and in return would enrich the cultural fare received by Canadians from abroad."²¹

The Massey Commission *Report* further acknowledged that Canada's shortcomings in cultural promotion and exchange were due to three deficiencies: the lack of federal funding, the lack of a national agency representing the development of educational exchanges, and the lack of a federal agency concerned solely with Canada's intellectual and cultural life.²² This last agency would guide and advise the DEA on cultural matters. In addition to several guidelines regarding the staffing of posts abroad, and the provision of resources for these posts, the commissioners made the following recommendation:

We are therefore presenting as our final group of recommendations a suggestion that one Council assume the primary responsibility for such official aid and countenance as can properly be given both to all voluntary cultural activities at home and to cultural exchanges with other countries. This Council, it is proposed, should take on among other matters some of the functions corresponding to those both of the British Council and of the Arts Council of Great Britain.²³

The Canada Council was the most prominent result of the Massey Commission *Report*. Charged with developing and supporting the arts, this arm's-length agency symbolized the government's view of culture as intrinsic to Canada's

health and prosperity, and indicated its commitment to provide the necessary funding.²⁴

Lester B. Pearson

Lester B. Pearson was a leading figure in developing Canada's international profile in the post-war period. He entered the DEA in 1928 and served at Canada House in London from 1935 to 1941, working under Vincent Massey, the High Commissioner. Pearson became Canada's ambassador to the US in 1945 and Under-Secretary of State in 1946. In 1948 Pearson became Minister of External Affairs in Prime Minister Mackenzie King's cabinet and was also elected to Parliament that year. Pearson's support for the creation of the United Nations and his work to create the North Atlantic Treaty Organization indicate his commitment to internationalism. In 1957 Pearson was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating an end to the Suez Crisis, thus bringing him international renown for his diplomatic skills and statesmanship. In 1963, following five years as leader of the Official Opposition, Pearson led the Liberals to victory on a platform including bilingualism and biculturalism, becoming Canada's fourteenth prime minister.

Riding an economic boom and having played a valuable role in World War II, Canada experienced a surge of national confidence in the late 1940s. Under Pearson's leadership in the DEA, Canada sought to build bilateral and multilateral coalitions with other nations, and succeeded in developing those

alliances. Pearson believed that Canada could, "most effectively influence international affairs not by aggressive nationalism but by earning the respect of the nations with whom we co-operate, and who will therefore be glad to discuss their international policies with us."²⁵

Pearson became prime minister during Québec's Quiet Revolution, a period of rapid modernization following 1960 that was associated with French Canadian nationalism. This fervent nationalism within Québec and calls for secession threatened the unity of the Canadian nation-state in an unprecedented manner. As prime minister, Pearson's policies were thus divided between recognizing Québec's distinctiveness and focussing on the unity of Canada. He recognized Québec's uniqueness in terms of language, history, and culture, and believed that federalism could bridge the differences between English and French Canada. He instituted the policy of bilingualism in the federal government and crown corporations. His recognition of a distinct Francophone identity was an extension of his broader principle of supporting pluralism in Canada.

Under Pearson's leadership, furthermore, the Canadian government incorporated policies of economic nationalism.²⁶ During the 1960s, and on the recommendation of the fervently nationalistic finance minister, Walter Gordon, the government instituted policies such as the 1967 Bank Act, which limited the amount of foreign ownership of banks in Canada. The government believed that, "there were certain institutions of Canadian economic and financial life that

must never be allowed to fall under foreign control.”²⁷ The government also proposed the creation of the Canada Development Corporation to provide financial assistance to Canadian businesses, and “Canadianize” industry.²⁸ In a 1967 letter to Gordon, Pearson described the problem of foreign, and primarily American, control of Canadian resources and industry as “becoming more difficult and more dangerous to our separate national existence.”²⁹

Nationalism in Canada was always seen as an antidote to the threat of the US. In an article titled “Pearson, Canada, and the World,” Robert Bothwell wrote that Pearson and his generation “thought it only natural to apply the lessons of Depression and war, which suggested the largest possible government instruments, and national leadership and action.”³⁰ Pearson believed that a strong central government was the key to retaining independence from the US, as it would provide national economic and social institutions.³¹ As a symbol of his dedication to building an autonomous and patriotic nation, Pearson oversaw the adoption of Canada’s national flag in 1965.

Advances in International Cultural Relations: the 1960s

During the 1960s, the DEA established cultural programs that would promote Canada’s cultural productions internationally. A policy that promoted internationalism would serve the domestic cultural community by presenting and promoting Canadian cultural production abroad, first in European countries.

Roger Swanson argues that Canada's objective with respect to international cultural relations was not to influence other nations. Rather, the measure of success for these policies "was the extent to which [they] contributed to Canada's national well-being, including especially the need for national unity."³² Foreign policy objectives and practices would be influenced largely by domestic issues; in fact, as Swanson continues, "foreign policy must be enlisted in their solution."³³

The creation of the DEA's Cultural Relations Division in 1965 was stimulated by a Québec government initiative to establish bilateral cultural relations with France.³⁴ In the early 1960s, Québec nationalists were intent on building formal ties with France to affirm the roots of Québec's distinct culture in its ancestral mother-country. France supported Québec's internationalist ambitions, as exemplified by Charles de Gaulle's famous 1967 provocation in Montréal, "Vive le Québec libre!" Québec was making forays into the international arena, which made the federal government nervous about the implications for its presentation internationally of an image of a united Canada.

The emergence of an international cultural program was an international response to internal domestic threats to Canada's national sovereignty. Umut Özkirimli identifies the materialization of nationalism in these circumstances as "tide-like." He asserts that this type of nationalism emerges, "under crisis situations, then suddenly disappearing once normal conditions are restored."³⁵

The creation of formal cultural ties between France and Québec proved to be problematic for the Canadian government. In February 1965, the Québec

government signed a cultural agreement with France, through which the province would receive educational assistance. The federal government responded in April 1965 with the creation of the Cultural Relations Division within DEA. A few months later, Canada signed an accord with France to develop cultural programs between the two nations, thus expanding the existing DEA cultural program with France. Advocacy by the Cultural Affairs Division gave prominence to the value of cultural diplomacy in Canadian foreign relations and resulted in the establishment of Canadian cultural centres in Europe, and eventually, the 49th Parallel.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau

The 1970s saw the further emergence of what was characterized as “Canadian nationalism”—a self-conscious understanding of the national social and cultural landscape—and an increasing concern for the sovereignty of Canada in the face of American dominance. In *Who’s Afraid of Canadian Culture?* (1976), Susan Crean argued that Canada, through mass media exposure and the American influence on Canada’s education system, was becoming ever-increasingly “Americanized.” “From sea to sea, in the smallest towns and the most isolated communities as well as in the big cities,” she warned, “American culture proliferates while our own fades and is being forgotten.”³⁶ Crean articulated the general fear that the rise of a continental economy would lead to a continental—that is, an American—culture. Resisting

American cultural domination and the advancement of a distinctly Canadian cultural identity was the call of the day.

During the 1970s, Canada's foreign policy attempted to demonstrate its autonomy from the US. Culture maintained a strong presence within Canadian foreign policy under Trudeau. While enhancing conventional diplomatic efforts, Trudeau's programs promoted Canadian cultural productions abroad, creating a foreign audience for the work of Canadian artists.³⁷ Trudeau's 1972 "Third Option" policy, for example, encouraged developing relations and trade with Europe and Japan in an attempt to mitigate Canada's reliance on the US.³⁸ As the anonymous author of a 1979 DEA publication on US-Canada relations summarized, "Whereas, in earlier days, bilateral relations had hinged to a large extent on the actions of the United States, now the relationship is increasingly affected by Canadian policy actions, some of which are perceived in the U.S.A. as being contrary to United States' interests."³⁹

National unity was a major concern for Trudeau, as it had been for Pearson. His domestic policies of the mid-1970s struggled to foster harmony between English and French Canada and to create a collective national consciousness. The notion of an essential Canadian culture was and is highly disputable, for Canada's diverse geographic, social, and ethnic landscape defies a simple, homogenous identity. Any efforts to define a national identity, therefore, demonstrate a lack of sensitivity to Canada's heterogeneous character. Trudeau recognized this and attempted to dismantle a bicultural definition of Canadian

culture with his infamous multiculturalism policy of 1971.⁴⁰ In 1982 the Applebaum-Hébert *Report* affirmed the direction of Trudeau's policy in its statement that diversity continued to be "an essential cultural resource."⁴¹ The 49th Parallel and the other cultural centres attempted, paradoxically, to portray a unitary view of "Canada" that was somewhat at odds with the heterogeneity of Canadian society and Trudeau's multiculturalism.

By the late 1970s, Trudeau had surrendered his "Third Option" to the determinations of geography and the inevitability of an integrated North American market.⁴² Although he initially resisted crediting America as playing an integral role in Canada's prosperity, he grew to recognize the importance of the Canada-US relationship. It was impossible to ignore the fact that for the majority of the twentieth century, Canada and the US were primary trading partners. Trudeau came to admit that, "It is because of American capital investment, and the technology that came with it, that we enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world."⁴³

In early 1979 the DEA published a "user-friendly" tabloid-format document entitled *US and U.S.A., A View of Canadian/American Relations*. Full of cartoons and data meant to demonstrate the importance of this relationship, *US and U.S.A.* pronounced in plain language that, "Both Canadians and Americans should enhance their knowledge and understanding of each other's problems and points of view. This involves people like you and is not solely or even mostly

the task of the governments!"⁴⁴ In the "Culture—A Matter of Survival" section, we read,

So it must be for Canada as a whole, that Canadians retain a cultural identity so as to remain a distinct people. To this end, Canadian cultural institutions and mass communication systems have been strengthened and Canadian talent—both English and French—has been encouraged by financial and economic incentives.⁴⁵

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is then offered as an example of how Canada has developed programs to fend off the threat of US cultural domination.

Finally, Canadians are reassured with the following:

A new nationalism is growing up in Canada, and Canadians are aware of the cultural pressures from the United States. They realize, as does the Government, that home-grown talent and productions need support and encouragement in order to thrive. The problem of living next door to a large, dynamic, friendly culture will not go away, but steps are being taken to temper the situation and reinforce our own culture.⁴⁶

Documents like *US and U.S.A.* indicated Canada's increasing interest in allying itself with the US. Close dealings—political, cultural, and economic—between the two countries were being negotiated in all areas of government, thus fortuitously preparing for the establishment of the 49th Parallel.

The Canada-US Relationship

Canada is in the American orbit and will remain so for the foreseeable future. Canadians could not resist that if they wanted to, and not many of them want to. Culturally, both nations should run their own show, and the way to run a cultural show is to let a thousand flowers bloom....⁴⁷

Northrop Frye, *Divisions on a Common Ground*

Northrop Frye's prophetic words highlight the indivisibility of North America culture. Although the two countries have been linked geo-politically for

generations, Canada did not engage in formal relations—independent of the British government—with the US until the early twentieth century. In 1927, Canada opened its first legation in Washington, D.C.; this was elevated to embassy status in 1943.⁴⁸ For many years after World War II, Canada and the US shared relations that historian Robert Bothwell has characterized as “bland harmony.”⁴⁹ As Bothwell asserts, “From the American point of view, Canadian interests were not so much opposed as forgotten....”⁵⁰ The US had no discernible motivation for pursuing closer relations with Canada.

While national security and cultural autonomy were primary concerns of the federal government in the 1970s, economic issues were also paramount. Canada’s dependency on the US for trade ran counter to the government’s objectives of independence. Canada, with its small population and vast geography and resources, depended on trade with other nations for economic development; the encroachment of American investment was a pressing concern.⁵¹ The Foreign Investment Review Act (FIRA), passed in 1973, established a mechanism for government to screen foreign takeovers of Canadian firms. Amidst calls by Canadian nationalists for drastic curbs on foreign investment and calls to create a more porous border and freer trade, FIRA represented a moderate response. Other instances of the Canadian government’s assertion over its dominion were the creation of Canadian-content regulations in radio and television (1961 and 1970), the Canada Development

Corporation (1973), and the establishment of domestic ownership regulations for Canadian periodicals (1975-76).⁵²

One of the main objectives in the formulation and execution of foreign policy is to influence the opinions of people in other nations toward Canada. It would be unrealistic, however, for a nation to expect to influence entire populations. The making and executing of foreign policy, therefore, involves targeting specific groups: politicians, the media, and "opinion-makers."⁵³ The 49th Parallel targetted very specific audiences: the makers, dealers, and collectors of contemporary visual art, and the New York cognoscenti.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Canadian government was shifting its diplomatic energies away from Europe and toward the US. In 1974, the federal cabinet had approved a program set forth by the Cultural Affairs division that set the US as a priority target.⁵⁴ In 1974, Guy Plamondon, then head of the Cultural Affairs Division at DEA, wrote a position paper stating that, "The specific reasons for developing a strong cultural programme with the US stem from various factors, among which the political ones are certainly the most important."⁵⁵ The federal government's interest in developing cultural relations with the US was largely diplomatic, with the purpose being to re-establish trade relations, which had deteriorated during the 1970s. Canada was, in other words, actively seeking access to the American market.

The promotion of Canada through cultural ventures was seen as an integral component of building trade alliances. The following assertion from a 1986 DEA document elucidates the link between cultural relations and trade:

The cultural dimension of foreign relations colours the attitudes of nations to each other, and influences the environment within which commercial and political decisions are made....[Cultural relations] build respect and confidence in Canada as a dynamic, distinct nation; they improve the likelihood of Canada as being seen as a source of excellence for goods and services and a destination for tourism and foreign investment....⁵⁶

Many documents from this period articulate a similar theme; they emphasize the importance of cultural diplomacy and assert the value of using culture as a common ground upon which to establish international relations and build trade relations. This belief provided the Canadian government the necessary motivation to set up the 49th Parallel. While Plamondon and others viewed the gallery first and foremost as a vehicle for the promotion of Canadian art and artists in NYC, the individuals at DEA who were accountable for this expenditure defended the viability of the project by using political and economic justifications. Many co-existing agendas were obviously at play.

Misconceptions of Canada in the US were viewed as impediments to the potential for developing successful relations between the two countries. According to political scientist Andrew Fenton Cooper, cultural diplomacy with the US was seen as a non-aggressive, "'soft face' style of raising the awareness and understanding of Canada among American leadership groups."⁵⁷ The establishment of the Academic Relations Division at DEA, which organized and

funded exchanges with American students and assisted in the creation of Canadian Studies programs at American universities, demonstrates the government's desire to educate Americans about Canada.⁵⁸

It became important, according to Robert Williams, for Canadian foreign policy-makers to influence Americans' perceptions of Canada, "to gather information, and to substitute favorable images for unfavorable stereotypes."⁵⁹ While this was part of the reason for establishing cultural dialogue with the US, the federal government was also interested in opening this large market to Canadian art for sales and exhibitions. The potential for financial gain in the US was immense, and no sector of the Canadian economy was excluded from the move to exploit it. In light of the fact that the development of trade was a significant factor in the government's penetration of the US in the 1980s, commercial potential indisputably motivated the establishment of the 49th Parallel.

Endnotes

- ¹ Maria Tippet, *Making Culture: English-Canadian institutions and the arts before the Massey Commission*, (Toronto 1990). In this book, Maria Tippet contests this notion, arguing that Canada had a vibrant culture prior to the Commission.
- ² Charles Comfort, as quoted in Dot Tuer, "The Art of Nation Building," *Parallélogramme*, XVII:4 (May 1992), 26.
- ³ Gail Dexter, "Yes, Cultural Imperialism Too!" in Ian Lumsden (ed.), *Close the 49th Parallel etc.*, (Toronto 1970), 158.
- ⁴ Denis Stairs, "Pearson and the Meaning of Politics," in Norman Hillmer (ed.), *Pearson: The Unlikely Gladiator*, (Montreal 1999), 43.
- ⁵ Michael Tucker, *Canadian Foreign Policy: Contemporary Issues and Themes*, (Toronto 1980), 18.
- ⁶ Massey Commission Report, <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/massey/rpt/etable.htm>, 4 May, 2001, 253-54.
- ⁷ Paul Litt, *The Muses, The Masses and the Massey Commission*, (Toronto 1992), 4.
- ⁸ Massey Commission Report, <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/massey/rpt/etable.htm>, 4 May, 2001, 263.
- ⁹ Like the Arts Council of Great Britain, which served as a prototype for the Canada Council, Great Britain's international cultural agency, the British Council, also set a precedent for Canada's International Cultural Relations division.
- ¹⁰ George Woodcock, *Strange Bedfellows: the state of the arts in Canada*, (Vancouver 1985), 30.
- ¹¹ Michael Bell, "The Welfare of Art in Canada," in *The Kingston Conference Proceedings, Conference of Canadian Artists*, (Kingston, Ontario, reprint, 1991), iii-xxxiv.
- ¹² Woodcock, *Strange Bedfellows*, 44.
- ¹³ Charles Frederick Fraser and Garnet Thomas Page, *A Submission to The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Science regarding the Functions, Duties and Organization of a National Commission for Unesco and the development of a Cultural Relations Programme for Canada*, unpublished submission, (Ottawa 1949), 54.
- ¹⁴ The purpose of the Massey Commission was not limited to culture. It had a broader mandate that included sciences and education.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 52. The *Submission* began by clarifying terminology: 'cultural relations' describes 'relations between peoples' while 'diplomatic relations' means 'relations between governments.'
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 53-54.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.
- ¹⁹ Massey Commission Report, <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/massey/rpt/etable.htm>, 4 May, 2001, 253.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 253. The *Massey Commission Report* describes projects undertaken by the National Gallery (which had been sending paintings abroad for exhibitions since the mid-1920s), the National Film Board and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to export Canadian culture and present it beyond Canada's borders.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 262.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 267.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 365.
- ²⁴ *Canada in Today's World*, (Ottawa 1980), 103.
- ²⁵ Robert Bothwell, "Pearson, Canada, and the World," in Norman Hillmer (ed.), *Pearson: The Unlikely Gladiator* (Montreal 1999), 28.
- ²⁶ Robert Bothwell, *Canada since 1945: power, politics and provincialism*, (Toronto, revised edition, 1989), 116.
- ²⁷ Peter Stursberg, *Lester Pearson and the American Dilemma*, (Toronto 1980), 236.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 242. Although introduced by Pearson's Liberal government, the Canada Development Corporation was not created until 1973, under Trudeau's leadership.

-
- ²⁹ Lester Pearson, as quoted in Stursberg, *Lester Pearson and the American Dilemma*, 243.
- ³⁰ Bothwell, "Pearson, Canada, and the World," 28.
- ³¹ Michael D. Behiels, "Pearson and the Conundrum of National Unity," in Norman Hillmer (ed.), *Pearson: The Unlikely Gladiator*, (Montreal 1999), 73.
- ³² Robert J. Williams, "International Cultural Programmes: Canada and Australia Compared," in Andrew Fenton Cooper (ed.), *Canadian Culture: international dimensions*, (Toronto 1985), 95.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 95.
- ³⁴ Guy Plamondon, interview with author, Ottawa, Ontario, 31 October, 2000.
- ³⁵ Umut Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*, (New York 2000), 3.
- ³⁶ Susan Crean, *Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture?*, (Don Mills, Ontario 1976), 268.
- ³⁷ Department of External Affairs (hereafter DEA), *Plan quinquennal de développement des relations culturelles avec l'étranger*, 4.
- ³⁸ DEA, *US and U.S.A. View of Canadian/American Relations*, (Ottawa 1979), 9.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.
- ⁴⁰ Department of Communications, *Report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee*, (Ottawa 1982), 10.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 9.
- ⁴² The creation of the National Energy Policy in the early 1980s was an exception. The international crisis in the supply of energy motivated the Trudeau government to create this policy which denied an approach to an integrated continent in order to serve national economic interests.
- ⁴³ DEA, *US and U.S.A.*, 7.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.
- ⁴⁷ Northrop Frye, *Divisions on a Common Ground: essays on Canadian culture*, (Toronto 1982), 64.
- ⁴⁸ DEA, *US and U.S.A.*, 2.
- ⁴⁹ Bothwell, "Pearson, Canada, and the World," 22.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.
- ⁵¹ DEA, *US and U.S.A.*, 6.
- ⁵² Roger Frank Swanson, "Canadian Cultural Nationalism and the U.S. Public Interest," in Janice L. Murray (ed.), *Canadian Cultural Nationalism*, (New York 1977), 66.
- ⁵³ The Cultural Affairs division's academic programs exemplify this notion of targeting a specific audience. They encouraged Canadian Studies in foreign universities and provided scholarships and exchanges for students. These programs focused on the highly educated segments of foreign populations, who were to become the future 'opinion-makers.'
- ⁵⁴ Robert Fulford, "The glorious paradox of cultural politics," *The Toronto Star*, 22 May, 1982, F5.
- ⁵⁵ National Gallery of Canada, 49th Parallel Fonds, Box 36, File 1, Guy Plamondon, "Establishment of a Canadian Art Centre, February 14, 1974," 2.
- ⁵⁶ International Cultural Relations, DEA, "Communiqué," XI: 200 (November 19, 1986).
- ⁵⁷ Andrew Fenton Cooper, *Canadian Culture: International Dimension*, (Toronto 1985), 157.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 157.
- ⁵⁹ Williams, "International Cultural Programmes: Canada and Australia Compared," 95.

CHAPTER TWO

More than “Toques and ‘Two-Fours’”: 1980-1984

**“New York was the place to be seen.”¹
Guy Plamondon**

The 49th Parallel was the brainchild of Guy Plamondon, a career foreign service official. Plamondon was involved with art from a very young age.² The great-grandson of renowned Canadian painter Antoine Plamondon (1804-95), he grew up in a family with a strong interest in the history of visual arts, particularly the arts of Canada. As a child he studied painting with Group of Seven artist Arthur Lismer (1885-1969), and frequented the Museum of Fine Arts in Montréal. He maintained his interest in art history while studying law at the University of Montréal. Plamondon's upbringing and education hint at what motivated him, a civil servant and lawyer, to advance the interests of contemporary Canadian art.

Plamondon, one of the first to work in DEA's Cultural Affairs division in 1965, assembled the Department's original collection of prints and drawings. He oversaw the purchase of contemporary Canadian art for DEA headquarters and diplomatic posts around the world. The Cultural Affairs division made an agreement with the director of the NGC, Jean Sutherland Boggs, which stipulated that it would consult with NGC curators regarding the selection of art to be purchased. Plamondon visited countless galleries and attended many openings, including those at the NGC and the Art Gallery of Ontario. He developed connections with dealers such as Toronto dealers Ydessa Hendeles

and Carmen Lamanna, and Toronto art patrons such as Arthur Gelber, who became a key player in the creation of the 49th Parallel. Both Plamondon and Gelber were buying from dealers like Lamanna.

Plamondon then spent four years in Paris (1968-72) setting up and developing Canada's first cultural centre, the Maison du Canada à Paris, which opened in 1969. The London (1972) and Brussels (1973) venues opened soon thereafter, establishing a Canadian cultural presence in these major European cities. Like the 49th Parallel, the centres were separate entities from the Consulates that existed for the promotion and display of Canadian art. The European centres, however, were located strategically in tourist areas and their programming was tailored to a "general" audience. In this sense, these centres differed greatly from the 49th Parallel, which from its elite SoHo site targeted an exclusive art-dealing and collecting audience. Unlike the 49th Parallel, furthermore, the programming of the European centres was not limited to avant-garde art but included the work of artists from various periods and in divergent styles, providing the broadest possible panorama of Canadian art. The European cultural centres thus served only generally as models for the ambitious program to be undertaken in NYC.

In an effort to build on Canada's achievements in Europe, Plamondon wrote position papers on the value of cultural centres and suggested potential locations where Canada could best promote itself culturally, including NYC, Los Angeles, and Mexico City.³ Plamondon pitched these centres as a network

through which Canada could promote itself and its products while serving as a platform for diplomatic relations. The US was of particular interest to Plamondon and to the government. Creating a permanent presence for contemporary Canadian art in the US would, in his words, help the two nations have a “better understanding of one another.”⁴ For Plamondon the US—and particularly NYC—represented an opportunity to link Canadian culture with the most exciting and boldest advances in art. The entrepreneurial avant-gardism that characterized the New York art scene, furthermore, provided an opportunity for Canadian artists to exploit this market and to reap the potential financial benefits.

Plamondon returned to Ottawa from Paris in 1972 to assume the position of head of the Programs, Planning and Cultural Agreements section of the Cultural Affairs Division at DEA. He continued to enlarge the Department's permanent art collection and participated in the art acquisition program for Canadian posts abroad.⁵

Plamondon in New York City

Continuing his work with the DEA, Plamondon was posted to NYC in 1975, initially as a legal advisor at Canada's Permanent Mission to the United Nations and, in 1977, as the Canadian Consulate's Counselor for Cultural Affairs.⁶ In the latter position, he acted as a liaison between artists in Canada and cultural venues in NYC, coordinating performances for Canadian singers, musicians and actors, setting up venues for Canadian film productions, and

negotiating with galleries for the display of Canadian art.⁷ Plamondon was allotted a budget of \$725,000 to carry out the promotion of cultural activities.⁸ He started with the performing arts, then literature, music and finally, the visual arts, which he saw as being the “Everest” of his cultural programs. The literature and visual arts scenes in NYC would be the most difficult to “crack,” he reasoned, because of competition. The performing arts were different. A Canadian group could perform one evening at Carnegie Hall and an American group could perform the next night; groups from different nations were not in competition.

While Plamondon was responsible for the promotion of all cultural activities, his interests lay primarily in the visual arts. He supported diverse visual arts activities, including projects at the Museum of Modern Art, the International Centre of Photography, the Institute for Art and Urban Resources, the Kitchen, and Artists Space.⁹

In *Taking the Leading Edge; Taking our own Initiative* (1983), James Kraft describes how Plamondon gathered statistics on the significance of culture in NYC, analyzing what “others were doing and Canada was not.”¹⁰ New York City, like London, England, is a rare international example of a global centre in which economics, politics, and culture concentrate in what is termed a “compressed global space.”¹¹ The economy that developed in the 1970s and 1980s created a new phase of capitalism that cultural critic Mike Featherstone has described as the “de-monopolization of economic structures with the deregulation and globalization of markets, trade and labour.”¹² This system favours the strongest

performer. The globalization of capital created a system of international professionals and international financial and political bodies that served to support an international economic space. This led to a process of harmonization among independent national systems. "A similar process of deregulation and globalization occurred," Featherstone asserts, "within the activities of design professions, such as architecture...television, music, [and] image."¹³ The professionals in these fields were challenged by the inter-cultural communication necessary for working outside the traditional boundaries of the nation-state.¹⁴ This is the challenge Plamondon endeavoured to meet.

Plamondon saw NYC as the single most important city for the arts, particularly the visual arts, and was intent on making a mark for Canada there.¹⁵ He argued that a gallery in NYC must be a "new," "forward," "bold," and "aggressive" initiative: a clear attempt to emulate American commercial gallery models. These models signify a progression toward modernization, internationalism, and globalization, which are tied together in Western capitalist concepts of innovation and prosperity.

To impress upon his superiors at DEA the importance of NYC as a target for Canadian cultural relations, Plamondon drafted a document presenting ideas to promote Canadian dance, music, literature, and visual arts there. In this promotional document published by Canada's New York Consulate and titled *New York as a World Art Centre*, Plamondon asserted that, "Gallery-wise, if Milan can boast 500 galleries, then New York can boast 1,000."¹⁶ The same

document assessed other American cities and concluded that Washington, D.C., the US capital and the centre of many national arts organizations, "does not play a significant role." As for NYC, "Critics...they are all here. Art magazines...the four most important ones are located here: *Art News*, *Art in America*, *Art Forum*, and *Artsmagazine*."¹⁷ There was little doubt at this time that NYC was the world's supreme centre for contemporary art. The following description from Plamondon's document reveals the intentions of the Canadian Consulate's program for NYC:

This office [the Consulate] could eventually play a major role in advising and helping Canadian individuals and groups. The major orchestras, theatre and ballet groups do have constant professional links with their counterparts in the U.S. but we can, by our own knowledge of the New York scene, contribute a lot as far as building up their image here. This could be done by developing closer contacts, almost daily ones, with the art world in general. These professionals, as important in their fields as the president of a corporation would be, are not easily influenced or pushed around. It is only when one has made friends with them that our say could be of significance. It is a matter of great diplomacy which cannot be attained without tact, knowledge and persistence.¹⁸

These words exemplify Plamondon's determination for advancing the profile of Canadian art in NYC.

Plamondon's Proposal

In addition to this document emphasizing the importance of NYC, Plamondon formulated an ambitious proposal submitted to the DEA that included all the arts: theatre, literature, visual arts, and dance.¹⁹ He envisioned a building located in SoHo that would include an auditorium, library, bookshop, art gallery

and live-in studios. There would be artists-in-residence from all disciplines, and regular performances, exhibitions, and lectures. Half the exhibitions would originate in Canadian public museums and galleries; half would be organized by Canadian commercial galleries. Plamondon's proposal was unique: never before had a government attempted to create a permanent cultural facility in NYC, independent from a consulate.

Plamondon located a five-storey building in SoHo, a former police precinct built in the late-nineteenth century. Major renovations were needed and for this, he recommended American architect Richard Meier. Plamondon believed that a well-known American architect would make the building a landmark and enhance its public profile.²⁰ Plamondon expected to procure funds from the federal and provincial governments, as well as private funding from Canadian corporations. The artists chosen to reside at the centre and present their work there would be selected with the assistance of the Canada Council and an advisory committee. Artists with a minimum of ten years experience would be favoured because, as Plamondon believed, "they would be less susceptible of having their professional outlook changed by the New York scene."²¹

Plamondon saw this initiative in NYC as an opportunity for Canada to assert itself as an independent and innovative nation. He proposed that a New York centre should exhibit leading-edge contemporary art, making the American and international art public sit up and take notice. He declared:

Since art is such a personal and elevated achievement of man, it reflects who we are, where we come from, who we know, and what we do.

Perhaps over a period of time people coming to the centre will see that the original in Canadian visual arts exists, separate from the mainstream of the art in New York and the United States....²²

Plamondon justified his focus on avant-garde art by emphasizing that because of Canada's short history it lacked a deep, rich culture that was truly representative of it as a nation. In a 1983 article in *The Globe and Mail*, Plamondon was quoted as saying, "You will never find a Matisse in our past....Our richness is what we have today and tomorrow."²³ In his proposal, Plamondon stated, "Canada does not have the centuries-old visual arts heritage which is a key component in the cultural programs of many nations represented in New York. But the vitality, range and proliferation of new experimental artistic expression in Canada is a recent development of remarkable quality and originality."²⁴

Plamondon saw the work of contemporary Canadian visual artists as constituting a distinct cultural expression and, in accordance with the government's foreign policy goals, as a way of promoting Canada as a progressive, modern nation. In the field of contemporary art, Canada could compete with the rest of the world. Contemporary art could transcend geographic and cultural boundaries by uniting people through a common, international language. There were no obstacles of language, politics or culture.

The promotion of Canada as a modern nation was encouraged as a means of breaking down Americans' established stereotypes of Canada, an important justification for the government in developing a cultural relations program in the US. This aspect of the 49th Parallel's role did not go unnoticed. In

1983, Canadian-born artist and art critic Ross Skoggard wrote in *Artsmagazine* that the gallery was, "Trying to show that there is more to the great white north than toques and 'two-fours'...."²⁵

Plamondon also viewed the proposed centre as an opportunity to learn from Americans about business and marketing. As an example of how business was a central factor in its objectives, he suggested that art dealers stay there while their artists' works were exhibited, giving them an opportunity to forge contacts with local dealers. In the conclusion to his proposal, Plamondon stated that "the political advantages for Canada should...counter-balance this expenditure."²⁶ Canadian artists could potentially win American recognition which, up to that point, they had been unable to achieve.

The financial gains to be made for Canadian art in the US market were also outlined in Plamondon's proposal. "From the economic stand-point," he wrote, "Canadian artists and performers need the American market for the obvious reason that only a small segment of our population is interested in the arts."²⁷ Plamondon contended that the Canadian government would receive financial benefits through the tax revenue from art sales, and cited the example of the British government's profit from the commercial success of the Beatles.²⁸ Most importantly, Canada needed to gain confidence internationally and this could be achieved by actively asserting itself both economically and culturally. Plamondon stated, "Success could bring pride and drive."²⁹

The government's desire to advance Canada's image as a vital country with rich cultural activity, and to promote Canadian art in "The Big Apple," veiled its underlying agenda to strengthen trade relations. Wisely, Plamondon always held to a strategically balanced mandate in his assertion that a visual arts centre in NYC would have three objectives: "commercial, cultural and political, and each must be considered carefully."³⁰

Inspired by the dynamism of the New York environment and with determination and energy, Plamondon moved swiftly into the right social circles, getting to know the museum and gallery crowd and several major art collectors.³¹ Finding warm support for the possibility of a Canadian cultural centre in NYC, his next hurdle was twofold: to convince his superiors in Ottawa that Canada should build its presence there, and to argue that a contemporary art centre was a worthwhile investment. The Canadian government's interest in developing international cultural relations and re-establishing trade relations with the US provided suitable conditions for the approval of Plamondon's project.

The evolution of cultural policies can, at times, be ascribed to individuals in government with strong interest in the arts, like Allan Gotlieb. Then Under-Secretary of State at DEA, Gotlieb was supportive of Plamondon's proposal and promoted the concept within the department.³² When Plamondon began in the legal section at DEA in 1965, Gotlieb had been his director. Gotlieb continued to take an interest in Plamondon's career, a situation that proved beneficial.³³ And Gotlieb, himself, had long been a supporter of the visual arts.³⁴ Gotlieb was

interested in advancing Canada's relations with the US, as was demonstrated by his appointment as Canadian ambassador to the US just nine months after the gallery opened. He was also a strong proponent of culture as a means of establishing diplomatic relations.

When Plamondon began the planning for a cultural centre in NYC, he told the Consul General that he needed both to interview Canadians from coast-to-coast, and to consult the key decision-makers in NYC's major art museums (Whitney Museum of American Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, etc).³⁵ Plamondon travelled across Canada, speaking to artists, gallery owners, curators and other prominent figures. In Vancouver, for example, he visited Canadian architect Arthur Erickson.

Arthur Gelber, a well-known businessman and arts advocate in Toronto, was a key Plamondon supporter. Gelber had a passion for the arts, and Plamondon had known him for years.³⁶ He had many influential contacts in the provincial and federal governments, including his close friend, Ontario Premier William Davis. Plamondon and Gelber met in NYC, where Plamondon solicited Gelber's opinion of his proposed centre for Canadian arts there.³⁷ A staunch Liberal, Gelber was enthusiastic and later travelled to Ottawa to lobby on Plamondon's behalf. Plamondon believes that Gelber's influence was critical to the 49th Parallel's creation.³⁸

A Place and A Name

In October of 1980, the DEA rejected Plamondon's plan to purchase a building and create a Canadian cultural centre in NYC.³⁹ However, Plamondon received approval for a scaled-down version of his plan: a visual arts centre. He was given *carte blanche* to select a space for the centre and, as its founding director, to design the programming. Regarding the location, Plamondon was set on the SoHo district of NYC, an area that by the early 1980s had become famous for its concentration of contemporary art in commercial galleries.

If NYC had become the centre of international art since World War II, SoHo had become its particular locus since the late 1970s.⁴⁰ It was home to famous international art dealers who represented the hottest artists. The exhibitions at SoHo galleries were diverse; as Canadian journalist René Viau wrote, "Il y a donc l'aspect "musée," l'aspect commercial puis il y a aussi ce côté plus expérimental du quartier."⁴¹ It was chic to be part of the SoHo scene, where innovation, risk, and prosperity were paramount.

Plamondon's friend, Jack Isabel, who worked in advertising for the international art magazine, *ArtForum*, informed Plamondon that the owners of a gallery in a multi-storey building at 420 West Broadway—a much sought-after SoHo location that had not had a vacancy in twelve years—were giving up their lease.⁴² (See Appendix D) Plamondon knew the address and was thrilled at the idea of locating the visual arts centre there. As the premiere address for

commercial art galleries, most of which had been established in the late 1970s, this prestigious venue drew between 4,000 and 6,000 visitors each week.⁴³ Plamondon signed a three-year lease for the gallery, a 7500 square foot classic white gallery space, beginning January 1981.⁴⁴

Plamondon contacted Illeana Sonnabend, a commercial dealer with a gallery at 420 West Broadway, who told him, "we [NYC art dealers] are watching you and you are doing good things."⁴⁵ She was very enthusiastic about Plamondon taking over the space, as was a fellow tenant and commercial art dealer, Leo Castelli. Situated amidst the other commercial gallery dealers, Castelli and Sonnabend, as well as Mary Boone and Charles Cowles, Plamondon recalled that the Canadian gallery "would be the tomato in the club house sandwich."

Plamondon's next step was to find a name that would appropriately represent the gallery's purpose and give it allure in SoHo. The possible names, including "Canada Space/Espace Canadien" and "Studio Canada," were discussed amongst Plamondon and his superiors at DEA in Ottawa.⁴⁶ "49th Parallel" was suggested by Robert Handforth, a Cultural Affairs Officer at the Canadian Consulate in NYC. The decisive moment came in a memorandum from Allan Gotlieb to the Minister of External Affairs, who wrote:

A large majority of those consulted favour this choice which translates elegantly in French, for low-key identification, memorability and suggestion of a metaphor. They also make the point that in the busy art market of the Soho neighbourhood, where most galleries are identified by the name of the owner, a catchy name would be better than an official one; the general consensus is that 49th Parallel answers well this

requirement and that it also identifies in American minds their friendly northern neighbour.⁴⁷

The final choice was “49th Parallel: Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art.” The name would remind the American and international audiences that there was a clear and determined distinction—physically, culturally, politically and ideologically—between what lay above the 49th parallel and what lay below.

Influenced by conceptualism, and relieved of the difficulty of the marketplace by Canada Council funding, Canadian artists had broken free of conventional art forms such as painting, sculpture and printmaking, and seized the opportunity to advance art to new levels. Guy Plamondon felt that, “After 25 years of Canada Council support, the country has a real harvest of artists working in contemporary art.”⁴⁸ By the late 1970s and early 1980s, Canadian artists had become internationally recognized for experimental art forms, including installation, video, photo, and performance art.⁴⁹ The artist-run centres or parallel galleries developed in the 1970s and funded by the Canada Council, signified increased freedom for artists. These centres were integral to the exhibition, promotion and awareness of contemporary art, a role the 49th Parallel would extend to American audiences.⁵⁰

In a 1981 article in *Art in America*, Ross Skoggard reported that, “Most of the art Plamondon wants to introduce to New York will be drawn from the roughly 60 Canada-Council-supported alternative spaces known as parallel galleries....”⁵¹ While this is true of the work shown during the gallery’s early years, it does not

reflect later exhibitions at the 49th Parallel, which featured art that was increasingly less experimental and more conventional and commodifiable.

Plamondon was convinced of the need for the 49th Parallel to match the level of professionalism practiced by the public and private galleries in NYC.⁵² He understood that in order to be taken seriously, the gallery had to play by the established rules. France Morin, the gallery's second director, would also recognize the importance of matching the standards set by local galleries.⁵³

Art sold for astronomical prices during the 1980s, thus affirming its value as an investment. Indeed, one month in 1978, registered sales of art in the SoHo district totalled more than five million dollars.⁵⁴ The corporate and art worlds merged, fusing private enterprise and the commodified art object.⁵⁵ Individuals and corporations seized the opportunity to invest in a booming market and be identified as patrons of the arts. Within the DFAIT records are articles from newspapers and art and business magazines that describe this burgeoning corporate art collecting and advocate the value of art as an investment.⁵⁶ In a note attached to a 1985 *New York Times* article titled "More Corporations Becoming Working Museums," Plamondon wrote: "this is why contemporary Canadian art should be in New York."⁵⁷ In a 1985 document outlining the commercial potential for Canadian visual arts in NYC, John Fowell, Consul General for Relations and Public Affairs, described how "increasing numbers of major corporations, such as IBM, are installing gallery space in new corporate headquarters buildings."⁵⁸

Plamondon believed that Canadian artists who sold their work in NYC would rely less on government support.⁵⁹ He said, "The number of patrons in Canada is too small to support these artists. The reception abroad helps their status and pocket-books at home."⁶⁰ Plamondon hoped the 49th Parallel would boost artists' "commercial potential," meaning that their art would sell.⁶¹ This goal becomes problematic, however, in view of the fact that the majority of the work shown in the first three years of its existence was site-specific and installation-based. Such works, essentially conceptual, did not have a strong sales potential.

Nevertheless, there was a market in SoHo for advanced art, and the 49th Parallel was perfectly positioned in this commodified realm. Describing how the contemporary art displayed in SoHo suited collecting tastes and established a relationship between artist and buyer, art historian Charles Simpson observes that, "...the avant-garde artist claims a status which depends most immediately upon the middle class for recognition and for conversion into political power or economic position."⁶² The 49th Parallel's programming, if it were to meet its underlying commercial objectives, had to include commodifiable art, making the gallery a hybrid space—official and commercial. This duality would eventually prove to be problematic.

The Programming

Plamondon was explicit in his vision of how the gallery should be managed. He proposed that the 49th Parallel,

...be operated with discretion, consistency and complete professionalism. Exhibitions will have to be of the highest quality, imaginatively installed, and supplemented with well-prepared information and advertising in significant art magazines. Such standards will assist in maintaining good relations with immediate neighbours which are necessary to the overall success of the project.⁶³

The gallery's programming was intended to represent artists from all regions of Canada. The first criterion for the work chosen would be "quality," an inherently problematic and subjective standard. Plamondon was intent on exhibiting work that could equal NYC's best art, and stated that the work should conform to the art being shown in major SoHo galleries: large-scale sculpture, installation, and innovative photography.⁶⁴ Prints and drawings were acceptable if they were deemed to carry the aesthetic and intellectual weight of comparable work in NYC.

Plamondon wanted the exhibition schedule to be dominated by solo exhibitions, which he thought were, "the most forceful and of the most benefit to the artist."⁶⁵ Two-person shows would be considered, though not favoured. Group exhibitions would only be presented if they demonstrated an "outstanding cultural effort" in Plamondon's estimation, "[as they] underplay or misrepresent the work of participating artists." Plamondon realized his goal: during his two-year tenure as director, nearly 83% of the shows were solo. (See Appendix B) The exhibitions would be curated by individuals suggested either by the gallery director himself or other curators. The gallery would also present exhibitions organized by other Canadian galleries.

Plamondon suggested a cost-sharing arrangement in which Canadian commercial gallery owners and artists would be responsible for part of the production costs, when and if their works sold.⁶⁶ The 49th Parallel would allow repeat appearances of noted artists in order to help build their reputations in NYC and internationally. The artists that received two exhibitions, in either solo or two-person shows, included General Idea (1981 and 1986), Melvin Charney (1982 and 1987), Roland Poulin (1981 and 1986) and Betty Goodwin (1983 and 1988).

The Opening

After rapidly pulling together a staff and an exhibition programme, the 49th Parallel opened its doors to the public on March 20, 1981, with a show of photographs and installation work by Michael Snow (b. 1929). Touted as Canada's "best known international artist" and embraced by the New York art scene since the 1960s, Snow was a secure and stable means of establishing the institution's name.⁶⁷ If the original mandate of the 49th Parallel was to "make a space available for the presentation of innovative work, especially from the younger generation," Snow's show was an overly cautious start to what was intended to be a bold and innovative venture.⁶⁸ Regardless, the gallery's opening garnered much media attention in American publications such as *The New York Times*, *Art in America*, and *The Village Voice*, and in Canadian publications including *ArtsCanada*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Montreal Gazette*, and *Le Devoir*.

Opening night was an exciting event; the gallery was packed with the major players from the New York and international art worlds. Ken Taylor, Canadian Consul General in New York, proudly declared, "It's a great feeling to be a Canadian in New York."⁶⁹ Several upper-level government officials—Allan Gotlieb, DEA's Deputy Under-Secretary Michel Dugumois, and Jacques Montpetit, DEA's Director of Cultural Affairs—traveled to NYC to attend the opening and show their support. NYC mayor Ed Koch attended, demonstrating a degree of interest created by the 49th Parallel.

In the gallery's first annual report, Plamondon stated that the general goal for the first year was to "appear well-established, professional, active and free-minded."⁷⁰ Plamondon stated that the gallery would "...try to show the kind of art that New Yorkers naturally expect to see in SoHo," meaning art that was risky and original.⁷¹ The programming's sensitivity to local tastes thus enhanced its rather elitist image, as indicated by its location and Plamondon's intention to "attract a large, wealthy and influential crowd."⁷²

Ydessa Hendeles assisted Plamondon in the selection of artists and helped him keep his finger on the pulse of Canada's thriving art scene.⁷³ In its first two years the 49th Parallel showed work by sculptor Roland Poulin (b. 1940), photographic assemblages by Pierre Boogaerts (b. 1946), and an installation by the artist collective General Idea. The exhibition of work by young artist Wendy Knox-Leet (b. 1950) was seen as a great success as a NYC art dealer offered to represent her there.

Serving as a “window” onto Canadian art and culture, the art shown at the gallery was intended to express something essentially “Canadian.” The term “window” is used frequently in Consulate and DEA memos to describe how the 49th Parallel would project a singular image of Canada. This “projection” is founded on the assumption that the gallery could provide an objective and comprehensive representation of Canadian art and culture.

A government-sponsored gallery in NYC was not entirely germane to its locale. How could art that survived on government funding be taken seriously? Indeed, in a city where commerce ruled and competition was the name of the game, a state-run gallery was less than *apropos*, and Plamondon was sensitive to this. Throughout its existence, efforts were made to minimize the state's apparent involvement in the 49th Parallel. A document produced by the gallery titled “49th Parallel: Policies and Goals Toward Renewal” described these efforts: “We have sought to minimize our status as a foreign agency while affirming the autonomy and specificity of Canadian visual art.”⁷⁴ This statement implies that the gallery's perceived status as a state-funded, nationally-exclusive venue was a liability. In a 1984 letter to the Minister of External Affairs, Yves Gagnon, acting director of the Cultural Promotions Division, stated that “the use of the usual national symbolism (logo, flag, etc.) in this particular context would most likely be perceived by our target clientele as heavy-handed propaganda and would seriously compromise the *raison d'être* of the Gallery.”⁷⁵ This persistent dilemma was one of the gallery's principal weaknesses.

The media coverage of the 49th Parallel included accolades and criticism from both sides of the border. The reproaches were divided between the exhibitions and the concept of a government-sponsored gallery. In 1982, Toronto journalist Joan Sutton claimed that "surely we would be better served as Canadians if the base of the 49th Parallel were broadened, if its exhibitions represented the taste of more than one man [Guy Plamondon]."⁷⁶ Criticism also came from the art community. In a 1981 article, for example, Ottawa artist Leslie Reid was quoted criticizing the 49th Parallel for not being more avant-garde, stating that it was simply "history on display."⁷⁷ (In this case "history" meant Michael Snow and Roland Poulin.) Canadian art dealers complained that they would have to compete with the government for business.⁷⁸

In fact, this concern was addressed in the *Report* of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee, hereafter called the Applebaum-Hébert Committee, released in 1982, one year after the gallery opened. The *Report* recommended that the International Cultural Relations division be separated from the DEA and be made into an independent agency.⁷⁹ This recommendation was made in response to the criticisms of the cultural community that its efforts to develop international audiences for Canadian art were being hindered by having to work through the DEA. This concern would eventually be resolved when Canadian art dealers became more directly involved in the programming of the 49th Parallel. Nevertheless, the gallery's ambiguous mandate left commercial dealers worrying that the 49th Parallel could hurt their business.

The Applebaum-Hébert *Report* addressed other issues that related directly to the 49th Parallel. Although it did not constitute a real threat to Canada's cultural centres, it questioned their efficacy in general and stated that commercial galleries were the most effective vehicles for marketing Canadian art, domestically and abroad. It recommended that federal assistance be given to:

The exhibition of gallery artists (including new and emerging artists) in other regions of Canada and abroad, exchanges between galleries, and participation in commercial art fairs and international expositions. Although the Canadian cultural centres in Paris, Brussels and London and the 49th Parallel Gallery in New York are valuable showcases for Canadian art, it is also important to hold exhibitions in independent institutions. Foreign critics, curators and investors are often wary of 'official' exhibitions.⁸⁰

In its submission to the Committee, the DEA articulated the following principles for international cultural relations:

- 1) Cultural relations consist of an integrated component in their own right of global foreign policy;
- 2) External cultural policies are an extension of domestic cultural policies;
- 3) Cultural presence abroad should be of the highest standard of excellence;
- 4) Cultural relations should aim to be comprehensive in scope and global in character.⁸¹

Cultural relations, therefore, could not be divorced from Canada's broader foreign affairs and yet they were also to serve Canada's domestic interests. The submission further stated the DEA's goal to "strengthen Canada's competitive position...in countries and parts of the world of strategic importance to our cultural interests."⁸²

From the beginning, the DEA advocated that the gallery should operate as an “authenticating institution,” an agency which would validate Canada as a prosperous, modern, and viable nation. The gallery’s success would be affirmed by the NYC and international arts communities, and by US publications. Reports on the 49th Parallel’s progress sent to Ottawa invariably included copies of laudatory letters from American curators and local art dealers and various published reviews.⁸³ In one report, Plamondon identified this market recognition as “constituting an important validation for this project.”⁸⁴ While the 49th Parallel sought to identify Canada as a distinct nation with rich artistic production, it also sought approval and acceptance from the US, a central and somewhat contradictory goal.

Following two years of personally selecting and programming the exhibitions, Plamondon set up a Consultative Committee. As a conspicuous demonstration of the links between the high ranks of government and the functioning of the 49th Parallel, the federal cabinet had to approve potential committee members.⁸⁵ The duty of this committee, as outlined by Plamondon, would be “to contribute information and suggestions concerning artists and exhibitions appropriate to the 49th Parallel’s focus on the leading edge of Canadian contemporary art.”⁸⁶ Its members would be Canadian curators, artists, and critics who were not “linked too closely with federal or provincial establishments in order to prevent, as much as possible, any pressures within

the committee...."⁸⁷ Members would represent artists from their region or province of Canada and would make selections for the gallery's exhibitions.⁸⁸

Although appointed by Order-in-Council, as all agency board members are, committee members were not intended to be part of the bureaucracy and were not obligated to adhere to government policies. They made suggestions based on what they considered interesting and distinct in Canada's visual arts. The first committee included Alvin Balkind, Emily Carr College of Art instructor and widely respected art critic and curator; artist Eric Cameron, who taught at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design; artist Jeffrey Spalding, director of the University of Lethbridge art department; Thérèse Dion, liaison officer for the Canada Council Art Bank; Claude Bouchard, president of Ottawa-based Lecha Art Publishing; Chantal Pontbriand, art critic, curator and co-founder of *Parachute* magazine in Montréal; and Elke Town, curator and video director of Art Metropole in Toronto. The members' affiliations with Canadian regions and institutions were expected to bring diverse representation to the gallery's programming. Balkind, however, characterized the 49th Parallel's programme as predominantly "picking up exhibitions from Toronto and Montréal."⁸⁹

The work of close to three hundred artists was shown at the 49th Parallel over a ten-year period, a mere fraction of the total number who had submitted portfolios and proposals.⁹⁰ There was a significant lack of work by artists of colour and First Nations, and a distinct bias for the art of central Canada. (See Appendix C) Prominent artists such as Robert Murray (b. 1936) and Michael

Morris (b. 1942) did not have exhibitions there. Not wanting to be affiliated with a state-run gallery due to the damage it might cause his reputation, Murray chose to make his own inroads into the international art market.⁹¹ The omission of Aboriginal artists was in direct opposition to the recommendations of the Applebaum-Hébert *Report*, which stipulated that “Native artists must be recognized as contemporary Canadian artists and federal policy should give special priority to promoting [their] work....”⁹² The exclusion of Aboriginal artists implied that their work and culture were not seen to present an image of Canada as “innovative” and “modern.” The perception of Aboriginal cultures as “traditional” and “historic” set them on the outside of the government’s agenda to demonstrate Canada’s entrepreneurial ambitions and cultural advancements. As with any gallery, nevertheless, selections had to be made.

A significant factor determining the selection of artists to be shown at the gallery involved a consideration of their reputation in Canada. Regarding the status of the artists shown at the 49th Parallel, Yves Gagnon said:

Most artists already selected to show at the 49th Parallel have been exhibited in private galleries and museums in Canada and reviewed in recent books and publications. Several works exhibited at the Gallery have found their way into public galleries (the National Gallery, the Art Gallery of Ontario) and private collections.⁹³

Criticisms of elitism leveled at the gallery can be traced back to this “safe” mandate of endorsing “quality” artists with established reputations.

France Morin Takes Over

In 1983, Guy Plamondon returned to Ottawa to assume the position of Director of Cultural Promotion at DEA, a continuation of his efforts to foster international recognition of, and appreciation for, Canadian art. Plamondon was succeeded by France Morin, an art dealer in Montréal and co-founder of *Parachute* magazine. Morin was hired for her experience as an innovative, critical thinker and as a sharp businesswoman.⁹⁴ Her unbureaucratic approach, likely deemed appropriate for the entrepreneurial New York art scene, reflects a desire on the part of the government to encourage the gallery's marketing potential.

Morin brought to NYC her experience in curating, writing, promotion and business, and possessed the energy and assertiveness necessary to survive and succeed there. As might be expected with a shift in management from a career civil servant to a commercial dealer, Morin had an astounding impact on the gallery. She expanded the curatorial mandate beyond solo shows to incorporate group exhibitions and feature a wider variety of artists and broader scope of art practice. She initiated imaginative and resourceful ventures, including collaborative exhibitions with NYC dealers, curators, and institutions. Her creative approach was the central force driving the gallery through the rest of the 1980s.

Within a year of Morin's arrival, three years after the gallery's opening and just after John Turner's Liberals lost to Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservatives in the 1984 federal election, the DEA commissioned a review of

Canada's cultural centres. The 1984 *Woods Gordon Report*, as it was called, was the first major challenge the gallery faced. Like the Applebaum-Hébert *Report* before it, the *Woods Gordon Report* questioned the relevance and purpose of the cultural centres. It went further, however, in critiquing the 49th Parallel in particular as having only a "covert identification" with Canada, which they saw as contradicting its intent to establish a significant profile for Canada in NYC.⁹⁵

Having spent only one morning at the 49th Parallel, the Woods Gordon consultants were criticized for providing such a cursory analysis, and for their sweeping conclusions about the cultural centres. There were also concerns that the consultants were inexperienced in cultural issues and therefore unsuited to evaluate Canada's cultural centres. In a 1985 Canadian Press article, Larry Black reported: "Opponents of the government-sponsored avant-garde gallery ranged from politicians alienated by the work they have seen exhibited there, to Canadian artists who believe the money could be better spent elsewhere, to New York critics uncomfortable with what they considered 'official art.'"⁹⁶

The criticisms were not entirely unfounded. A persistent problem with the perception of the 49th Parallel was that it was neither a museum, nor a commercial gallery, nor an official diplomatic venue. The report thus revealed the absence of a clear bureaucratic mandate, a condition reflecting Plamondon's personal vision that had informed the gallery's activities from the beginning.

In 1985, the Conservative government cut funding for the arts, including the 49th Parallel. There was strong support for the gallery in the Canadian arts community and in NYC; a flood of letters, along with endorsements by key political figures, was initially enough to save the 49th Parallel. Allan Gottlieb, who had become ambassador to the US in 1981, wrote to Under-Secretary of State Marcel Massé, concerning the threats to shut the gallery:

To close the gallery at this point flies in the face of our continuing need for more cultural expression in the United States, not less, and strikes me as inconsistent with the thrust of our contemporary policy, part of which is to widen American consciousness of Canadian achievements.⁹⁷

The gallery was saved, in part, by a renewed funding structure. The Department of Communications became the largest source of funding when it offered \$300,000 to cover operational costs and the Canada Council offered to cover personnel costs. The perceived importance of the gallery in terms of relations with the US, and its advancement of Canadian art on the international scene, would effectively ensure its continuation.

A DEA work plan from 1985 outlines the increasing importance the Conservative government placed on Canada's relationship with the US. Subtitled "Culture, Public Affairs and Information," the document described how the Canadian government could capitalize on its significant relationship with the US.⁹⁸ It stated that the election of the Conservative government had elicited positive reactions in the US, and had piqued the interest of its financial and media circles. It stated, furthermore, that Canada should take advantage of this renewed interest and demonstrate its absolute dedication to expanding relations

with the US. The importance of cultural relations was emphasized: "An informed and positive understanding of Canada will contribute positively to the atmospherics and conduct of Canada-U.S. relations in general, and to the achievement of the government's economic development objectives in particular."⁹⁹

The exhibitions during this period (1984-87) continued to demonstrate the originality and uniqueness of Canadian art. France Morin broadened the scope of the 49th Parallel's mandate, adding design and architecture to Plamondon's narrower focus on "fine" art. She placed greater emphasis on the intellectual formation of the exhibitions, and invited professional Canadian and American curators to produce shows. The 1985 show *Phoenix: New Attitudes in Design*, originally held at The Power Plant in Toronto, for example, demonstrated the emergence of new and exciting talent in this field and supported the gallery's expanded purpose. That same year, Morin invited Vancouver photo-artist Ian Wallace to curate a group exhibition of well-known West Coast artists: Rodney Graham (b. 1949), Ken Lum (b. 1956), Jeff Wall (b. 1946), and Ian Wallace (b. 1943). The exhibition signified Morin's interest in thematic and group shows with an intellectual edge.¹⁰⁰ Well received in NYC, the exhibition was a catalyst for the four artists' quick rise to fame there, proving that the gallery was fulfilling its mandate to assist Canadian artists in achieving international recognition.

The 1986 season included an exhibition of two acclaimed artists, Jana Sterbak (b. 1955) and Krzysztof Wodiczko (b. 1943). Their work was first shown at

the 49th Parallel two years earlier in an exhibition called *Canada/New York*, which featured Canadian artists working in NYC. Sterbak and Wodiczko, like Michael Snow, were recognized “blue chip” artists whose achievements were already acknowledged internationally. The shows were reviewed widely in US publications and praised highly by collectors and institutions. The 49th Parallel was meeting its objectives—thus far.

During the mid-1980s, France Morin worked hard at mounting thought-provoking and thematic group exhibitions organized by guest curators. The 1986 exhibition, *Icarus: The Vision of Angels*, a curatorial collaboration between Morin and Ronald Feldman, a commercial NYC dealer, juxtaposed the work of Canadian artists such as Murray Favro with “recognized masters” like Leonardo da Vinci. In a letter to David Peacock, director of DEA’s Arts Promotion Division, John Fowell described the exhibition as “incorporating Canadian art into the international forum by presenting fine examples with the work of internationally recognized masters, thereby *denationalizing* the value of Canadian art while retaining its *cultural distinction*.”¹⁰¹ A tension appears that is persistent through the gallery’s history: there is a desire to present Canadian art in all its uniqueness and diversity, while being connected to, and reflective of, a larger international community and culture.

Three months after the Sterbak/Wodiczko show, *A Measure of Consensus: Canadian Architecture in Transition* featured the designs of 23 architects and architectural firms. Curated by Andrew Gruft for the University of

British Columbia, the exhibition demonstrated the expansion of the programme at the 49th Parallel under Morin's directorship. A document titled "Changing Objectives for the Gallery" explains how the original focus on the avant-garde had "evolved into a more balanced programme...Exhibitions have become accessible to a wider audience by highlighting themes such as architecture, design and technology."¹⁰² In 1987, *The Idea of the North*, an exhibition based on the theme of the well-known composer Glenn Gould's 1967 CBC radio programme, represented a focused attempt to display a sense of national cultural identity. Building upon its established reputation of showing daring installation work, the 49th Parallel became known in NYC for the quality of its thematic exhibitions, a distinction which set it apart from commercial galleries in SoHo.

The 49th Parallel's exhibitions presented Canadian culture as homogenized. It did not, however, represent the entire field of art in Canada. In the 1980s, the multicultural project that had come to be identified with Canada's national culture was ignored, as multicultural arts were not easily commodified. There was insignificant representation of artists from outside Toronto and Montréal, and an absence of artists from minority groups.

In a 1992 article in *Parallélogramme*, Dot Tuer contended that, "From the vantage point of ethnic communities, visible minorities and aboriginal people, national unity constructed from subsidized culture pays lip service to difference while funding uniformity, invokes democratization while preserving the structures of elitism."¹⁰³ The notion of an "essential" Canadian culture obscured and

negated hundreds of years of Canadian history preceding the Massey Commission and certainly denied the accomplishments of First Nations cultures. Furthermore, this notion was rooted in the idea that projecting a central, cohesive vision of Canadian culture was possible, a notion that was contested and even anachronistic by the 1980s, a decade in which cultural identity and difference were at the fore of artistic practice in Canada and internationally.

Under France Morin, the 49th Parallel's programming was extremely dynamic. Morin explored the gallery's unrealized potential and the possibilities seemed limitless. There were hundreds of Canadian artists to show, there were myriad ways of showing them, and there was an immense audience, unfamiliar with the arts of Canada, ready to devour the gallery's offerings. NYC had demonstrated through its favourable reception of the 49th Parallel's exhibitions that it was ripe and ready for the best that Canada had to offer. The city's insatiable appetite for all things new and provocative was matched by Morin's eagerness to satisfy that appetite. Despite negative criticism and evaluations such as the *Woods Gordon Report*, it seemed the 49th Parallel was destined for success.

In its early years, the 49th Parallel was successful in attracting attention to Canada and its contemporary visual arts. Its ambiguous mandate, however, compromised its existence. The gallery's overt concern for promoting Canadian art and artists veiled the government's covert promotion of trade and improved political ties. While the gallery was at times described as a business marketing

Canadian art, emphasis was at other times placed on the “window” motif: its self-definition thus vacillated between a cultural museum, a diplomatic/political space, and a commercial art gallery. Plamondon did not view his tri-partite mandate—“commercial, cultural and political”—as problematic.¹⁰⁴ As will be discussed in Chapter Three, the gallery’s purpose eventually became more clearly defined: commerce would dominate.

Endnotes

¹ Guy Plamondon, interview by author, Ottawa, Ontario, 31 October, 2000.

² Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Archives (hereafter DFAIT), 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 1, James Kraft, "Taking the Leading Edge; Taking Our Own Initiative," 1.

³ National Gallery of Canada Archives (hereafter NGC), 49th Parallel Fonds (hereafter 49PF), Box 36, File 1, Guy Plamondon, "Establishment of a Canadian Art Centre, February 14, 1978," 1.

⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁵ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 1, "49th Parallel Position Paper."

⁶ Plamondon, interview.

⁷ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 1, *Artsnews*, The Canadian Consulate General, NYC, Cultural Affairs, (March 1981).

⁸ Kraft, "Taking the Leading Edge," 7.

⁹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹¹ Mike Featherstone, "Global Culture: An Introduction," in Mike Featherstone (ed.), *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, (London, reprint, 1996), 8.

¹² Ibid., 7.

¹³ Ibid., 8.

¹⁴ An interesting example of international programming is the Guggenheim Foundation, which has art museums in several locations, including NYC; Bilbao, Spain; Venice, Italy; and a recently-opened venue in Las Vegas, Nevada.

¹⁵ Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*, (Chicago and London 1983), 1.

¹⁶ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 1, "New York as a World Art Centre," Consulate General, New York, 1.

¹⁷ Ibid., 1.

¹⁸ Ibid., 3.

¹⁹ Plamondon, "Establishment of a Canadian Art Centre," 1.

²⁰ Ibid., 11.

²¹ Ibid., 14.

²² Kraft, "Taking the Leading Edge," 9.

²³ Lisa Balfour Bowen, "Manning the outpost for Canadian art," *The Globe and Mail*, 5 November, 1983, E9.

²⁴ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 1, "49th Parallel/49e Parallèle: Centre for Canada Contemporary Art – Position Paper," 1.

²⁵ Ross Skoggard, "The 49th Parallel: After Two Years," *Art in America*, LVI:2 (Summer 1983), 32. This reference to beer drinking and cold climate headgear is derived from the popular 1983 Canadian film, *Strange Brew*, about two brothers, Bob and Doug Mackenzie. The "two-fours" refers to the colloquial description, used mainly in Central Canada, of a package of twenty-four beers. The reference to toques is an obvious labelling of Canada as the "Great White North."

²⁶ Plamondon, "Establishment of a Canadian Art Centre," 15.

²⁷ Ibid., 3.

²⁸ Ibid., 4.

²⁹ Ibid., 6.

³⁰ Kraft, "Taking the Leading Edge," 7.

³¹ Ibid., 4.

³² Allan Gottlieb, interview with author, Toronto, Ontario, 26 February, 2001.

³³ Plamondon, interview. Plamondon was mentioned in a speech that Gottlieb made in western Canada in the context of someone who worked in the field of foreign affairs and contributed to the field of arts.

³⁴ Gottlieb owned the world's finest collection of Tissot prints before donating them to the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1994.

³⁵ Plamondon, interview. For example, Plamondon described visiting the assistant director of the Guggenheim Museum in 1980. He recalled the assistant director's lack of interest in and knowledge of the Canadian art scene, which made him all the more determined to improve its image in NYC.

³⁶ Guy Plamondon, telephone conversation with author, 8 February, 2001. Plamondon believes he first met Gelber at a function for the Ontario Arts Council, an organization for which Gelber served as board member and chairman.

³⁷ Ibid. Plamondon recalls having dinner with Gelber and his wife in NYC to discuss the idea. It was after this encounter that Gelber mounted a lobbying campaign to convince key individuals in Ottawa of the value of such an endeavour.

³⁸ Ibid. Plamondon is not sure exactly with whom Gelber spoke, but he knows that he had many conversations with various people at the DEA with regard to the 49th Parallel.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ See Charles R. Simpson, *Soho: The Artist in the City*, (Chicago 1981), 4.

⁴¹ René Viau, "49e Parallèle: Une Vitrine pour l'art canadien," *Le Devoir*, 24 October, 1981, A13.

⁴² Plamondon, interview.

⁴³ John Bentley Mays, "Canada's art child christened," *The Globe and Mail*, 23 March, 1981, C19.

⁴⁴ Kraft, "Taking the Leading Edge," 6. The rent for the building was \$5,200 per month when the lease was first signed. Average rents in SoHo at this time were \$9 per square metre, versus \$40-50 per square metre in midtown.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 1, Memo to DEA from Guy Plamondon, 22 January, 1981.

⁴⁷ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 1, Allan Gotlieb, "Memorandum for the Minister, Subject Opening of a gallery for contemporary Canadian art in New York," 3 February, 1981, 1.

⁴⁸ Nancy Tousley, "Canadian gallery takes a bite out of the Big Apple," *Calgary Herald*, 11 July, 1981, C2.

⁴⁹ *A Little Applebert: Report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee*, Ottawa, Supply and Services Canada, 1982, 43.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 44.

⁵¹ Ross Skoggard, "The 49th Parallel," *Art in America*, LXIX:6 (Summer 1981), 17

⁵² Kraft, "Taking the Leading Edge," 6.

⁵³ NGC/49PF, Box 37, File 1, author not cited, "49th Parallel: Policies and Goals Toward Renewal," 1.

⁵⁴ Viau, "49e Parallèle: Une Vitrine pour l'art canadien."

⁵⁵ Thomas J. Lueck, "More Corporations Becoming Working Museums," *The New York Times*, 25 September, 1985, C9.

⁵⁶ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 1.

⁵⁷ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 6. Memo from Guy Plamondon to Cecil Rabinovitch, 10 July, 1985. Plamondon's memo is attached to the aforementioned article by Thomas J. Lueck.

⁵⁸ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 3, "1985-86 Cultural Programme Budget."

⁵⁹ This would become particularly important in 1984 with the election of the Conservatives and their decreased funding for the arts.

⁶⁰ Jean Symington-Hage, "49th Parallel: Canada opens showcase gallery in New York," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 11 April, 1982, D2.

⁶¹ Kraft, "Taking the Leading Edge," 7. As part of the initial plan, if an artist sold work through the gallery, he or she would be asked to contribute 20% of their sales to the gallery to fund promotional activities.

⁶² Simpson, *Soho: The Artist in the City*, 5.

⁶³ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 1, Guy Plamondon, "49th Parallel, Centre for Canadian Contemporary Art – Position Paper," undated, 2.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁶⁶ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 7, Letter to David Peacock from John Fowell, 11 May, 1987. The gallery, however, would not receive any profit from the sale of works as this would compromise their not-for-profit status, which enabled them to avoid paying taxes in the US.

⁶⁷ Lisa Balfour Bowen, "Ottawa opens art gallery in New York," *The Toronto Star*, 22 March, 1981, D22.

⁶⁸ "49th Parallel Annual Report 1981-1982," 2.

⁶⁹ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 1, Al Colleti, untitled article, Canadian Press, 23 March, 1981.

⁷⁰ "49th Parallel Annual Report, 1981-1982," 3.

⁷¹ Georges Bogardi, "Gallery for Canadian artists set for N.Y.," *The Gazette*, 17 January, 1981, 53.

⁷² Symington-Hage, "49th Parallel: Canada opens showcase gallery in New York."

⁷³ Plamondon, interview.

⁷⁴ NGC/49PF, Box 37, File 1, author not cited, "49th Parallel: Policies and Goals Toward Renewal," 1.

⁷⁵ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 2, Letter to MINE (through SFB) from SCA/Yves Gagnon, March 1, 1984.

⁷⁶ Joan Sutton, "We pay tab for one-man show," *Toronto Sun*, 24 February, 1982, 57.

⁷⁷ Leslie Reid as quoted in Audrey M. Ashley, "Hearing told of Canada's 'cultural poverty,'" *The Ottawa Citizen*, 16 April, 1981, A4.

⁷⁸ Bentley Mays, "Canada's art child christened."

⁷⁹ Robert J. Williams, "International Cultural Activities in the Conservative Era: a Study in Frustration" (paper presented to the conference, *Diplomatic Departures? The Conservative Era in Canadian Foreign Policy, 1984-1993*, Hull, Quebec, November 18-20, 1999), 1.

⁸⁰ *A Little Applebert*, 44.

⁸¹ "Canada's International Cultural Relations, A Brief to the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee," (Ottawa 1981), 7.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 8.

⁸³ Plamondon, interview. Plamondon felt that the people in Ottawa never understood the value of the 49th Parallel because they never saw first hand what the gallery was doing. Plamondon needed to inform the bureaucrats in Ottawa about the art scene in NYC and familiarize them with the structure and nature of the art world in general. He described to me a day that he spent with a senior official from the US division of DEA. Plamondon took him to all of the best galleries—"from the top of Manhattan to the bottom"—with the final stop being the 49th Parallel. By doing this, he intended to show how the Canadian art shown at the 49th Parallel measured up against its competition. The official was extremely impressed with the 49th Parallel and according to Plamondon, stated his understanding of the value of the gallery for Canadian visual arts.

⁸⁴ "49th Parallel Annual Report 1981-1982," 3.

⁸⁵ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 1, Memo from DEA to Plamondon, 12 July, 1983.

⁸⁶ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 2, Letter from Guy Plamondon to Mrs. Wilson Hammont, 24 February, 1983.

⁸⁷ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 1, Memo from DEA to Plamondon, 12 July, 1983.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Eve Johnson, "Canada's New York state of mind," *Vancouver Sun*, 9 November, 1984, 14.

⁹⁰ NGC/49PF, Box 44 and 45. These boxes contain slides submitted by artists interested in being shown at the 49th Parallel, including those who submitted slides to the gallery but were not given an exhibition.

⁹¹ NGC curator Brydon Smith told me this in an informal conversation at the NGC on March 4, 1999.

⁹² *A Little Applebert*, 5.

⁹³ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 2, Letter to MINE (through SFB) from SCA/Yves Gagnon, March 1, 1984.

⁹⁴ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 1. The other candidates for the position included André Ménard, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montréal; René Blouin, Canada Council, Visual Arts Section; and Robert Handforth, Assistant to Plamondon at the Canadian Consulate General in New York and the 49th Parallel.

⁹⁵ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 1, "Woods Gordon Report," 1984.

⁹⁶ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 3, Larry Black, "49th Parallel," Canadian Press, 7 November, 1985.

⁹⁷ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 1, Letter from Allan Gottlieb to Marcel Massé, 5 June, 1985.

⁹⁸ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 3, "Work Plan, 1985/86 Fiscal Year, Department of External Affairs," 1.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁰⁰ NGC/49PF, Box 37, File 9, author not cited, "Report to the Advisory Board of 49th Parallel on the Gallery's Promotional Activities."

¹⁰¹ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 7, Letter from John Fowell to David Peacock, May 11, 1987. The italics are mine.

¹⁰² DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 7, "Changing Objectives for the Gallery."

¹⁰³ Dot Tuer, "The Art of Nation Building," *Parallélogramme*, XVII:4 (May 1992), 28.

¹⁰⁴ Kraft, "Taking the Leading Edge," 7.

CHAPTER THREE

Canadian Art Gets Down to Business: 1985-1992

The excitement and exhilaration that generally characterized the 49th Parallel's initial years eventually gave way to serious challenges. Although the gallery's early successes were encouraging, director France Morin knew not to take anything for granted, particularly in a city as discriminating as NYC. The economic and political climate under the Conservative government changed a great deal in the mid-1980s. Culture was not high on the Conservative agenda, and there was a general shift toward smaller government and privatization. A downturn in the economy in the late 1980s affected the art market, resulting in decreasing sales and interest. These factors caused the 49th Parallel to adapt in an attempt to survive.

In this chapter, I continue to trace the 49th Parallel's history, taking a closer look at public policies affecting it and the conflicting pressures that pushed it to the brink of closure. Those who had a vested interest in the gallery's survival were challenged to find innovative means to sustain its presence. Artists, art dealers, business people and politicians from across Canada got involved: meetings were held, money was pledged, and much time was devoted to ensuring the gallery's survival.

The history of the 49th Parallel from 1985 to 1992 is a chronicle of constant threats of closure and significant restructuring. The gallery was the target of serious criticism and as a result, there were countless and often contradictory

recommendations for change ranging from budget reductions to closure. Those who supported the 49th Parallel maintained that it benefited Canadian artists and the nation. Those who opposed it argued that in a time of fiscal restraint, it was a luxury.

The 49th Parallel's dependence on government sponsorship compromised its credibility in the US, where the arts—then as now—are largely privately funded.¹ In a city driven by market forces, furthermore, it is no surprise that New Yorkers were suspicious that the 49th Parallel might be a government propaganda tool. Government sponsorship, in their view, weakened any claims to the merit of the art shown there. A 1987 memorandum sent from the Consul General in NYC to the DEA's United States division in Ottawa warned that, “flagwaving can backfire.”²

Whether or not to reveal the Canadian government's complete involvement in the 49th Parallel was a genuine dilemma for those working in the best interest of the gallery.³ Some officials in Ottawa who supported the 49th Parallel and its cultural diplomacy efforts argued that the DEA should only fund a gallery in NYC if the connection to Canada was made explicit. Allan Gottlieb asserted that the potential “denationalization” of the gallery would render its programme irrelevant to the government by “losing the concept of what you are all about.”⁴ The celebration of artists irrespective of their nationality was, for Gottlieb, the business of private art dealers. To government officials, the 49th

Parallel was as much about Canada as it was about art, and the gallery was compromised, in part, by this dilemma.

Defenders of the 49th Parallel argued that it would take time for the gallery to be firmly established as a respectable arts institution in NYC. They argued that Canada House, the Canadian High Commission in London, England that housed the cultural centre, was a venue that over time had nurtured the interest and won the admiration of the local arts community. The Cultural Affairs Division maintained that the programs had to be allowed time to come to fruition. The 1985 "Cultural Affairs Program Report," which assessed Canada House, emphasized the need for permitting cultural programs time to fully mature: "...Canada House Gallery exhibitions have frequently been accompanied by showings in a commercial gallery in London but it has taken ten years of unremitting effort to attain this result."⁵ When the choice of artists and exhibitions at Canada House was tailored to the community's expectations of Canadian art, there were quantifiable benefits: sales resulted, critical awareness increased, and Canadian artists gained opportunities with public and commercial galleries in the United Kingdom.⁶ Richard Tait, Canada's Consul General in NYC, stated that "programs must be conceived with longer-term objectives firmly in view, including the objective of having Canadian culture become institutionalized in the host country...."⁷

In late 1984, Marcel Masse, the Minister of Communications, visited NYC and was extremely impressed with the 49th Parallel. France Morin arranged for

Masse to meet with prominent NYC dealer Leo Castelli, who sang Morin's praises and attested to the gallery's positive impact. This meeting proved critical to the future of the 49th Parallel.⁸ Upon Masse's return to Ottawa, and following pressure from the DEA's United States Division to close the gallery, the Department of Communications came forward with a new financing arrangement to keep it open.⁹ The gallery, whose entire budget had previously come from DEA, would receive \$300,000 from the Department of Communications for operating costs for each of the fiscal years 1986-87 and 1987-88. Despite these new funding arrangements, however, the 49th Parallel's future remained uncertain.

Changing Support, Changing Identity

The threat of closure frustrated France Morin; after 1985, lobbying on behalf of the gallery was, for her, as large a task as programming the exhibitions. As discussed in Chapter Two, the *Woods Gordon Report* (1984), was the first major threat. The second came from Ottawa in 1985. The lease on the property at 420 West Broadway would expire in December of 1985, presenting a logical date to close the gallery. Determined to resist closure, Morin initiated plans to expand the gallery's funding base into the private sector. She fought hard and used the gallery's achievements and popularity as a defence. She solicited and received letters of support from artists, Canadian and American art dealers, curators and patrons of the arts.¹⁰ Phillip Monk, curator of contemporary art at the

Art Gallery of Ontario, wrote a letter that was oft quoted in letters of appeal to decision-makers in Ottawa. Monk wrote that:

Criteria for judging an institution like the 49th Parallel [cannot] be formulated outside the standards and knowledge of the art community, which includes artists, critics, curators, dealers, and the art institutions themselves. The effects of the 49th Parallel are intangible only to those who have no experience or understanding of the nurturing of cultural growth.¹¹

Morin was mindful of the 49th Parallel's unusual official/commercial hybridity. She once wrote that "it is always difficult to define the gallery's situation as an institution that promotes Canadian art and has a very up-front commercial attitude as opposed to an institution operating along the lines of a museum."¹²

At this time, the DEA reasserted the objectives for the 49th Parallel and Canada's other cultural programs—theatre, dance, music, and literature—in NYC: they were about "promoting understanding and awareness of Canada; image building; and maximizing commercial return to Canadians."¹³ Consul General John Fowell argued that the most important of these objectives was "commercial return," and that the other two were its by-products. There was an emerging consensus, even among the government individuals involved, that the 49th Parallel could be realistically effective as a business, rather than primarily as an instrument of diplomacy. As a result, it was becoming increasingly difficult for Morin, Fowell, and gallery supporters in the International Cultural Relations division to justify the gallery's existence in its original form. A restructuring was imminent.

Going Private

If the Cultural program were not harnessed to foreign policy objectives and managed in the interest of promoting Canada's total relationship (political, economic, and social) with the host country there would be no justification for funding it through [the DEA].¹⁴

"Views of Europe Branch on Cultural Centres," 1985

In 1985, Morin drafted a report entitled "Review of the role and history of the Centre," which outlined the gallery's business plans for the future. She presented the idea of collaborating with Canadian art dealers, who would pay part of the exhibition costs when the artists they represented were shown at the 49th Parallel.¹⁵ The Consultative Committee would continue to recommend the artists shown. Instead of the artists submitting their work to the committee, however, the dealers would make submissions on behalf of their artists.¹⁶ During the first five years, Canadian dealers were only involved when the gallery referred potential buyers to them.¹⁷

In the "Commercialization of Canadian Artists" section of Morin's report, she discussed the "packaging" of Canadian art in NYC, arguing that the commercialization process involved more than simply displaying artists' work for sale.¹⁸ There was a great disparity between the Canadian and American art markets, so Morin concluded that the prices on Canadian art sold in the US would have to be lowered. Due to their unfamiliarity with Canadian art, American and international patrons were unwilling to pay the prices these works commanded in Canada.

This is a marked shift, even though Plamondon included the rhetoric of commerce in his initial plan, in the 49th Parallel's *raison d'être*, and in the meaning of Canada's cultural relations programs in the US. Although it seemed that in its increasing emphasis on the "business" of art, the 49th Parallel was moving away from the goals of Canadian cultural relations, the character of cultural relations itself was, in fact, shifting, and the gallery was caught up in this shift. The economic thrust in the DEA's cultural programs, in short, was gaining momentum. This proved to be the most challenging and confounding aspect of the gallery's story.

In 1985, prominent members of the business community had expressed interest in providing support for the gallery.¹⁹ In order to encourage Canadian businesses to invest in the 49th Parallel, Morin proposed that the gallery hold socio-cultural evenings for members of the diplomatic, business and art communities in NYC.²⁰ She wrote that the events would "enable the politicians to better understand the 49th Parallel, its wide range of repercussions, and the political tool it could be if used well."²¹

At this point, the 49th Parallel won institutional status from the Canada Council for the Arts, making it eligible for Exhibition Programme Assistance funds for individual exhibitions, and allowing it to hire curators, produce catalogues, and tour exhibitions.²² These efforts were intended to further establish the gallery's reputation and validate its role as a "Canadian cultural institution."²³ As the following quotation illustrates, the efforts had further goals as well:

As an initial effort, the Director has thought it wise, despite its state mandate as a promoter of Canadian art abroad, for the 49th Parallel to circulate its first major travelling exhibition in Canada (Will Gorlitz, in collaboration with the Sable-Castelli gallery of Toronto, to Montreal, Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Vancouver in the Fall and Winter of 1987/88). She has taken this course of action to build credibility and trust for the Gallery among professionals and institutions in Canada to gain their necessary support in circulating future exhibitions in foreign locations.²⁴

In 1985, the Conservative government commissioned The Task Force on Program Review, which was a comprehensive examination of all government programs, including health, communications, justice, and culture. The Task Force recommended a decrease in funding for the arts and specifically, the dismantling of the DEA's arts promotion program. The Canada Council, it recommended, should take over the role of subsidizing international touring of visual and performing arts.²⁵ The Task Force argued that, "External Affairs should cease providing financial assistance to any groups and any programming in the cultural centres to promote Canadian culture abroad."²⁶ Counter to the *Report's* recommendations, it was announced in late 1986 that the budget for the International Cultural Relations division would be doubled that year. In short, the Canadian government would support the promotion of its artists in foreign markets while cutting back funding within Canada. However, the influence of the Task Force would be felt—cutbacks in cultural relations were imminent.

France Morin's efforts to diversify the gallery's sources of funding already represented a new direction; the rethinking of the government's role was even more radical.²⁷ From the perspective of those in NYC, the government's role in the 49th Parallel was deemed unimportant. To the Canadian arts community, the

gallery's function as a tool of cultural diplomacy seemed tenuous; it had become more important to artists, dealers, and curators than it was to Canada's foreign policy.

There was an attempt to incorporate the 49th Parallel or turn it into a non-profit institution, making it possible for private donors to obtain tax credits in return for financial support. Robert Johnstone, the new Consul General in NYC, contacted Montréal lawyer Douglas C. Robertson in late December 1985 for legal advice on altering the gallery's status.²⁸ Robertson concluded that because the gallery was located in the US, it would have to be "domiciled," or incorporated, there.²⁹ This would prevent Canadians from making tax-deductible contributions, thereby defeating the purpose of charitable status. Robertson believed the solution was to keep the gallery as a Canadian entity supported by a funding body, such as "The American Friends of the 49th Parallel," incorporated in the US.

In April of 1986, a meeting was held at the law offices of Phillips and Vineberg in Montréal. Present at the meeting were Cecil Rabinovitch, director of Cultural Policy at the DEA; Edyth Goodridge, head of visual arts at the Canada Council; Gaston Blais, head of arts policy for the Department of Communications; Vladimir Skok, International Cultural Liaison for the Department of Communications; Robert Johnstone; France Morin; and Douglas Robertson.³⁰ The focus of the meeting was to create a new direction for the 49th Parallel. With no blueprint, the possibilities seemed endless. The discussion centered on the

possibility of privatization and securing funding from dealers, businesses, foundations, and individuals in Canada and the US. The agenda also included a consideration of the potential for special events, publications, resident programs, the possible role of municipal and provincial governments, and the "commercialization" of Canadian art.

The significance of this meeting was twofold. First, it was the first time that representatives from the various funding agencies had met to discuss their respective views of the 49th Parallel's function and potential. Second, it was the first time that the issue of privatization was discussed formally; the notion of non-governmental funding had previously only been suggested in discussion or written correspondence between Morin, Johnstone, and Robertson.

In May of 1986, Cecil Rabinovitch wrote to Marshall A. Cohen, then president of the Canadian real estate development company, Olympia and York, and a former Deputy Minister in Ottawa, asking if the company would contribute space in NYC.³¹ Rabinovitch's request signifies that there was definite support for the strategy to privatize and diversify sources of funding. The DEA was eager to change the 49th Parallel's status.

In June of 1986, the DEA's International Cultural Relations division submitted a statement to the Secretary of State for External Affairs that it would seek private, non-profit charitable status for the 49th Parallel.³² They hired a private firm to create a fund-raising plan and began approaching individuals to assist in the creation of a corporation to run the gallery and to serve on its board

of directors. They asked that the government contribute to the 49th Parallel the funds to match the private sector's investment, equivalent to the financial assistance provided to Canada House in London and the Maison du Canada à Paris.³³

Following two months of meetings among the representatives from the government departments involved, the group sent a letter to Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, presenting two options.³⁴ The first was to establish a Crown corporation that could own and operate the gallery, and receive private support. This option was not favoured as it ran counter to the government's desire to privatize existing crown corporations. The creation of a crown corporation, furthermore, required a special Act of Parliament that would likely be difficult to achieve. The second, more feasible, option was the creation of a private, non-profit corporation that would own and operate the 49th Parallel, and be run by a board of private individuals serving as the gallery's trustees.³⁵ Its funding would be drawn from private and corporate donations in Canada and the US.

Soon after, action was taken to secure the funding to support the corporation. Morin and Johnstone contacted individuals within Canadian corporations and sent them information packages. The appeal for funding included the following rationale:

As recognition of Canadian art increases internationally, so does the market value of its principal exponents and, consequently, so does the actual value of Canadian collections both private and corporate. This

"denationalization" of Canadian visual art we believe to be the healthiest course of action to take as it affords immediate benefits to Canada.³⁶

It seems, in hindsight, that corporate involvement in and funding of the 49th Parallel was inevitable, regardless of the earlier mandate. This pivotal shift toward privatization was the result of diminishing federal financial support and a response to an increasingly market-driven Canadian art world. Furthermore, it echoed the ideological and economic shift in Canada toward freer trade within a burgeoning continental economy.

Canadian businesses were offered the opportunity to be identified with "contemporary visual arts – on a continuing basis, and before a large, appreciative and influential audience in the U.S. metropolis."³⁷ Sponsors and corporations were asked to contribute approximately \$25,000 each for a three-year period to expand the gallery's programme and bolster its image.³⁸ The sponsors' names would be displayed at the entrance to the gallery, featured in advertising and printed material, and acknowledged at exhibition openings. Sponsors would be invited to annual events at the Canadian Consulate in NYC and receive an official income tax receipt for their contribution.³⁹

Believing corporate private sponsors would recognize their own self-interest in supporting the gallery, Johnstone and Morin held lunches in Toronto and Montréal, inviting the chairpersons and CEOs of major Canadian corporations.⁴⁰ Attendees learned about the role of the Canadian Consulate in NYC and the objectives of the 49th Parallel. Johnstone explained that the goal of Consulates was to promote national interests in foreign countries, thus

stimulating a better understanding of Canada. He also emphasized that, "more of our work is on the economic side," including developing international markets for Canadian businesses and promoting foreign investment in Canada⁴¹ These goals would certainly be appealing to Canadian corporations with interests in the US. The appeals, unfortunately, were largely unsuccessful, resulting in only one partnership with Air Canada. The company's name would appear on all brochures and advertisements for the gallery in return for passenger and cargo flight vouchers on the airline.⁴²

In May 1987, France Morin decided to formally adopt a new strategy and drafted yet another report that outlined possible changes to the 49th Parallel's programming to improve its profile and broaden its appeal. Titled "49th Parallel: Policies and Goals Toward Renewal," the document listed six strategies that the gallery should implement in its exhibition planning.⁴³ The first was to share exhibitions with "other respected U.S. institutions." The second was to circulate exhibitions to other US galleries. The third was to increase attention to Canadian art and culture "through both analytical and populist exhibitions."⁴⁴

Morin's fourth strategy was that Canadian art dealers become directly involved in the affairs of the 49th Parallel. They had, after all, an obvious vested interest in NYC exhibitions of artists they represented. Her fifth idea was to incorporate design and related technological experimentation in the exhibitions.⁴⁵ This reflected the postmodern thrust in the visual arts, and was characteristic of Morin's inclusive definition of art. Morin applied this approach effectively at the

49th Parallel, resulting in some of the most advanced and unique exhibitions in NYC at the time. These included *Material Fictions* (1987), curated by Morin, and *Active Surplus* (1988), curated by Canadian Bruce Grenville. In the introduction for the *Active Surplus* brochure, France Morin wrote:

In representing this exhibition at the 49th Parallel it has, in an interesting manner, become that which it seeks to address, that is to say, it has become an object, specifically, an object intended to signify the presence of a Canadian culture.⁴⁶

This thematic exhibition was a postmodern interpretation of Canadian cultural symbolism. Defying the conventional character of high art, *Material Fictions* included a selection of work by seventeen young Canadian artists who utilized the ubiquitous materials of mass media and mass production.

Morin's sixth recommendation was to include "traditional and native artifacts in thematic exhibitions and contemporary Canadian art toward a new postmodern and more inclusive aesthetic/philosophic exploration of our ongoing heritage."⁴⁷ Morin was shifting the gallery's programme in an effort both to make it more theoretically relevant and to appeal to a wider audience, as well as to appease those in government who were skeptical about avant-garde art. This shift was perhaps motivated by her determination to cast a wider net in Canada in order to foster greater support for the gallery among artists and art dealers. From 1985 to 1987, the gallery's programme became more "balanced," a term used to justify its programme in reports sent to Ottawa. The gallery continued to exhibit avant-garde work but also presented retrospectives of established Canadian artists, such as the 1987 exhibitions of work by Claude Tousignant (b.

1932) and Guido Molinari (b. 1933), and the 1988 exhibition of work by Ivan Eyre (b. 1935).

Collaborative projects with other respected institutions were incorporated into the programme in order to encourage media coverage and increase the gallery's profile. Examples of collaborations include *General Idea: The Armoury of The 1984 Miss General Idea Pavilion* (1986), organized by the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo; *Active Surplus* (1988), curated by Bruce Grenville for The Power Plant in Toronto; and *Betty Goodwin* (1988), curated by Montreal curator Yolande Racine for the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts.

Morin did break with the gallery's mandate to exhibit only avant-garde work by including the work of "historic" artists Yves Gaucher (b. 1934), Guido Molinari, and Louis Comtois (b. 1945) in the *Montréal Abstraction Series* (1987-88). Her aim, in this case, was to affirm "the involvement of Canadian visual arts historically on the broadest international planes."⁴⁸

France Morin knew that the 49th Parallel needed to increase its support within Canada. It had gained respect in the New York art scene as an exciting forum for art, but it catered to New York audiences so exclusively that the interests of Canadian art dealers were not taken into account. Morin attempted to address this situation by producing in 1987 a newsletter called *Canada/New York News*, circulated in the Canadian art world. The newsletter's first—and to my knowledge—only issue, outlined the gallery's change of status and the recent amendments to its curatorial mandate and funding. This newsletter was

produced in addition to the brochures that accompanied each exhibition. Furthermore, in 1987 the 49th Parallel allied itself with the Professional Art Dealers' Association of Canada (PADAC) in order to involve those who had the most to gain from the international success of Canadian artists and who were experts in the promotion and marketing of art.

While Morin was working hard in NYC to diversify the 49th Parallel's funding, the federal government was seeking to alleviate itself of the gallery's administration and costs. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's Conservative government was re-elected in 1988 with a mandate to complete a Free Trade Agreement with the US, asserting the importance of a continental free-market economy. In June of that same year, the government articulated the following positions regarding the 49th Parallel: there was strong support from the art world for its continuation; it was possible to keep the gallery open if the private sector contributed 50 percent of the budget; and through the incorporation of the gallery, the programming and decision-making would become the responsibility of a board of directors.⁴⁹ The 49th Parallel's diplomatic/foreign policy role was no longer dominant.

In 1988, Joe Clark commissioned a task force to examine the role of the 49th Parallel and its future prospects.⁵⁰ The task force included Canadian art dealers and PADAC members Diane Farris (Vancouver) and Olga Korper (Toronto). In its final report, the task force recommended that the gallery be "commercialized" and managed by Canadian art dealers who would, in turn, pay

for the gallery's programming and use it as a promotional venue. On February 27, 1989, referring to the 49th Parallel's de facto role as a "shop window" for Canadian art, Joe Clark announced the approval of this commercialization plan. This would mark the final phase of the gallery's decade-long history.

In regard to the proposed management strategy of PADAC, Olga Korper stated that "... regional representation on the programming board will mean that exhibitions are not just from Québec and Ontario. The committee structure is more democratic and will not be controlled by some little group."⁵¹ Morin had been criticized, and justifiably, for giving the gallery too narrow a focus, including mainly installation works by Ontario and Québec artists. (See Appendix C) Those that supported Morin's former programming style and were averse to a "democratic structure," like Jorge Zontal of the art collective General Idea, argued that, "If you want to have an impact in New York, you have to have a strong vision. Regional representation is going to dilute the effect."⁵²

Commercializing

Progressively throughout the 1980s and 1990s, European and U.S. governments have sought to downplay the potential leverage of individual national governments in the economic life of the nation, citing inexorable global forces and the necessity for deregulated markets as their *raison d'être*.⁵³

Jessica Evans, *Representing the Nation*

During the last three years of the 49th Parallel's existence, its exhibitions featured, almost exclusively, Canadian painters. Due to PADAC's involvement, the gallery was devoted to art that could be classified as possessing "commercial

potential." The 1989 exhibition of paintings by Attila Richard Lukacs, for example, was deemed the "most popular show ever, in terms of critical and public interest," but was criticized for its lack of commercial success.⁵⁴ Glen Cumming, the former Art Gallery of Hamilton director who became the third and final director of the 49th Parallel in 1989, ruefully noted that, "Despite his Canadian dealer Diane Farris' full-time work in New York, nothing sold here. While two works did later sell in Toronto to American collectors who first saw them at 49th Parallel, we received no commission since the pieces did not sell here."⁵⁵ Cumming's comment underscores the gallery's increasingly commercial focus, and his effort to define it as a New York venue and not a foreign agency.⁵⁶ For PADAC members, the sale of art was the obvious goal. Sales had always been a problem at the 49th Parallel; they were hindered by regulation of duties, sales tax, and commissions and varying pricing structures among galleries.⁵⁷

The 49th Parallel underwent a review of its commercial status in 1988, the gallery's fourth programme review since 1981. The review's report states that, "The response among New York collectors to Canadian artists is now sufficient, in the Director's estimation, to warrant a serious reappraisal of 49th Parallel's status to allow for commercial activity."⁵⁸ For the gallery to be exclusively commercial, exhibiting art that was "saleable," it would have to abandon its initial mandate as a cutting-edge venue. Furthermore, it was important for Canadian dealers to develop relationships with American dealers, "rather than competing aggressively with them. While these considerations by no means preclude a

commercial role for the 49th Parallel, they do set limits on how far it can be so developed."⁵⁹

The gallery's initial mandate—to project an image of Canadian culture and Canada as an innovative, sophisticated nation—had been abandoned. Of primary concern now was the display of artists whose work would sell. This change was reflected symbolically in PADAC's change of the gallery's name from 49th Parallel: Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art, to simply the 49th Parallel Gallery. The new name removed any connotations of "state" association, as was the case with the Canadian cultural centres in Europe. The renaming was intended to alter "[the 49th Parallel's] profile within the [New York art] community."⁶⁰ This was perhaps sufficient for Morin to realize that the gallery she had directed for six years had forever changed. She resigned in June 1989 and Glen Cumming took her place.⁶¹

Morin's departure ushered in a change in the gallery's administration. This was the first year that the 49th Parallel was administered jointly by PADAC and the DEA, an arrangement that was well-received by those involved.⁶² PADAC organized exhibitions at the 49th Parallel from July to December of 1989. They included: Jan Poldas, organized by Toronto's Costin and Klintworth Gallery; Richard Prince, organized by Vancouver's Equinox Gallery; Janice Gurney, organized by Toronto's Wynick-Tuck Gallery; and the work of two New York-based Canadian artists, Shelagh Keeley and Susanna Heller, organized by Toronto's Grunwald Gallery. The 1989 annual report stated that "Through

exhaustive efforts of the dealers, we're pleased to report that sales were made, which is a tremendous accomplishment towards our long term goal—to operate a revenue producing gallery."⁶³ Five sales were made directly from the gallery in 1989, thus altering permanently its design and objectives.

In late 1989, Joe Clark authorized a three-year extension on the lease for the 49th Parallel and supplied funds to help cover the operational cost of the space, which included \$400,000 for rent and utilities.⁶⁴ PADAC committed to providing \$200,000 for staff salaries and general operating and exhibition programming costs.⁶⁵ Olga Korper, then president of PADAC, was quoted as saying, "The partnership symbolizes a marriage of private and public sector support for the gallery and is geared to giving contemporary Canadian art a greater edge in a very competitive market..."⁶⁶

In the final two years of its existence, the 49th Parallel's conservative programming was the antithesis of the bold exhibitions of its early years. The 1990 exhibition, for example, of paintings by Jean-Paul Riopelle, a well-established and "safe" artist, demonstrates this significant shift. The innovative, non-commodifiable installations, such as those in 1981 by Irene Whittome (b. 1942) and General Idea (active 1968-94), and those in 1983 by Ian Carr-Harris (b. 1941), and John McEwen (b. 1945), were supplanted by art with potential commercial success.⁶⁷

The gallery had been borne of the idea of presenting the daring, avant-garde art for which Canada had become famous. The 49th Parallel attempted to

operate above the market while trying to fit in with the New York art scene. Entirely government-sponsored, the gallery had the freedom to resist commercialization. As a result of government cutbacks and pressure from Canadian dealers seeking exhibit space for their artists in NYC, however, the gallery's exhibitions became much more cautious. Commercialization had been only one element of Guy Plamondon's broad vision for the 49th Parallel. Ultimately, it became the essential determinant.

With the PADAC program in place, the 49th Parallel achieved moderate success with sales. Joe Fafard sold a work to an art dealer in Spain, while Howard Lonn sold to a dealer in NYC.⁶⁸ The Jewish Museum in NYC purchased work by Peter Krausz for their permanent collection. Artists such as Ron Martin, General Idea, Jeff Wall, Betty Goodwin, and Krzysztof Wodiczko won praise and support in NYC and their international careers were launched during this period. Olga Korper boasted that six of her artists had gained representation with European dealers as a result of exhibitions at the 49th Parallel.⁶⁹ In a 1990 letter to *C* magazine, Korper wrote,

Contrary to some fears which have come to our attention, the intent of the new priorities of the 49th Parallel is not to become a purely commercial venture which would compromise the quality of the exhibits, but to focus on placing the work in public galleries, private galleries, group exhibitions beyond our borders, collections of some significance, and lastly, to make the work overtly available to the general viewing public.⁷⁰

Korper was also quoted in *The Globe and Mail* in December 1989 as saying, "There is going to be a major push to place the art in the U.S. collections

and exhibits. We will no longer borrow works out of public or private collections in Canada. The works we exhibit have to be 90 percent available for sale and exhibition.”⁷¹

Glen Cumming, like his predecessors, included letters of support in reports submitted to the DEA. Affirming the gallery’s importance, he wrote:

We are constantly hearing about yet another article or review on the 49th Parallel from art communities across the country. As a result, we have received a flood of applications for exhibitions which demonstrates two important points: 1) the interest from the community is enthusiastic; 2) the validity of maintaining a venue in New York is essential.⁷²

The gallery, ultimately, could not survive without support from Ottawa. The economic downturn that began in the late 1980s and took hold in 1990 had a direct impact on the 49th Parallel—it was not immune from the prevalent cutbacks and layoffs. Although the 49th Parallel responded to the general ideological shift toward privatization, becoming increasingly profit motivated, it was always, at its core, government-funded.

The Closure

In 1991, PADAC suggested that the gallery be moved to a new, less expensive location and found a space with a monthly rent of \$150,000.⁷³ Olga Korper, who acted as the liaison between the 49th Parallel and her fellow dealers, lobbied members of the federal and provincial governments for further support. She targeted specifically the Québec and Ontario governments, as 76 percent of the artists represented at the 49th Parallel originated there.⁷⁴ Korper had by now

abandoned the gallery's original mandate, for she made no mention of its potential diplomatic role. She presented statistical evidence to the provincial cultural ministers showing that the 49th Parallel was of great service to Canadian artists and dealers. She wrote to Karen Haslam, Ontario Minister of Culture, asking for an annual commitment of \$100,000, asserting that the 49th Parallel "...has contextualized Canadian contemporary art in an American market, demonstrating an effort to put forth a measure of our cultural worth in international territory."⁷⁵ Korper sent the same letter to Ms. Haslam's Québec equivalent.

Glen Cumming and the Canadian dealers compiled a list of people to meet and brainstorm a new concept for the promotion of Canadian art in NYC.⁷⁶ The group included France Morin, now working as a curator at The New Museum in NYC, artists Joanne Tod and Claude Simard, art consultant Bruce Ferguson, Ontario and Québec cultural delegates, and NYC gallery owners. Although the results of this meeting are not documented, this effort attests to the degree to which people were interested in seeing the work of the 49th Parallel continue.

While Korper, Cumming, and other PADAC members attempted to save the 49th Parallel, the federal government was meanwhile considering breaking the lease before its June 30, 1992, expiration date. The cost of seeing out the lease, however, was close to the cost of breaking it. The DEA declared that "severe" budget cuts were the reason for their inability to continue funding the gallery's rental costs.⁷⁷ The potentially negative public reaction if the gallery were

to close abruptly, however, was a concern. There was also no plan in place for the future of the Consulate's visual arts program if the 49th Parallel closed.

Despite efforts by PADAC to ensure its survival, the closure of the gallery was inevitable, sudden, and swift. Voicing the opinions of many critics of the gallery, Toronto art dealer Jared Sable asserted, "The whole thing is tarred and feathered as a government gallery."⁷⁸ The efforts of Canadian and New York dealers, Canadian artists, and representatives of international cultural institutions were not enough to keep the gallery open. In April 1992, the 49th Parallel shut its doors, thus ending an experiment in the internationalization of Canadian art.

Endnotes

¹ The funding of the visual arts in the US is described lucidly in Edward C. Banfield's *The Democratic Muse, Visual Arts and Public Interest*, (New York 1984).

² National Gallery of Canada (hereafter NGC), 49th Parallel Fonds (hereafter 49PF), Box 36, File 4, Memorandum from the Consul General, NYC, to BKA (US division), DEA, April 22, 1987.

³ Marc Mayer, interview with author, Toronto, Ontario, 25 May, 2001. 49th Parallel's assistant director, Marc Mayer, for example, recalled hearing patrons dismiss the gallery and its government connection as they passed by on their way to other commercial galleries in the building.

⁴ Allan Gottlieb, interview with author, Toronto, Ontario, 26 February, 2001. Gottlieb mentioned The Jewish Museum in NYC as an example of how institutions can lose sight of their objectives. In the 1960s and 1970s, the museum presented avant-garde exhibitions that were lauded by the art world. However, these exhibitions neglected the purpose of the museum itself, which was to celebrate Jewish art and traditions.

⁵ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 3, "Cultural Affairs Programme," from SCA to CNGNY, 21 March, 1985, 1. Underline from original text.

⁶ Ibid., 4.

⁷ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 3, Memo, 1985, 6.

⁸ Ibid., 6.

⁹ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 2, Memo to UGB from UGP/US Programs Division, 21 January, 1985.

¹⁰ The letters are in the NGC Archives and at the DFAIT Archives.

¹¹ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 2, Memo from SCA, Guy Plamondon to CMD/Beauchemin, 29 April, 1985, 2.

¹² NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 3, France Morin, "Review of the role and history of the Centre," 1985, 1.

¹³ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 3, "1985-1986 Cultural Programme Budget," 1.

¹⁴ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 3, author not cited, "Views of Europe Branch on Cultural Centres," August 1985.

¹⁵ Morin, "Review of the role and history of the Centre," 1.

¹⁶ Ibid., 4. Morin also stated that she hoped to employ a receptionist, a reference centre librarian, which was part of Plamondon's original plan, and a deputy director. The deputy director would be responsible for "the development of exhibitions for which [the] Canada Council and corporate assistance is requested; organizing the publication of exhibition catalogues; touring exhibitions; development of thematic exhibitions in conjunction with major museums; [and] development of the future 49th Parallel Reference Centre."

¹⁷ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 1, James Kraft, "Taking the Leading Edge; Taking our Own Initiative," 1. The 49th Parallel was to be given a voluntary 20% share of any purchase made as a result of an exhibition there. I could find no evidence in the archival material or through my interviews that any voluntary contributions were ever made. There is very little documentation of any sales whatsoever.

¹⁸ Morin, "Review of the role and history of the Centre," 6.

¹⁹ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 3, Memo, 1985, 6.

²⁰ Ibid., 6.

²¹ Ibid., 6.

²² NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 3, Larry Black, "49th Parallel," Canadian Press, 7 November, 1985.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ NGC/49PF, Box 37, File 1, "49th Parallel: Policies and Goals Toward Renewal," 5.

²⁵ *Culture and Communications: A Study Team Report To the Task Force on Program Review*, (Ottawa 1986), 199.

²⁶ Ibid., 201-02.

²⁷ NGC/49PF, Box 35, File 4, Letter to Robert Johnstone, from Douglas C. Robertson, Phillips V. Vineberg, Montréal, 24 January, 1986, 3-4.

²⁸ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 3, Letter to Douglas C. Robertson, from Robert Johnstone, 31 December, 1985.

²⁹ NGC/49PF, Box 35, File 4, Letter to Robert Johnstone, from Douglas C. Robertson, Phillips V. Vineberg, Montréal, 24 January, 1986, 3-4.

³⁰ NGC/49PF, Box 35, File 4, "49th Parallel Centre for Contemporary Art – Privatization Committee – Preliminary Organizational Meeting," Monday, 14 April, 1986. Also present at the meeting were Tony Advokaat, deputy director of cultural policy at DEA, and Yves Pépin, head of the visual arts section at DEA.

³¹ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 4, Letter to Marshall A. Cohen from Cecil Rabinovitch, 2 May, 1986. Cohen was also asked if he would be interested in working on the soon-to-be formed Board of Directors.

³² NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 4, Letter from Marie-Andrée Beauchemin and Donald Campbell to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, 2 June, 1987, 1.

³³ Ibid., 3.

³⁴ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 4, Memorandum to the Secretary of State for External Affairs from A. Advokaat, 7 July, 1986, 1.

³⁵ Ibid., 2.

³⁶ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 4, Untitled document sent from John Fowell to France Morin, September 16, 1986. The document appeared to be part of a package sent to private citizens and businesses in an appeal for funding.

³⁷ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 4, Gordon L. Goldie, "The 49th Parallel, The International Showcase for Canadian Contemporary Art – A Plan for Private Sector Participation," unpublished paper, 21 January, 1987, 1. Gordon Goldie was hired by the Consulate in NYC to make recommendations on fund-raising for the 49th Parallel.

³⁸ Ibid., 2. They wanted a total of \$350,000 in contributions, requiring fourteen sponsors to raise the appropriate funds.

³⁹ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁰ NGC/49PF, Box 36, File 4, Among those at the Toronto meeting were: Marshall Cohen, Chairman and CEO, Gulf Canada Corporation; T. Fell, President and CEO, Dominion Securities; C.E. Medland, Chairman and CEO, Wood Gundy, Inc.; Arnold Edinborough, President and CEO, The Council for Business and the Arts in Canada; William Withrow, Art Gallery of Ontario; Olga Korper, art dealer; and Mira Godard, art dealer. Among those at the Montréal meeting were: David Culver, Chairman and CEO, Alcan Aluminium Limited; André Charron, Chairman, Levesque Beaubien Ltd.; René Blouin, art dealer; Marcel Brisebois, Director, Musée d'art Contemporain; and Lilian Rayson, Director, Community Affairs, Air Canada.

⁴¹ NGC/49PF, Box 36, file 4, "Montréal (re 49th Parallel) – Meeting," 17 March, 1987, 1.

⁴² DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 2, Letter from France Morin to External Affairs, 22 January, 1985.

⁴³ "49th Parallel: Policies and Goals Toward Renewal," 1.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 1.

⁴⁵ "49th Parallel: Policies and Goals Toward Renewal," 2.

⁴⁶ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 5, *Active Surplus*, (NYC 1988), unpaginated.

⁴⁷ "49th Parallel: Policies and Goals Toward Renewal," 2.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 2. Morin's 1984 exhibition *Canadian Paintings and Sculpture* included work by historic artists including L.L. FitzGerald, Lawren Harris and F.H. Varley.

⁴⁹ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 3, Letter to Marie-Andrée Beauchemin and Donald Campbell, letter from an anonymous correspondent, "The 49th Parallel, Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art, New York City," June 2, 1987.

⁵⁰ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 3, author not cited, "Task Force on the Future of the 49th Parallel Gallery," 1988.

⁵¹ Isabel Vincent, "Canadian gallery in New York launching a major assault," *The Globe and Mail*, 9 December, 1989, C4.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Jessica Evans, "Introduction: Nation and Representation," in David Boswell and Jessica Evans (eds.), *Representing the Nation: A Reader*, (London and New York 1999), 3.

⁵⁴ NGC/49PF, Box 37, File 9, author not cited, "Report to the Advisory Board of the 49th Parallel on the Gallery's Promotional Activities," 1991.

⁵⁵ NGC/49PF, Box 37, File 9, Glen Cumming, "Viewpoint," 1991.

⁵⁶ NGC/49PF, Box 37, File 1, author not cited, "Restructuring, 1988-1990."

⁵⁷ "49th Parallel: Policies and Goals Toward Renewal," 4.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁰ NGC/49PF, Box 37, File 1, "49th Parallel Report," 13 March, 1990, 1.

⁶¹ Glen Cumming, interview with author, Toronto, Ontario, 15 October, 2000. The DEA placed an advertisement in *The Globe and Mail* for the position of director of the 49th Parallel.

⁶² "49th Parallel Report," March 13, 1990, 1.

⁶³ Ibid., 1.

⁶⁴ Olga Korper, "Letter to the Editor," C, 24 (Winter 1990), 71.

⁶⁵ Vincent, "Canadian Gallery in New York launching a major assault," C4.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ General Idea was a Toronto artists collective comprised of AA Bronson (b. 1946), Jorge Zontal (1944-94), and Felix Partz (1945-94).

⁶⁸ NGC/49PF, Box 38, File 2, Letter to Susan Whitney (Regina) from Glen Cumming, June 1992.

⁶⁹ NGC/49PF, Box 37, File 2, Letter from Olga Korper to Karen Haslam, 1 September, 1991.

⁷⁰ Korper, Letter to the Editor, 71.

⁷¹ Vincent, "Canadian gallery in New York launching a major assault."

⁷² "49th Parallel Report," March 13, 1990, 2.

⁷³ NGC/49PF, Box 37, File 2, author not cited, "PADAC Art Foundation – Proposal for 49th Parallel in New York City," unpaginated.

⁷⁴ This statistic includes only one- and two-person shows.

⁷⁵ NGC/49PF, Box 37, File 2, Letter from Olga Korper to Karen Haslam, 1 September, 1991.

⁷⁶ DFAIT, 55-16-1-USA-1, Vol. 16, Memorandum, undated.

⁷⁷ NGC/49PF, Box 37, File 2, "Early termination of the lease on the 49th Parallel in New York," April 12, 1991.

⁷⁸ Lisa Balfour Bowen, "Cumming of Age at the 49th Parallel," *Toronto Sun*, 17 March, 1991, S3.

CONCLUSION

In 1982, just one year after the 49th Parallel opened, art critic Robert Fulford considered the gallery's future in a *Toronto Star* article titled, "A glorious paradox of cultural politics." Fulford predicted that:

It will be perhaps half a dozen years before we learn whether the 49th Parallel was just the bright transitory whim of a powerful bureaucrat or a brilliant idea, perfectly designed for its time and place.¹

I would argue that it was both a risky whim and an inspired vision. The time was right for Plamondon to introduce contemporary Canadian art to the international scene. In 1981, the 49th Parallel was the right thing at the right time: the North American economy in the early- and mid-1980s was booming, the art market was exploding internationally, and the Canadian government wanted to celebrate Canadian culture in the US. The 49th Parallel seemed to be a relevant and viable project.

Moreover, the place was right. The invigorating and inspiring SoHo atmosphere provided, firstly, a venue for Canada to demonstrate its modern, sophisticated distinctiveness, and secondly, a space for Canadian artists to achieve international recognition in an unprecedented way. As a project of unparalleled innovation in Canadian foreign affairs, the history of the 49th Parallel speaks volumes about the vast potential of art and culture in creating ties, building relations and crossing borders.

In the final analysis, the 49th Parallel can be deemed both a success and a failure. The gallery, as a vehicle for the government's high expectations of

cultural diplomacy, fell short of the initial, lofty vision. The gallery exemplified the Canadian government's dynamic and concrete efforts to counter the domination of American culture. Yet it failed, to any measurable degree, to improve Americans' stereotyped perceptions of Canada. Despite the gallery's negligible effect internationally, Plamondon's hope that it would create "pride and drive" in the Canadian art community was indeed realized.² The later involvement of PADAC, which confirmed the gallery's de facto role as a commercial "shop window" for Canadian art, did provide Canadian dealers with the invaluable opportunity to exhibit their artists' work in NYC, thereby giving them an entrée to the international art market.

More than anyone else, Canadian artists benefited from the 49th Parallel. Close to 300 artists exhibited their work in NYC, the art capital of the world, and their careers were undoubtedly bolstered by the experience. Over the course of the gallery's history, the artists who wrote letters of support included Betty Goodwin (b. 1923), Pierre Boogaerts (b. 1946), Ian Wallace (b. 1950), Garry Neill Kennedy (b. 1935), Michael Snow (b. 1929), and Sandra Meigs (b.1953). Regardless of the Canadian art community's support for the gallery, however, without the continued endorsement of key bureaucrats like Allan Gotlieb, the gallery's position in DEA was weakened.

As I learned more about the 49th Parallel, I became confounded by its myriad objectives and was amazed that such a gallery survived as long as it did, for it was fraught with contradictions from the beginning. In the first instance,

Plamondon's original vision of a five-storey multi-media and performing arts centre was scaled down to a one-room visual arts gallery, suggesting that even at the initial stage, the DEA's support for a project of their own initiative was surprisingly limited. The gallery's dependence on government funding potentially guaranteed its survival (as long as it met the expectations of its masters in Ottawa), but compromised its image in a culture of high commerce. In other words, it was discredited by its "covert identification" with Canada. And although its mandate as a government-sponsored institution demanded diverse representation of artists from across the country, the undeniable neglect of minority artists and artists from outside Ontario and Québec limited and biased its representation of Canadian visual arts.

Finally, the 49th Parallel's ambiguous mandate—was it official or commercial?—proved to be its principal weakness. The Conservative government's reduction in funding forced Morin and the Consul General, Robert Johnstone, to seek sponsorship in the business community. It was a catch-22: the business sector was understandably wary of investing in a publicly-funded gallery, while the government was reluctant to finance an increasingly commercial project largely benefiting dealers and artists, and not fulfilling national political goals. The rhetoric of commerce, initially a minor force shaping the direction of the gallery, caused its ultimate downfall.

By the 1990s, furthermore, the earlier nationalist policies buttressing 49th Parallel had lost their relevance. In the mid-twentieth century, at the time of the

Massey Commission, national cultures were seen as localizing forces that distinguished societies and peoples, and protected traditions and identities. The Commission's recommendations were based on the premise that "culture was what bound Canadians together and distinguished them from other nationalities."³ With the advent of global technology and communications—radio, television and more recently the internet—national cultures such as Canada's were threatened by the more powerful culture of the US.⁴ As global markets expanded and government policies, including Canada's, became increasingly centred on the economic and the global, nationalist projects like the 49th Parallel—viable only with government support—found less justification in government policies which recognized more cultural diversity.

Following the closure of the 49th Parallel in 1992, there was a four-year period during which international cultural relations received little attention within the foreign policy initiatives of Brian Mulroney's Conservative government. With the 1995 publication of *Canada in the World*, however, Jean Chrétien's Liberal government re-inserted cultural affairs into the state's diplomatic strategy. *Canada in the World* is unambiguous in its statement that culture is, "an important way of advancing our interests in international affairs."⁵

This renewed interest arose in a cultural climate distinctly different from the previous two decades. Not until the mid-1990s did the government exhibit a genuine desire to recognize Canada's diversity within foreign *and* domestic cultural policy.⁶ In 2000, Yves Gagnon, director of the Cultural Relations division

at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, affirmed that multiculturalism is a significant part of its mandate, and that any cultural endeavours undertaken today must represent the arts of all Canadians.⁷ A 49th Parallel established today would need to offer a more inclusive and expansive “window” onto Canadian art and culture.

This thesis has presented a chronological history of the 49th Parallel, but it tells only one of many possible stories of the gallery. In the course of my research, I became aware of several avenues of research that could be explored. For example, the gallery's effect on the careers of Canadian artists could be measured by conducting a more extensive series of interviews with artists, curators, and commercial dealers while it is still possible. The 49th Parallel's exhibition programme could be evaluated more generally in terms of its relevance to the contemporary art scene in Canada. Furthermore, an in-depth examination of all Canadian cultural centres abroad would determine their impact on the domestic art world. The 49th Parallel project, finally, could be compared to other international cultural initiatives—dance, theatre, or music, for example—undertaken by the Canadian government, thus highlighting the unique role of the visual arts in promoting Canada abroad. By looking at these topics, the successes and failures of the 49th Parallel unveiled by this thesis could be further explored.

Endnotes

¹ Robert Fulford, "A glorious paradox of cultural politics," *The Toronto Star*, 22 May, 1982, C3.

² National Gallery of Canada Archives, 49th Parallel Fonds, Box 36, File 1, Guy Plamondon, "Establishment of a Canadian Art Centre, February 14, 1974," 6.

³ Paul Litt, *The Muses, The Masses and the Massey Commission*, (Toronto 1992), 4.

⁴ Ann Cvetkovich and Douglas Kellner (eds.), "Introduction," in *Articulating the Global and the Local: Globalization and Cultural Studies*, (Boulder, Colorado 1997), 6.

⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Canada in the World: Government Statement*, (Ottawa 1995), 4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷ Joyce Zemans, as quoted in Dot Tuer, "The Art of Nation Building," *Parallélogramme*, XVII:4 (May 1992), 34.

Appendix A: List of exhibitions at the 49th Parallel
 National Gallery of Canada Archives, 49th Parallel fonds, box 37, file 11.

49th Parallel Exhibitions, March 1981 to July 1991.

1981

3/21/81 - 4/11/81	Michael Snow
4/18/81 - 5/9/81	Roland Poulin / Sorel Cohen
5/16/81 - 6/6/81	General Idea
5/13/81 - 7/3/81	Wendy Knox-Leet

1981 - 1982

9/26/81 - 10/24/81	Irene Whittome
10/31/81 - 11/28/81	David Thauberger
12/5/81 - 1/9/82	Pierre Bougaerts
1/16/82 - 2/13/82	Elizabeth Ewart
2/20/82 - 3/13/82	John Clark
3/20/82 - 4/17/82	Bill Vazan
4/24/82 - 5/22/82	Noel Harding
5/29/82 - 6/26/82	Peter Hill / Paul Campbell

1982 - 1983

9/18/82 - 10/23/82	Melvin Charney
10/30/82 - 11/20/82	John Greer / Sandra Meigs
11/27/82 - 5/23/83	"Fragments, Content, Scale", curated by Alvin Balkind & Doris Shadbolt Oliver Gilling / Nancy Johnson / Chris Reed / John Scott
	"Videotapes", curated by Elke Town Susan Britton / Tomiyo Sasaki / Ed Slopek / John Watt
1/12/83 - 2/12/83	Ian Carr-Harris

- 2/19/83 - 3/19/83 Rober Racine
- 3/26/83 - 4/23/83 John McEwen
- 4/30/83 - 5/28/83 "Commentary 1982-83", curated by Carmen Lamanna
John Brown / Marc de Guerre / Rae Johnson / Joanne Tod
- 6/4/83 - 7/30/83 "Contemporary Quebec Photography", curated by Peter Krausz
Raymond April / Lise Begin / Sorel Cohen / Angela Grauerholz /
Holly King / Serge Tousignant
- 1983 - 1984
- 9/24/83 - 10/15/83 Betty Goodwin
- 10/22/83 - 11/19/83 "Fiction", curated by Elke Town
Ian Carr-Harris / Mary Janitch / General Idea / Shirley Wiitasalo
- 11/26/83 - 12/22/83 Robin Collier, curated by Philip Fry
- "Videotapes", curated by Kate Craig
Tom Dean / Marshalore / Elizabeth Vanderzaag / Paul Wong & Co
- 1/7/84 - 1/28/84 Lynn Hughes (in collaboration with Grunwald Gallery)
Renee Van Halm (in collaboration with S L Simpson Gallery)
- 2/4/84 - 3/3/84 Vincent Tangredi (in collaboration with Carmen Lamanna)
- 3/10/84 - 4/7/84 "Canada / New York", curated by France Morin and Edit Deak
Simon Cerigo / David Craven / Stephen Lack / Marcus Leatherdale /
John Massey / Dorothea Rockburne / Jana Sterbak /
Krzysztof Wodiczko / Robert Walker
- 4/14/84 - 5/12/84 "Allocations", curated by William A Ewing
Marvin Gasoi / George Legrady / Arnaud Maggs / Philip Pocock /
Michael Snow / Brian Wood
- 5/19/84 - 6/16/84 Tony Brown (in collaboration with Ydessa Gallery)
- 1984 - 1985
- 9/15/84 - 10/20/84 "Canadian Paintings and Sculpture", curated by David Rabinovich
Paul-Emile Borduas/Jack Bush/Jack Chambers/Greg Curnoe/Pierre
Dorion/Elizabeth Ewart/Murray Favro/Robert Fones/Yves Gaucher
Lawren Harris/L L Fitzgerald/J W G MacDonald/Ron Martin/John
Meredith/Guido Molinari/Jana Sterbak/Michael Snow/F H Varley
- 10/27/84 - 11/24/84 "Subjects in Pictures", curated by Philip Monk
Shelagh Alexander / Janice Gurney / Nancy Johnson / Sandra Meigs
Joanne Todd/Shirley Wiitasalo

- 12/1/84 - 12/22/84 Garry Neill Kennedy / Norman Cohn / Krzysztof Wodiczko
curated by Peggy Gale
- 1/5/85 - 2/2/85 "Phoenix : New Attitudes in Design"
curated by Loris Calzolari and Bruce Barber
- 2/9/85 - 3/9/85 Rodney Graham / Ken Lum / Jeff Wall / Ian Wallace
curated by Ian Wallace
- 3/16/85 - 4/13/85 Gilles Mihalcean / Michel Denée
- 4/20/85 - 5/18/85 Robert Adrian X
- 5/25/85 - 6/27/85 Anne Billy/Pierre Dorion/Angela Grossman/Landon MacKenzie
- 1985 -1986**
- 9/14/85 - 10/12/85 Ron Martin (in collaboration with Carmen Lamanna)
Videoseries: Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak, curated by Renee Baert
- 10/19/85 - 11/16/85 Greg Murdock / Marian Penner Bancroft / Cheryl Sourkes
Videoseries: Francois Girard, curated by Andree Duchaine
- 10/23/85 - 12/21/85 Tom Dean / Medrie MacPhee
Videoseries: Lily Lack, curated by Ardele Lister
- 1/11/86 - 2/15/86 Jana Sterbak / Krzysztof Wodiczko
(in collaboration with Hal Bromm Gallery and Ydessa Gallery)
Videoseries : Jan Peacock, curated by Bruce Barber
- 3/1/86 - 3/29/86 "Icarus: The Vision of Angels"
curated by France Morin and Ronald Feldman
Alexander Graham Bell/Murray Favro/Leonardo da Vinci/Panamarenko
& 44 others
- 4/5/86 - 4/26/86 "A Measure of Consensus: Canadian Architecture in Transition"
curated by Andrew Graft
Patkau Associates / Bellprat Associates / Peter Rose / Henriquez &
Partners Architects / Lambur Scott Architects / Baird Simpson
Associates / Peter Cardew Architects / Jacques Rousseau,
Architecte / Dan S Hanganu Architecte / Jones & Kirkland,
Architects / A A Robins & Associates/ Barry Johns Architect / Roger
Hughes, Architects / John Perkins Architects / James K M Cheung,
Architect / Barton Myers Associates / John Shnier / Margaret Ishii /
Bruce Kuwabara / Wynus Bielaska / Carmen Corneil, Architect / A J
Diamond & Partners
Videoseries: Bernar Heber, curated by Rene Blouin

5/3/86 - 5/24/86

Jerry Pethick

Videoseries: Elizabeth Vanderzaag, curated by Hank Bull

5/31/86 - 6/21/86

Donigan Cumming / Lynne Cohen

Videoseries: John Greyson, curated by General Idea
Rodney Werden, curated by Christina Ritchie1986 - 1987

9/11/86 - 10/11/86

General Idea, curated by Albright-Knox Art Gallery

Videoseries: General Idea

10/18/86 - 11/8/86

Dave Tomas

Videoseries: Norman Cohn, curated by Peggy Gale

11/15/86 - 12/13/86

Roland Poulin

Videoseries: Colin Campbell, curated by Kerrie Kwinter

12/20/86 - 1/24/87

Ron Giii

Videoseries: Michelle Wasquant, curated by Rene Blouin

1/31/87 - 2/28/87

"The Idea of North", curated by France Morin
Robert Frank / June Leaf / Agnes Martin / David Rabinowitch /
Royden Rabinowitch / Dorothea Rockburne / Jackie Winsor *

Videoseries: Rober Racine

3/7/87 - 3/28/87

Claude Tousignant, curated by Normand Theriault

Videoseries: Rhonda Abrams, curated by Colin Campbell

4/4/87 - 4/25/87

Gathie Falk

Videoseries: Jean Gagnon, Paul Gauvin, curated by Marshalore

5/9/87 - 5/30/87

Melvin Charney

Videoseries: Marc de Guerre, curated by Elke Town

6/6/87 - 7/31/87

Douglas Kirton / Jeffrey Spaulding

Videoseries: Kate Craig, curated by Karen Henry

1987 - 1988

- 9/12/87 - 9/26/87 "Material Fictions", curated by France Morin
Vikky Alexander / Alan Belcher / Jennifer Bolande / Jack Goldstein /
General Idea / Ken Lum
- 10/3/87 - 10/31/87 Will Gorlitz
- Videoseries: Diane Poitras, curated by Lisa Steele
- 11/7/87 - 12/12/87 Guido Molinari, curated by Normand Theriault
- Videoseries: Ewa Turska, curated by Manon Blanchette
- 1/9/88 - 1/30/88 Betty Goodwin, curated by Yolande Racine
- 2/6/88 - 3/5/88 Ron Moppett
in collaboration with Mira Godard Gallery
- Videoseries: Cornelia Wyngaarden, curated by Kate Craig
- 3/12/88 - 4/9/88 "Active Surplus", curated by Bruce Grenville
Jim Anderson/Gretchen Bender/Elsa Cayo/Abraham David Christian/
David Clarkson/Robin Collyer/Judith Doyle/Paul Knotter/Louise Lawler/
Liz Magor/Allan McCollum/Robert McNealy/Bernie Miller/Martha Rosler/
Joyan Saunders/Mary Scott/Martha Townsend
- 4/16/88 - 5/7/88 Jocelyn Allouche / Robert Bourdeau, curated by Shirley Madill
- Videoseries: John Will, curated by Daina Augaitis
- 5/14/88 - 6/11/88 Ian Wallace, curated by Vancouver Art Gallery
- Videoseries: Susan C Rynard, curated by Bernar Hebert
- 6/18/88 - 7/30/88 Wanda Koop

1988 - 1989

- 9/16/88 - 10/22/88 Brian Boigon / Douglas Walker
in collaboration with S L Simpson Gallery
- 10/29/88 - 11/12/88 Ivan Eyre / Katya Jacobs
in collaboration with Mira Godard Gallery
- 11/19/88 - 12/3/88 Medrie MacPhee / Christopher Pratt
in collaboration with Mira Godard Gallery
- 12/10/88 - 1/21/89 Pierre Blanchette / Jacques Hurtubise / Jean-Pierre
Morin / Jean Noel / Michel Saulnier / Susan G Scott /
Pierre-Leon Tetreault / Jennifer Macklem

in collaboration with Michel Tetreault Art Contemporain

1/28/89 - 2/11/89

Gerard Collin-Thiebaut / Raymond Gervais / John Massey
in collaboration with Galerie Chantal Boulanger

2/18/89 - 3/4/89

Ludger Gerdes / Serge Murphy / Carol Wainio
in collaboration with Galerie Chantal Boulanger

3/11/89 - 3/25/89

Graham Gillmore / Angela Grossman / Derek Root
in collaboration with Diane Farris Gallery

4/1/89 - 4/15/89

Attila Richard Lukacs
in collaboration with Diane Farris Gallery

4/22/89 - 5/6/89

Yves Gaucher
in collaboration with Olga Korper Gallery

5/13/89 - 5/27/89

Ilan Averbuch/Roland Brener/Claude Luneau/Claude Mongrain/
Leopold Plotek/Ron Shuebrook
in collaboration with Olga Korper Gallery

6/3/89 - 6/17/89

Louis Comtois/Hugh LeRoy/John Noestheden/Bobbie Oliver/
Roland Poulin/Henry Saxe/Eric Snell
in collaboration with Olga Korper Gallery

6/24/89 - 9/23/89

Jan Poldas
in collaboration with Costin & Klintworth Gallery

1989 - 1990

10/7/89 - 10/28/89

Richard Prince
in collaboration with Equinox Gallery

11/4/89 - 11/25/89

Janice Gurney
in collaboration with Wynick/Tuck Gallery

12/9/89 - 1/20/90

Susanna Heller / Shelagh Keeley
in collaboration with Tomoko Liguori Gallery and Grunwald Gallery

1/27/90 - 2/24/90

Andre Fauteux
in collaboration with Gallery One

3/3/90 - 3/31/90

Harold Klunder
in collaboration with Sable-Castelli Gallery

4/7/90 - 5/5/90

Claude-Philippe Benoit
in collaboration with Galerie Brenda Wallace

4/12/90 - 6/23/90

Jean-Paul Riopelle
in association with Gallery Moos

6/29/90 - 7/27/90

Stacey Spiegel

1990 - 1991**9/8/90 - 10/6/90****Alan Storey****10/13/90 - 11/17/90****Enn Erisalu
in association with Atelier Gallery****11/27/90 - 1/5/91****Edmund Alleyn
in collaboration with Galrie d'art Lavalin****1/12/91 - 2/9/91****Evan Penny
in collaboration with Wynick/Tuck Gallery****2/16/91 - 3/16/91****Peter Krausz
in collaboration with Galerie Dresdnere****3/23/91 - 4/20/91****"The Photographic Image",
curated by Glen Cumming
David Buchan / Sorel Cohen / Evergon /
Wyn Geleynse / Angela Grauerholz /
Arnaud Maggs / Colette Whiten.****4/27/91 - 5/25/91****Al McWilliams
in collaboration with Equinox Gallery****6/1/91 - 7/27/91****Wyn Geleynse
in collaboration with Galerie Brenda
Wallace****9/7/91 - 10/5/92****Suzanne Giroux
in association with Ministere des Affaires
Culturelle, Quebec.****10/12/91 - 11/9/91****John Hartman
in association with Mira Godard Gallery****11/16/91 - 1/4/92****Howard Lonn
in association with Galeria Senda,
Barcelona**

1992

1/11/92 - 2/8/92

Joe Fafard

In association with Susan Whitney Gallery,
Regina

2/15/92 - 3/14/92

John Francis

Curated by James D. Campbell
Avec l'assistance de la Delegation General
Du Quebec a New York.

3/21/92 - 4/18/92

Chris Combs / Stan Denniston

4/25/92 - 5/23/92

Chris Cran

in association with Paul Kuhn Fine Arts,
Calgary.

6/1/92 - 6/31/92

To be announced

Appendix B: Summary of exhibitions at the 49th Parallel, by year and type

	Year	Total Shows	Solo Shows	Two-person Shows	Group Shows (3+ artists)
1	1981 03/81-07/81	4	3	1	0
2	1981-1982 09/81-06/82)	8	7	1	0
3	1982-1983 09/82-07/83	9	4	1	4 (1 video)
4	1983-1984 09/83-06/84	10	6	0	4 (1 video)
5	1984-1985 09/84-06/85)	8	1	1	6
6	1985-1986 09/85-06/86	16*	10 (8 video)	3	3
7	1986-1987 09/86-07/87	18*	15 (8 video)	2	1
8	1987/1988 09/87-07/88	14*	11 (5 video)	1	2
9	1988-1999 09/98-09/99	12	3	3	6
10	1989-1990 10/89-07/90	8	7	1	0
11	1990-1991 09/90-07/91	8	7	0	1
12	1991-1992 09/91-05/92	7	6	1	0
	TOTAL:	122	79 (65%)	16 (13%)	27 (22%)

*The sharp increase in the annual number of exhibitions in the mid-1980s is due to the "Videoseries" exhibitions, held from September 1985 through November 1988. The "Videoseries" exhibitions typically featured one artist.

Appendix C: The geographical origin of artists featured in solo and two-person exhibitions at the 49th Parallel

The geographical origin of the artist denotes their primary place of residence at the time of their 49th Parallel exhibition, not their birthplace or current residence.

Total number of artists shown in all exhibitions: 111

Artists in these exhibitions from Ontario or Québec: 84 (76%)

1981	Artist	Origin
1	Cohen, Sorel	Québec
	Poulin, Roland	Québec
2	General Idea	Ontario
3	Knox-Leet, Wendy	Ontario
4	Snow, Michael	Ontario

Total artists shown: 5

Artists from Ontario or Québec: 5 (100%)

1981-82	Artist	Origin
1	Boogaerts, Pierre	Québec
2	Campbell, Paul	Ontario
	Hill, Peter	Ontario
3	Clark, John	Alberta
4	Ewart, Elizabeth	?
5	Harding, Noel	Ontario
6	Thauberger, David	Saskatchewan
7	Vazan, Bill	Québec
8	Whittome, Irene	Québec

Total artists shown: 9

Artists from Ontario or Québec: 7 (78%)

1982-83	Artist	Origin
1	Carr-Harris, Ian	Ontario
2	Charney, Melvin	Québec
3	Greer, John Meigs, Sandra	Nova Scotia Ontario
4	McEwen, John	Ontario
5	Racine, Rober	Québec

Total artists shown: 6

Artists from Ontario or Québec: 5 (83%)

1983-84	Artist	Origin
1	Brown, Tony	Québec
2	Collyer, Robin	Ontario
3	Goodwin, Betty	Québec
4	Hughes, Lynn Van Halm, Renée	Québec Ontario
5	Tangredi, Vincent	Ontario

Total artists shown: 6

Artists from Ontario or Québec: 6 (100%)

1984-85	Artist	Origin
1	Mihalcean, Gilles Deneé, Michel	Québec Québec
2	Robert Adrian X	Ontario

Total artists shown: 3

Artists from Ontario or Québec: 3 (100%)

1985-86	Artist	Origin
1	Cohen, Lynne Cumming, Donigan	Ontario Québec
2	Dean, Tom MacPhee, Medrie	Ontario New York (b.Alberta)
3	Girard, Francois	Québec
4	Greyson, John Werden, Rodney	Ontario Ontario
5	Hebert, Bernard	Québec
6	Lack, Lily	?
7	Martin, Ron	Ontario
8	Peacock, Jan	Nova Scotia
9	Pethick, Jerry	BC
10	Steele, Lisa Tomczak, Kim	Ontario Ontario
11	Sterbak, Jana Wodiczko, Krysztof	Québec Ontario
12	Vander Zaag, Elizabeth	Ontario

Total artists shown: 17

Artists from Ontario or Québec: 13 (76%)

1986-87	Artist	Origin
1	Abrams, Rhonda	Ontario
2	Campbell, Colin	Ontario
3	Charney, Melvin	Québec
4	Cohn, Norman	PEI
5	Craig, Kate	BC
6	De Guerre, Marc	?
7	Falk, Gathie	BC
8	Gagnon, Jean	Québec
	Gauvin, Paul	Québec
9	General Idea (main)	Ontario
10	General Idea (video)	Ontario
11	Giii, Ron	Ontario
12	Kirton, Douglas	Ontario
	Spalding, Jeffrey	Alberta
13	Poulin, Roland	Québec
14	Racine, Rober	Québec
15	Tomas, Dave	Québec
16	Tousignant, Claude	Québec
17	Wasquant, Michelle	?

Total artists shown: 19

Artists from Ontario or Québec: 14 (74%)

1987-88	Artist	Origin
1	Alloucherie, Jocelyne	Québec
	Bourdeau, Robert	Ontario
2	Goodwin, Betty	Québec
3	Gorlitz, Will	Ontario
4	Koop, Wanda	Manitoba
5	Molinari, Guido	Québec
6	Moppett, Ron	Alberta
7	Poitrass, Diane	Québec
8	Rynard, Susan	Ontario
9	Turska, Ewa	?
10	Wallace, Ian	BC
11	Will, John	Alberta
12	Wyngaarden, Cory	Ontario

Total artists shown: 13

Artists from Ontario or Québec: 10 (77%)

1988-89	Artist	Origin
1	Boigon, Brian	Ontario
	Walker, Douglas	Ontario
2	Eyre, Ivan	Manitoba
	Jacobs, Katya	Ontario
3	Gaucher, Yves	Québec
4	Lukacs, Attila Richard	BC
5	MacPhee, Medrie	New York
	Pratt, Christopher	Newfoundland
6	Poldaas, Jaan	Ontario

Total artists shown: 9

Artists from Ontario or Québec: 5 (56%)

1989-90	Artist	Origin
1	Benoit, Claude-Philippe	Québec
2	Fauteux, André	Ontario
3	Gurney, Janice	Ontario
4	Heller, Susanna	New York
	Keeley, Shelagh	Ontario
5	Klunder, Harold	Ontario
6	Prince, Richard	BC
7	Riopelle, Jean-Paul	Québec
8	Speigel, Stacy	?

Total artists shown: 9

Artists from Ontario or Québec: 6 (67%)

1990-91	Artist	Origin
1	Alleyn, Edmund	Québec
2	Erisalu, Enn	BC
3	Geleynse, Wyn	Ontario
4	Krausz, Peter	Québec
5	McWilliams, Al	BC
6	Penny, Evan	Ontario
7	Storey, Alan	BC

Total artists shown: 7

Artists from Ontario or Québec: 4 (57%)

1991-92	Artist	Origin
1	Combs, Chris	Ontario
	Denniston, Stan	Ontario
2	Cran, Chris	Alberta
3	Fafard, Joe	Saskatchewan
4	Francis, John	Québec
5	Giroux, Suzanne	Québec
6	Hartman, John	Ontario
7	Lonn, Howard	Ontario

Total artists shown: 8

Artists from Ontario or Québec: 6 (75%)

Appendix D: Map of select galleries in SoHo, including the 49th Parallel
 Grace Glueck, "The Weekend Art Scene: Uptown and Down," *The New York Times*, 2 October, 1981, Section 2.

The Weekend Art Scene: Uptown and Down

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archival Sources

Department of External Affairs Archives. File Number 55-16-1-USA-1, Volumes 1 through 16.

National Gallery of Canada Archives. 49th Parallel/49e Parallèle fonds, 1981-1992. Boxes 34 through 38.

Personal Interviews

Cumming, Glen. Interview by author. Tape Recording. Toronto, Ontario, 10 October, 2000.

Gagnon, Yves. Interview by author. Ottawa, Ontario, 12 October, 2000.

Gotlieb, Allan. Interview by author. Tape Recording. Toronto, Ontario, 26 February, 2001.

Johnstone, Robert. Interview by author. Toronto, Ontario, 25 May, 2001.

Mayer, Marc. Interview by author. Toronto, Ontario, 25 May, 2001.

Morin, France. Interview by author. New York City, New York, 4 December 2000.

Plamondon, Guy. Interview by author. Tape recording. Ottawa, Ontario, October 31, 2000.

-----. Telephone conversation. 8 February, 2001.

Secondary Sources

A Little Applebert: Report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1982.

Ashley, Audrey M. "Hearing told of Canada's 'cultural poverty.'" *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 April, 1981: A4.

Balfour Bowen, Lisa. "Ottawa opens art gallery in New York." *Toronto Sun*, 22 March, 1981: D22.

-----, "Manning the outpost for Canadian art." *The Globe and Mail*, 5 November, 1983: E9.

-----, "Privatizing the 49th." *Canadian Art*, IV:3 (Fall/September 1987): 15, 16.

-----, "The 49th Parallel: A new lease on life for Canada's showcase." *Toronto Sun*, 19 March, 1989: S20.

-----, "Cumming of Age at the 49th Parallel." *Toronto Sun*, 17 March, 1991: S3.

Banfield, Edward C. *The Democratic Muse: Visual Arts and the Public Interest*. New York: Basic Books, 1984.

Bell, Michael. "The Welfare of Art in Canada." In *The Kingston Conference Proceedings, Conference of Canadian Artists (1941: Kingston, Ontario)*. (Kingston, Ontario, reprint, 1991): iii-xxxiv.

Bentley Mays, John. "Canada's art child christened." *The Globe and Mail*, 23 March, 1981: C19.

Bogardi, Georges. "Gallery for Canadian artists set for New York." *Montreal Gazette*, 17 January, 1981: 53.

Bothwell, Robert. *Canada since 1945: power, politics, and provincialism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989.

-----, *Canada and the United States: the politics of partnership*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.

-----, "Pearson, Canada, and the World." In Norman Hillmer (ed.) *Pearson: The Unlikely Gladiator*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 1999: 21-43.

Bothwell, Robert and J.L. Granatstein. *Pirouette: Pierre Trudeau and Canadian foreign policy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.

Canada and country; alternative policies for a strong, united and sovereign Canada: the report. Proceedings of a conference held at Ridgetown, Ontario, September 24, 1994. Delaware, Ontario: Canadian Council on National Issues, 1994.

Canada's International Cultural Relations, A Brief to the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1981.

Canada in Today's World. Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1980.

Communiqué. No. 200 (19 November 1986). Ottawa: International Cultural Relations Division, 1986.

Coombs, Philip H. *The fourth dimension of foreign policy: educational and cultural affairs*. New York: Harper, 1964.

Cooper, Andrew Fenton. *Canadian Culture: international dimensions*. Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1985.

Crean, Susan. *Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture?* Don Mills, Ontario: General Publishing, 1976.

"Cultural sovereignty: myth or reality?" Proceedings of the 28th annual Seminar at University of Windsor Seminar on Canadian-American Relations. Windsor, Ontario: Center for Canadian-American Studies, 1987.

Culture and Communications: A Study Team Report To the Task Force on Program Review. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1986.

Cummings Jr., Milton C. and Richard S. Katz (eds.). *The Patron State: Government and the Arts in Europe, North America, Japan*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Curtis, Kenneth M. and John E. Carroll. *Canadian-American Relations: The Promise and the Challenge*. Toronto: Lexington Books, 1983.

Cvetkovich, Ann and Douglas Kellner (eds.). *Articulating the global and the local; globalization and cultural studies*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997.

Department of Communications. *Report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee*. Ottawa: Information Services, 1982.

Department of External Affairs. *Plan quinquennal de développement des relations culturelles avec l'étranger*. Ottawa: 1974.

----- . *International Cultural Relations*. Ottawa: Bureau of International Cultural Relations, 1980.

----- . *Canada's International Cultural Relations, A Brief to the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee*. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1981.

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. *Canada in the World: Government Statement*. Ottawa: Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 1995.

Dickey, John Sloan. *Canada and the American Presence: The United States Interest in an Independent Canada*. New York: New York University Press, 1975.

Doran, Charles F. and John H. Sigler (eds.). *Canada and the United States: Enduring Friendship, Persistent Stress*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1985.

Dunton, Davidson. "The Response to Cultural Penetration." in H. Edward English (ed.) *Canada-United States Relations*. Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science. New York: The Academy of Political Science, 1976: 63-74.

Edinburgh, Arnold. "It's time to help Canada take a larger bite of the Big Apple." *Financial Post*, 29 September, 1984: B13.

Evans, Jessica. "Introduction: Nation and Representation." in David Boswell and Jessica Evans (eds.) *Representing the Nation: A Reader, Histories, heritage and museums*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Featherstone, Mike (ed.). *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*. Reprint, London: Sage Publications, 1996.

Fisher, Jean (ed.). *Global Visions: Towards a New Internationalism in the Visual Arts*. London: Kala Press in association with The Institute of International Visual Arts, 1994.

Frye, Northrop. *The taming of the nation: a study of the cultural bases of international policy*. New York: Macmillan, 1952.

-----, *Divisions on a Common Ground: essays on Canadian Culture*. Toronto: Anansi, 1982.

Fulford, Robert. "A glorious paradox of cultural politics." *Toronto Star*, 22 May, 1982: C3.

Giddens, Anthony. *The Nation-State and Violence*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1985.

Glueck, Grace "The Weekend Art Scene: Uptown and Down." *The New York Times*, 2 October, 1981: Section 2.

Gotlieb, Allan. *The United States in Canadian foreign policy*. Ottawa: External Affairs and International Trade, 1991.

Grampp, William D. *Pricing the Priceless: Art, Artists, and Economics*. New York: Basic Books, 1989.

Guilbaut, Serge. *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Gwyn, Richard. *The 49th Paradox: Canada in North America*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985.

Hammock, Virgil. "Dialogue: The 49th Parallel: An Opinion." *Artpost*, V:3 (Spring 1988): 6-7.

Helwig, David (ed.) *Love and Money: The Politics of Culture*. Toronto: Oberon Press, 1980.

Hilliker, John and Donald Barry. *Canada's Department of External Affairs. Volume 2, Coming of Age, 1946-1968*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995.

Hillmer, Norman (ed.) *Pearson: The Unlikely Gladiator*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999.

Hobsbawm, Eric. "Introduction." In Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Johnson, Eve "Canada's New York state of mind." *Vancouver Sun*, 9 November, 1984: 14.

Kibbins, Gary. "Cultural Democracy: Smoke and Mirrors in the Institutions." *Fuse*, VIII:6 (Spring 1985): 13-19.

Kleyn, Robert. "Canadian Art or Canadian Artists?" *Vanguard*, XIV:1 (February 1985): 27-31.

Korper, Olga. "Letter to the Editor." *C*, 24 (Winter Issue): 71.

Litt, Paul. "The Massey Commission, Americanization, and Economic Nationalism." *Queen's Quarterly*, XCVIII:2 (Summer 1991): 375-387.

-----, *The Muses, The Masses and the Massey Commission*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.

Lueck, Thomas J. "More Corporations Becoming Working Museums." *New York Times*, 15 September, 1985: C9.

Mlinar, Zdravko. *Globalization and territorial identities*. Aldershot, England: Avebury, 1992.

Murray, Janice L. *Canadian Cultural Nationalism: The Fourth Lester B. Pearson Conference on the Canada-United States Relationship*. New York: New York University Press, 1977.

Netzer, Dick. *The Subsidized Muse: Public Support for the Arts in the United States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

New strategies for culture and trade. Ottawa: The Cultural Industries Sectoral Advisory Group on International Trade, 1999.

Ostry, Bernard. *The Cultural Connection: An Essay on Culture and Government Policy in Canada*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978.

Özkirimli, Umut. *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Robertson, Clive. "Business and Culture." *Fuse*, V:6-7 (August/September 1981): 196-204.

Robins-Mowry, Dorothy (ed.) *Canada-U.S. Relations: Perceptions and Misperceptions*. Report of the Seminar "Canada-U.S. Relations: Perceptions and Misperceptions." Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1988.

Rochon, Lisa. "49th Parallel in the spotlight again." *The Globe and Mail*, 24 September, 1988: C3.

The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences. National Library of Canada Website:
<http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/massey/rpt/etable.htm>.

Russell, Anna K. *The failure of fringe internationalism: origins of cultural diplomacy in Canada 1945-1951*. Research Essay (M.A.). Ottawa: Carleton University, 1995.

Schafer, Paul. *Canada's International Cultural Relations*. Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1979.

----- . *Aspects of Canadian Cultural Policy*. Paris: UNESCO, 1976.

Simpson, Charles R. *Soho: The Artist in the City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Skoggard, Ross. "The 49th Parallel." *Art in America*, LXIX:6 (Summer 1981): 17, 19.

----- . "The 49th Parallel: After Two Years." *Art in America*, LVI:2 (Summer 1983): 32-33.

Stursberg, Peter. *Lester Pearson and the American Dilemma*. Toronto:

Doubleday, 1980.

Sutton, Joan. "We pay tab for one-man show." *Toronto Sun*, 24 February, 1982: 57.

Swanson, Roger Frank. "Canadian Cultural Nationalism and the U.S. Public Interest." In Janice L. Murray (ed.) *Canadian Cultural Nationalism: The Fourth Lester B. Pearson Conference on the Canada-U.S. Relationship*. New York City: New York University Press, 1977.

Symington-Hage, Jean. "49th Parallel: Canada opens showcase gallery in New York." *Ottawa Citizen*, 11 April, 1982: D2.

Taylor, Brandon. *Avant-Garde and After: Rethinking Art Now*. New York City: Harry N. Abrams, 1995.

Taylor, Kate. "Gallery Officials upbeat despite low sales." *The Globe and Mail*, 8 April, 1991: C2.

Thompson, John Herd and Stephen J. Randall. *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994.

Tippett, Maria. *Making Culture: English-Canadian institutions and the arts before the Massey Commission*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990.

Tucker, Michael. *Canadian Foreign Policy: Contemporary Issues and Themes*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1980.

Tuer, Dot. "The Art of Nation Building." *Parallélogramme*, XVII:4 (May 1992): 24-36.

United States in Canadian Foreign Policy. Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1991.

US and U.S.A, View of Canadian/American Relations. Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, Spring 1979.

Viau, René. "49e Parallèle: Une Vitrine pour l'art canadien." *Le Devoir*, 24 October, 1981: A13.

Vincent, Isabel. "Canadian gallery in New York launching a major assault." *The Globe and Mail*, 9 December, 1989: C4.

Wayne, Joyce. "Foreign Affairs." *Canadian Art*, II:2 (Summer/June 1985): 34-39, 62-63.

Webster, Judith (ed.). *Voices of Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Culture*. Proceedings from a symposium on 20th Century Canadian Culture put on by the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States. Burlington, Vermont: The George Little Press, 1977.

Williams, Robert J. "International Cultural Activities in the Conservative Era: a Study in Frustration." Paper presented to the conference, *Diplomatic Departures? The Conservative Era in Canadian Foreign Policy, 1984-1993*, Hull, Quebec, November 18-20, 1999.

-----, "International Cultural Programmes: Canada and Australia Compared." In Fenton Cooper, Andrew (ed.). *Canadian Culture: International Dimensions*. Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1985: 145-164.

Woodcock, George. *Strange Bedfellows: the state of the arts in Canada*. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1985.

You've got ten minutes to get that flag down. Halifax Conference: A National Forum on Canadian Cultural Policy, Mount Saint Vincent University, 1985. Halifax: Coalition on Arts and Culture, 1986.