

Originality is perhaps an exhausted concept, but I would be derelict in my responsibilities as editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Canadian Art History* were I not to list the ‘firsts’ represented by this issue.

First of these is the *Journal’s* recognition of a Canadian art historian through the commissioning of a series of articles honouring his contributions to the field. This model is, of course, the *Festschrift*, a collection of original essays published in celebration of a scholar whose work has not only informed, but inspired his colleagues and students. Being scholars, we write “in honour of...” but this serious tone does not mute the expressions of pride, pleasure, and just plain good luck at having in our midst a scholar of the intellectual quality and critical penetration of François-Marc Gagnon. A *Festschrift* normally marks a milestone in the career of the honouree. This one comes as François-Marc Gagnon completes his tenure as founding director of the Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art, having graciously accepted to continue his association with the Institute as its distinguished research fellow. We can expect more to celebrate as he completes two major publications and irrepressibly, as we know him, invests himself further in the work he loves.

Another first, this one for the direction of the *Journal*, is the possibility of a guest-edited thematic issue becoming a reality. This issue, I have to admit, is something of an inside job. Its conception and writing were well advanced before I came on the scene and it has been brought to fruition by none other than Sandra Paikowsky, co-founder of the *Journal* and its editor until 2010. Her guest editorial sets out the principles of her project, notably its emphasis on a single work of art as the springboard for research and reflection. Devotees of the *Journal* will no doubt share my view that the participants’ responses to Sandra Paikowsky’s invitation also honour her extraordinary contribution to Canadian art history. For my part, I thank her, on both intellectual and practical grounds. No incoming editor could hope for a warmer welcome than two guest-edited issues in the works. I did say ‘two’, since this is the ‘first’ of two issues in honour of François-Marc Gagnon, the second to follow in spring 2012. The celebration begins, and it will continue.

*Martha Langford*