Julia Crawford and the Rules of the Game

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ARTICLE

The feminist's first reaction, Linda Nochlin suggested, to her famous question about why there had been no great women artists, was to "dig up examples of worthy or insufficiently appreciated women artists throughout history; to rehabilitate rather modest if interesting and productive careers; to 'rediscover' forgotten flower painters . . . to engage in the normal activity of the specialist scholar who makes a case for the importance of his [or her] very own neglected or minor master."[1] Certainly, the "forgotten flower painter" Nochlin had in mind was not New Brunswick artist Julia Crawford (1896–1968), but Crawford does fit the description of the subject pursued by the hypothetical, and ultimately misguided, feminist "specialist scholar." While Crawford had at least one admirer who considered her "the East Coast Emily Carr," this view of her talent and status was not, and has not been, shared by those most influential in establishing the canonical hierarchy of Canadian art.[2] To make a case for Crawford's "importance" – in the sense Nochlin uses the term – might succeed in expanding this canon, but would not challenge its basic assumptions, assumptions that did not serve Crawford well in her lifetime. "To claim creativity for women is to do more than find a few female names to add to canonised lists in surveys of Western art," Griselda Pollock writes. "[C]hallenging the cultural negation of women's creativity is *more* than a matter of historical recovery." But, she continues, "few of us have really thought through how impossible the task of doing that *more* actually is."[3]

More than forty years after Nochlin's provocation, and in light of the many debates of the intervening years, Mary Sheriff's keynote address at the 2012 Canadian Women Artists History Initiative Conference encouraged attendees to reconsider the merits of the kinds of recovery efforts that Nochlin implied were not capable of altering the standards of value, the underlying structure, of the discipline. Rediscovering the lives of women artists within the context of their social worlds, taking seriously forms of history through which these lives have been recorded ("ego documents":

Detail, Julia Crawford, *Snow and Mill from Gregory Place*, ca. 1950, oil on Masonite, 40.5 × 30.5 cm, New Brunswick Museum, 2001.25.10. (Photo: New Brunswick Museum)

memoirs, diaries, biography), Sheriff suggested, is a valuable and necessary precursor to the *"more"* for which Pollock calls.[4] Like Sheriff, Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, the editors of *Reclaiming Female Agency* (2005), are concerned that art historians "deferential to postmodern skepticism about the modernist heroizing of individual artists, have focused less and less on the work and agency of individual women artists, shying away especially from the idea of a feminist expression grounded in women's real life experiences." Research focused on "the issue of female agency, both its presence and its repression" is, for Broude and Garrard, "the most advanced and fruitful thinking of the present moment."[5]

One persistent challenge in any study focused on agency remains determining its limits and its relationship to structure. Consider, for example, Broude's assessment of Mary Cassatt's relationship to "patriarchal norms of proper femininity": "What we see [in Cassatt] is an important and widespread pattern of resistance on the one hand and simultaneous complicity on the other, a pattern typical of many Euro-American women artists and intellectuals who achieved fairly notable positions during the nineteenth century. Like Cassatt, these women desired autonomy, success, and fame, but they had also absorbed the patriarchal values of their bourgeois, Victorian era."[6] The pattern, as Broude suggests, is familiar enough, but where in it does agency lie? Does agency apply only to resistance and not to complicity? Were ideas about femininity "absorbed" from Victorian society, but not ideas about "autonomy, success, and fame"? This questioning should not be pursued to reductive ends. I would echo Pollock's view that it is not useful to "aim to be so anti-humanistic that structuralist analysis excises all traces of the subject and subjectivity."[7] At the same time, a dichotomy of agency/repression risks ahistorically imagining a subject whose appealing ideas and actions (appealing, that is, from the perspective of the twenty-first century) are chosen of her own will and volition, while unappealing ones are the result of an imposed (false) consciousness. As Pollock notes elsewhere in the same volume, "biographical materials certainly provide significant and necessary resources for the belated production of women's *author*ity," but "[b]iography . . . can never be a substitute for history." What Pollock means by "history" echoes Marx: "Women make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past."[8] Structure and agency are conjoined, simultaneously and insuperably, in "women's real life experiences."[9] As Marx (again) put it, "life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life."[10]

One strategy for keeping both structure and agency in constant view is to make use of Pierre Bourdieu's conceptions of *field* and *habitus*. Spheres of

human activity are both made possible and circumscribed within interrelated and hierarchical fields (the economic field, the political field, the field of cultural production, and so on). An individual's participation in a field is not determined – it depends on subjective acts, agency – but players share some common dispositions regarding the field's rules, rewards, and authorities. These common dispositions make up part of the larger system of dispositions that constitute an individual's habitus: dispositions inculcated throughout a lifetime which influence and limit an individual's actions and reactions in multiple and diverse fields.[11] A Bourdieu-inspired "rediscovery" of Julia Crawford's "real life experiences" requires trying to understand her habitus and then exploring the way it enabled and limited her participation in the field of art. This approach resists the biographical tendency in "canonical art history" to "make its artists into heroes."[12] Or, in this case, a heroine (with a focus on agency) or a tragic heroine (with a focus on the repression of agency).

A challenge for biographers is to resist the form's teleological tendency. That is, the most recognizable patterns of a subject's life are pre-supposed by the fact that the subject is considered worthy of biography. To put this another way, the choice of a subject of a biography (let us say, a woman artist) already leads to the kinds of evidence (say, reviews of exhibitions, public collections, prices at auction) that created the subject's already acknowledged position in the field. To see the field as an always-contingent, always-constructed web of social forces and then to appropriately locate a subject's "agency" within these forces is, of course, an enormous challenge, particularly for those subjects, such as Crawford, who were marginal or losing players. It is possible that Crawford's current marginality is not due to biographical factors at all, but to aesthetic ones. The artistic field is, as Bourdieu notes, a field that possesses "relative autonomy" and Crawford's paintings may have not sufficiently demonstrated mastery of the visual codes used by contemporaries to assess quality: in simpler terms, perhaps her work was just not very "good" and art historians' judgments have endorsed the negative evaluation or inattention of contemporary critics.[13] The difficulty of this argument, as I will explain later, is that there is very limited (and limiting) evidence for contemporary art historians to work from; as for contemporary critics, when Crawford's work did receive notice, it was positive notice – particularly when those critics were far from the artistic circles in which Crawford was, as she put it, "personally known."[14]

In recent years, the number of biographical works on Canadian women artists has grown significantly. A list of important works would certainly include Susan Butlin on Florence Carlyle, Elspeth Cameron on Frances Loring and Florence Wyle, and Laura Brandon on Pegi Nicol.[15] A similar biography of Julia Crawford could be written. It would require digging and stitching, since there is no extensive archival collection of her papers, nor

have the vast majority of her works found their way into public institutions. One might piece together the fragments from the artist files – press clippings, catalogues, and other ephemera – held at the National Gallery of Canada (NGC), the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), the Beaverbrook Gallery, and, most significantly, the New Brunswick Museum. At the latter institution is the largest, albeit not large, collection of archival materials and, certainly, the largest public collection of Crawford's paintings. A few of these, even, were purchased during her lifetime.

The biographer's patches could be assembled into a quilt, albeit one that was somewhat threadbare from the outset for want of material. What can be salvaged affords the choices of a few recognizable, or established, patterns. One choice would be to write a story of Crawford's success: her rise from humble origins as a New Brunswick country school teacher to have her works exhibited nationally and internationally and singled out for praise by critics; her ability to sustain her creative practice, continuing to develop and experiment as a modern painter over the course of forty years without much in the way of patronage or institutional support. This narrative would bolster Crawford's negligible reputation and correct the existing historiography that has afforded her virtually no place in the canon of Canadian art.

An alternative narrative would focus on Crawford's failure, explaining the reasons why she was unable to attract more critical and institutional support in her lifetime and more attention from scholars since. What explains this failure? Clearly, Crawford was the wrong gender. A woman modern artist with a constantly evolving style was not likely to be selected for star treatment in the Canadian pantheon of Crawford's generation (the "discovery" of Emily Carr in the last decade of her life is the exception, the rule is Kathleen Munn, Edna Taçon, Marian Scott, Pegi Nicol . . .).[16] For another thing, she lived in New Brunswick and, for many years, as far as central Canadian art institutions were concerned, culture flowed like the Saint Lawrence *to* the Maritimes, and decidedly not in the opposite direction. And, to a certain extent, medium and subject matter may have been obstacles. She was best known for her watercolours (though use of this medium did not pose much problem for the careers or posthumous reputations of David Milne, Carl Schaefer, or Crawford's good friend Jack Humphrey). And, like Van Gogh, she occasionally painted flowers. Perhaps this choice of subject matter led one critic to discern in her work "a feminine sensibility of a high order."[17] This kind of praise was praise only to a point; it imposed limits like an intransigent bouncer at "Club Great Artist," barring the door. Also, it is possible that Crawford was just a little too old. She was a bit older than the generation of Pegi Nicol (1904–1949), Paraskeva Clark (1898–1986), and Marian Dale Scott (1906–1893), who were female peers nationally, and she was older than Jack Humphrey (1901–1967), Miller Brittain (1914–1968) and Ted Campbell (1804–?)

who were male peers locally. All of these factors could be combined in a biography that explains the injustices that have prevented Julia Crawford from achieving "autonomy, success, and fame."

Both of these hypothetical biographies would be factually correct, with accent in the first case on agency and the second on structure. This article is no substitute for a full biography of either kind, but I will use this opportunity to suggest to a future biographer some of the elements of Crawford's *habitus* that complicate these narratives. For one, there seems to have been a disconnect between Crawford's understanding of "success" and the way rewards were apportioned and distributed by the field. Crawford can appear in retrospect to have been naive, but it is not always easy to discern the difference between naiveté and alternate ideals, persistently held (and, indeed, the two categories are not mutually exclusive). Crawford, for example, did not believe in competition between works of art. Her feelings about selling her work were ambiguous at best, and in regards to art dealers disdainful. Crawford's was not a *habitus* well suited to garner such autonomy, success, or fame as was available in the field of art locally, nationally, or internationally, yet the element of agency in these choices should not be underestimated. To be sure, this rural New Brunswick schoolteacher was not entirely apprised of strategies useful to "play the game" as well as more privileged artists, but her course was in some important ways a *chosen* one. Her defeats and failures, measured by the values venerated in the field, can also be read as refusals – refusals that speak to different standards of value.

Crawford was not entirely naive about the rules of the game. In fact, there were rules that she *thought* she understood perfectly. She was committed, for example, to the basic aesthetic tenets of modern art, i.e., to use Norman Bryson's terms, a privileging of the painterly or the figural over the discursive – to use a reductive shorthand, "formalism."[18] For example, she could not understand why, in 1941, there was local enthusiasm among her peers, artists with training, *artists who should know better*, about works by her friend and colleague Violet Gillett (1898–1996) in an exhibition mounted in a Saint John antique store. She wrote to Walter Abell, an important critic and scholar in the region, asking if there was something she was missing: "Vi Gillet has some flower sprays which I don't doubt will prove popular, although not so difficult to do (Watercolor or poster paint without any backg [*sic*] and color). Most of her work seems to be lacking in unity or has too much detail and is not done in a painterly, big way. Do I see it right?"[19] Surely, she imagined, the trained eye could discern the difficult and the significant from the easy and the popular.

To the antique store show, Crawford herself had only submitted one work. She explained this choice in the same letter to Abell: "no time for thinking about it, no time for painting, and not much money for frames – HA HA, I

1 | Julia Crawford, *Befogged,* 1949, watercolour over charcoal on board, 60.2 × 89.7 cm, New Brunswick Museum, A49.8. (Photo: New Brunswick Museum)

really can't see mine going so well with antiques either. Then again I was of the impression that it was chiefly for the artists who were not teaching." There is so much in these few lines (and a good thing, too, for there are few lines of Crawford's to be had): not "going so well with antiques" tells us something about how she understood her own sensibility, and "not much money" and "no time" were not really the jokes "HA HA" would have us believe. And, her idea that this opportunity for sales should be more-or-less reserved for those artists who did not have a teaching income says a great deal about Crawford's sense of economic justice and her complex attitude towards the marketing of paintings, which she would maintain for the rest of her life.

We will return to Crawford and the rules of the marketplace, but let us continue for the moment to consider Crawford's paintings and the rules of modern art. Some of the examples of Crawford watercolours in the collection of the New Brunswick Museum are highly stylized (the reason for the word "some" and the apparent inconsistency of Crawford's work will be revisited

2 | Julia Crawford, *The Quarry,* 1942, oil on fibreboard, 50.5 × 60.3 cm, New Brunswick Museum, 2004.25.1. (Photo: New Brunswick Museum)

shortly). These paintings record Crawford's performance as a modernist *auteur.* When describing *Befogged* (Fig. 1), a work purchased by the Museum from Crawford in 1949, curator Peter Larocque emphasizes the confidence of the technique and the required speed of execution. The size of the surface allowed for large gestures: this was painting from the shoulder, not from the wrist. In the best of Crawford's work, Larocque discerns a "tactile appreciation of materials" and what he calls "vitality."[20]

In that this latter word refers to the mode of representation and not the subject represented, Larocque sees Crawford in much the same light as did contemporary critics who singled her works out from group shows for particular praise. When reviewing the 1942 annual exhibit of the Maritime Art Association, Crawford's local peer Jack Humphrey called *The Quarry* (Fig. 2) "undoubtedly among the most satisfying paintings in the collection."

3 | Julia Crawford, *Barnesville,* 1942, oil on board, 52 × 40.3 cm, New Brunswick Museum, A45.730. (Photo: New Brunswick Museum)

He thought it reflected "the approach of Cezanne."[21] Humphrey does not explain in what way he thought Crawford's *Quarry* shared the approach of, say, Cezanne's *Bibemus Quarry* (1895) – was it the light? The perspective? The handling? – but he was placing Crawford in what was for him, and for most modern painters of the era, exalted company. Crawford, too, was fond of *The Quarry*. When, in 1943, the patron of the New Brunswick Museum's art collection, Alice Webster, decided it was time to add a Crawford to the collection – Crawford was forty-seven years old; it was her first sale to a public institution – Crawford urged her towards *The Quarry* rather than Webster's choice, *Barnesville*: "[I] would rather be represented by [*The Quarry*] because I really think it has something. As most pictures do, it looks better in certain lights." Crawford had been asking $100 for *The Quarry,* but for Webster she would drop the price to $75. Webster instead bought *Barnesville* for $70 (Fig. 3).[22]

4 | Julia Crawford, *Still Life*, 1937, watercolour on paper, 46.4 × 37.8 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Gift of Friends of Canadian Art Fund, 1937. (Photo: Art Gallery of Ontario)

Critics who singled out Crawford's work from group shows for praise were by no means all local. Of *Still Life* (Fig. 4), showing in Toronto in the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour (CSPWC) 1937 annual exhibition, Graham McInnes wrote, "the strength and spirited bravura of this group of flowers is a convincing testimony to the awareness of a group of New Brunswick painters . . . which include Jack Humphrey, Miller Brittain."[23] Just what kind of "awareness" McInnes had in mind is unspecified, but I suspect he means "of contemporary painting." The same year, Crawford

5 | Julia Crawford, *The Lily,* 1937, as reproduced on a 1956 Christmas card sent by Crawford to the National Gallery of Canada. (Photo: Kirk Niergarth, reproduced courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada)

exhibited in the *salon* of the French Society of Artists. Another *Still Life* was reproduced in *La Revue Moderne* along with the commentary: "L'amour de la couleur et de ses variation lumineuses, un métier solide et le sens du décor ont conduit Julia Tilley Crawford à la réalisation d'une œuvre où dominent les paysage et les nature mortes et dans laquelle se reflet sa personnalité." [Love of colour and its variations, a solid technique, and decorative sense has

enabled Crawford to achieve an *œuvre* dominated by landscapes and still lifes that reflect her personality.][24] The following year Crawford exhibited *The Lily* (Fig. 5) in the same *salon* and saved this review from *Arts* (Paris): "Une aquarelle portant titre LILY, exposée au dernier Salon des Artistes Français, attire l'attention générale par sa légèreté aérienne et sa grâce exquise. Son auteur joues en ma[nière] consomme d'une gamme étendu de tons délicats, parfois très osés, mais toujours harmonieux." [A watercolour entitled *Lily* attracted general attention because of its airy lightness and exquisite grace. Its author plays in consummate manner with an extended range of delicate tones, sometimes daring, but always harmonious].[25] *Lily* would continue to earn plaudits for Crawford. It was selected for the "Canadian Trends" exhibition accompanying the 1941 Kingston Conference of Canadian Artists and chosen for reproduction in the published conference proceedings.[26] Then, in 1945, Crawford's *Flowers* was selected to travel to Brazil as part of an exhibition of contemporary Canadian painting. "I should like to pay homage to Julia Crawford," wrote the Brazilian critic Geraldo Ferraz in his review of the show, "whose 'Flowers' is a product of discreet observation of great delicacy in this exacting genre."[27] When *Calla* was exhibited with the CSPWC 1946 show in the Grand Central Art Gallery in New York, it was selected for purchase for that gallery's permanent collection.[28] It seemed that the further Crawford exhibited from home the more generous was the critical reception. Little wonder, then, that she told a reporter in 1959 that she "believes it is best to exhibit where an artist is not personally known. Then only the painting is judged and there is no chance for thought or consideration to the person who composed it."[29] Yes, Crawford dreamed of the "death of the author," the pure hierarchy of form. Surely she might have known, by this time, that this was wishful thinking.

Crawford was "personally known" to many of the players in the field of Canadian art in her era. She was one of the delegates to the Kingston Conference. She was thoroughly impressed and became involved in the organization that grew out of the conference, the Federation of Canadian Artists. Writing about the event as a correspondent for *Maritime Art*, Crawford affirmed: "The Saint John artists, who were given the opportunity of attending the conference of Canadian Artists received much inspiration from the meeting and believe that the results will be far reaching, even beyond the highest hopes of those who strove to make the conference possible."[30] While there, she was photographed in the front row of a lecture given on "Old Master Techniques" (Fig. 6). Her attention has been distracted from the lecturer by a figure outside the frame sitting on the floor with Louis Muhlstock. A very young Alma Duncan (1917–2004) looking directly into the lens from the seat next to Crawford only emphasizes the impression that

6 | Julia Crawford at the Kingston Conference, seated at the far right of the first row. Photo from *Maritime Art*. (Photo: author)

Crawford appears somewhat older than most of the women in attendance. Were there signifiers of age, taste, and class about Crawford's manner and dress that would have signalled to those in attendance that she, unlike they, spent her early twenties, before the Twenties, as a teacher in rural New Brunswick? Such signifiers are not easily read in this photograph – is her dress fashionable? Is she too keen to take notes? – but if it is imagined that Crawford looks somewhat unlike the others, this is an imagining that, metaphorically, speaks to her position within the field of Canadian art. She was admitted to the field, but she lacked attributes and dispositions that would give her status within it. She was a marginal insider.

"The field of cultural production," Bourdieu tells us, "is the site of struggles in which what is at stake is the power to impose the dominant definition of the [artist] and therefore to delimit the population of those entitled to take part in the struggle to define the [artist]."[31] Crawford's presence at the Kingston Conference indicates that the field recognized her as a legitimate artist. Already, by the late 1930s, the regular acceptance of her work at national juried exhibitions suggests that she was not really

an outsider, nor even – like Maud Lewis (1903–1970) or the Bouchards – a "primitive" whose lack of sophistication prompts adoption and consecration. By 1936, the NGC was sending Crawford an "Information Form for the Purpose of Making a Record of Artists and Their Work." Not, as will be discussed below, that the institution ever purchased any of said work in Crawford's case. Crawford's responses to the Information Forms are as close as we have to her autobiography – they appear to be her only surviving "ego documents." Perhaps they help explain the lukewarm embrace she was given by Canadian art institutions in spite of her critical triumphs abroad. They reveal that Crawford was worse than a primitive, she was a "club woman"! The most detailed of these forms is undated but appears to be from 1945. Quoting from it at length will, I hope, reveal its entire lack of guile:

> Born at Kingston, N.B.
> Won Lieut. Governor's medal for highest average in Grade 8 for Kings Co. N.B. Aver. 90.5
> When in High School taught (supply) ½ day per wk. in Primary Grades at Kingston, N.B.
> 1915–16 attended Prov. Normal School receiving Superior Class License
> 1917–18 taught Grades 5,6,7 at Chipman, N.B.
> 1917 attended Summer Agric School at Sussex, N.B.
> 1918–1925 taught in Saint John – first as assistant, then Grade 3 and Grade 7.
> During this time attended Miss Hagerty's class in art, Saint John (Saint John Art Club)
> Took public speaking and expression lessons from Miss Amelia Green and Mrs. Clark.
> Was in Miss Green's Greek Statues at the Capitol Theatre and in a play directed by Mrs. Clark at Saint Peters
> Attended gym classes at the YWCA and was in Scotch dance and display at Capitol.
> Took dancing lessons from Miss Green.
> Took some piano lessons from Prof. Ford.
> Took course in teaching music from Prof. Jas. F. Browne. Passed local written and practical exams Aver. 90.5 [. . .]
> 1925 Summer – had jaundice. Got up out of bed and went to Pratt.
> 1925–28 Attended Pratt Institute Brooklyn, NY [. . .]
> 1927 Summer – Taught colour and design to Home Economics Classes at Vocational School, Saint John, NB. Had tonsil operation before returning to Pratt.
> 1928 Summer Nursed mother. Mother passed away Aug.

1928–1944 Taught art at Saint John Vocational School during the whole years [. . .]

1931 Summer sick [. . .]

1934 Had a delightful 7 weeks' European Travel (Paid back debts and saved enough for it) [. . .]

1937 Autumn Elected President of Saint John Art Club. Exhibited with Can. Soc. Painters in Watercolour in Toronto and painting was purchased by Art Gallery for its permanent collection ($75) Surprise.

1937 "Revue Moderne" Paris has article on work [. . .]

1938 Toronto Sat Night mentions work Dec 18

1938 Dec. "Arts" Paris has article on "Lily" exhibited in Paris. [. . .]

1939 Graham McGinnis [*sic*] in Book "Canadian Art" mentions name

1940 International Business Machines Corp book mentions watercolours. [. . .]

1943 Mrs. J. Clarence Webster bot [*sic*] painting for NB Museum

1944 Had Kodachrome slides made of some paintings.

1944 Sick January . . .. [*sic*] til June plus Nervous Exhaustion.

Better.

1943 Summer made sketches from my room of people in square and rested, rested, rested.[32]

The previous year, Crawford had submitted another version of her life story to the NGC. This one had less detail (she left out jaundice, nursing Mother, and nervous exhaustion, for example), but was more editorial. Her teachers at Pratt (she lists fourteen of these) were "the best possible – swell" and they awarded her a scholarship for her third year after a second year success: "Had both designs for House Beautiful Cover Design Competition . . . accepted for travelling exhibition . . . The 100 designs in this exhibition (from thousands, so the story goes) were selected by a Boston jury. (As I look back on this I consider it one of the greatest surprises – my designs probably were not so good but they were original (absolutely) and gay." In this form we learn that on her 1934 European tour she met with Franz Cizek, the influential art educator, and visited his experimental school; we also learn that in 1937 she visited schools in Brooklyn and "one class wanted to hear about Canada so I said we were not all bears, Eskimos or Indians." She noted that she had "exhibited regularly since 1935" and had a penchant to "Buy too many artmagazines and books for the good of my pocket book."[33]

Besides being refreshingly honest and breezy, these forms show Crawford to have had little ability to discern between those events of her life that could

provide her with distinction and advance her career (say, consulting with Cizek, *Revue Moderne*) from those that could not (say, correcting Canadian stereotypes held by a group of Brooklyn school children). If when she was providing her GPA in grade eight, she was attempting to construct a narrative about her early prodigious talent, she was making a very poor job of it. Not, of course, that it likely mattered much. Outside of Abell, whose career in Canada ended in 1944, Crawford seems to have had few connections to influential players in the field. While the papers of her local peers Jack Humphrey and Miller Brittain indicate an array of contacts in Canada and the United States – particularly, for Humphrey in Montreal and for Brittain in New York – this does not seem to have been the case for Crawford.[34] Critical notice abroad was not a recipe for domestic success for Crawford. Her minor national reputation during her lifetime is accurately reflected in the three passing mentions she receives in Maria Tippett's 1992 history *By A Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women*.[35]

Locally, in Saint John, Crawford played a more significant role, but even here she was not an entirely accepted figure among the small clique of the city's modern artists. This ambivalence was not in spite of the fact that Crawford was prominently involved in the Saint John Art Club (SJAC), serving as its President between 1937 and 1942. This was the club that gave Crawford the opportunity to begin training in art and so her involvement is unsurprising. There is anecdotal evidence, however, that other, younger modern artists in Saint John viewed the club with a certain amount of disdain. According to Sara Johnson, an art student at the Vocational school during the early 1940s, artists including Brittain, Humphrey, and Ted Campbell (the teacher who replaced Crawford at the Vocational – a change that either precipitated or followed Crawford's period of "nervous exhaustion") held a low opinion of the SJAC:

> [They] looked upon its members as Sunday painters, which for the most part they were, and [the modern artists] never seemed to take it seriously . . . I remember going up there with some of the art students to help clean the place. There was a lady, wearing a pair of flamboyant beach pyjamas, who had the most remarkable purple hair, and at one point in the clean up I turned to find her holding a carved gargoyle . . . She had him standing in a basin of water and the combined effect nearly reduced me to hysterics.[36]

We ought to be careful about too easily and entirely accepting Johnson's memories of these artists' dismissive attitude. Of twenty-six Saint John artists whom Crawford and Jack Humphrey invited to join the Federation

of Canadian Artists in 1942, twenty were or had been members of the SJAC. Crawford was not the only non-"Sunday painter" to serve on the club's executive. Jack Humphrey was first elected to the club's executive council in 1936 and Miller Brittain joined him later the same year.

During Crawford's presidency, the activities of the SJAC began to change in tone and content. Previously, the club's program was geared almost wholly to art appreciation, and the art to be appreciated was canonical: works of British and European "old masters." Beginning in 1937, however, the focus of the club became more local, more contemporary, and more oriented towards actively creating works of art than passively consuming them. That year, local artists and craftspersons delivered instructional lectures describing their techniques.[37] The "Pictures You Should Know" series, became both more North American and more contemporary in focus: in January of 1937, for example, a Mrs. Keefe and a Mrs. Russell were assigned to prepare papers on Tom Thomson (1877–1917) and Diego Rivera respectively. A "Picture Loan Service," where one could rent-to-own art by local artists was established by 1940, and in 1942 the club began to expand its own collection of artworks for the first time since before the First World War. Jack Humphrey's *Head of a Girl* (1941) was the club's first purchase. The club sponsored child art classes and exhibitions and, beginning in 1940, junior memberships in the club were made available at reduced rates.[38]

These changes aligned well with the interests of Crawford and other professional artists in Saint John. Drawing the membership's attention to local, contemporary art may have encouraged sales and the emphasis on creativity might have provided art teachers with students. Johnson's memories of modern artists' disdain for the SJAC in general no doubt coexisted with a very real dependence on the patronage of its members. There is also no doubt, however, that Crawford was understood locally to be closer to the woman in the "flamboyant beach pyjamas" than were Humphrey, Brittain, or Campbell.

When Crawford was elected to membership in the CSPWC in 1940, at least one Toronto-based member of the Society was ambivalent. Caven Atkins passed on the news in a letter to Carl Schaefer who was out of the country on a Guggenheim fellowship: "Miss Crawford of New B. also elected. Good but questionable. Her latest work not quite so strong."[39] Atkins would not be the last to question Crawford's consistency. Forty years later, Christina Sabat concluded a review of a Crawford retrospective at Gallery 78 in Fredericton by writing "it was obvious that the artist had absorbed and mastered many different styles and ideas but it seemed . . . that she never really allowed herself the freedom of self-discovery."[40] Consider the evidence on which these judgments are based. Atkins would have seen the one or two paintings

7 | Julia Crawford, *Snow and Mill from Gregory Place*, ca. 1950, oil on Masonite, 40.5 x 30.5 cm, New Brunswick Museum, 2001.25.10. (Photo: New Brunswick Museum)

a year that Crawford could afford to ship to the CSPWC annuals. Sabat had a larger body of work to contemplate, but it was a relatively small show in a private gallery with works drawn from a span of thirty years of the artist's work. If we look at the collection of Crawford's works in the New Brunswick Museum, it too is a very mixed assemblage. There are still lifes and landscapes and portraits, but they range markedly in style from the conventional to the expressive. Compare, for example, the approach to landscape in *Barnesville* (Fig. 3) with *Snow and Mill from Gregory Place* (Fig. 7).

At one-person shows organized during Crawford's lifetime, her inconstancy was noted but not in the same way. Of her "Know Your Own Artists" exhibition in 1949, Avery Shaw wrote:

> It is the art of a painter who is always seeking for new impressions, and who retains the capacity for experimenting with her medium and in her approach to art. This is not the easiest way to paint; many artists tend to work out formulas based upon their previous successes whereas constant experimenting can sometimes produce its failures. The successes, however, contribute something new in added freshness and originality. The justification of such an approach is the current exhibition upon the walls of the Museum Hall, charming in colour, powerful in design, with each picture possessing qualities of its own.[41]

In 1954, Crawford had a solo show at the University of Maine, Orono. "Rarely has the University of Maine art gallery shown an exhibition of water colors of such variety of technique," was the judgement of the head of the University's art department, Vincent Hartgen. "Using a wide range in her palette, the artist achieves, in a very unique manner, a style and brushstroke closely related to the subject she is depicting . . . This accomplishment is . . . not often attained in the water color medium."[42] What at close range was "accomplishment" was at a distance of time or space "inconsistency."

Over time, the coherence of Crawford's "constant experimenting" has been lost. A recent article in the *Globe and Mail* previewing a Picasso show at the AGO illustrates, by contrast, what is lacking in Crawford's case:

> One of [the show's] strengths, in fact, is its softening of our tendency to slot Picasso's output into fixed categories or stages such as "the Rose Period," or "analytic cubism." For instance, smack-dab in the middle of a wall of cubistic creations circa 1911 [the curator], has placed a lovely neoclassical artist-and-muse painting that seems to have migrated from 1904 but, in fact, was completed at the same time as he was deep into his experiments with collage, cubism and mixed media. A 1918 portrait of his first wife, Olga Kokhlova, is more homage to Ingres's *Comtesse d'Haussonville*, from 1845, than anticipation of *Bather Opening a Beach Hut*, painted in 1928.[43]

What would happen, though, to Picasso's "fixed categories," if *only* the "neoclassical" and the portrait of Kokhlova were in public collections? Crawford was painting non-objective works by 1946 at the latest (i.e. two years before *Refus Global*) and she continued to produce works of this kind for the remainder of her life.[44] These are usually mentioned, though never described, in the local press coverage of the many exhibitions Crawford staged in her own studio (descriptions were reserved, it seems, for works of more interest to potential buyers or those that were easiest for the reporter

to write about, perhaps both).[45] The most extensive discussion comes in a 1959 article: "In her abstract compositions [Crawford] begins with an idea and enlarges on it. Explaining that form of art, she makes it sound exceedingly simple . . . Miss Crawford claims abstract painting, with its apartness from concrete relation or embodiment, is a protest against the materialism 'which is so prevalent in our day'."[46] Clearly, this was an important part of her creative practice for an extended period in her career. Were her abstractions expressive, moving in the direction suggested by *Snow and Mill from Gregory Place*? Or were they geometric, akin to those produced by her students in a summer course in 1959 whose work was photographed for a newspaper story describing their exhibition?[47] Until such a work is ferreted out – perhaps by Crawford's as-yet hypothetical biographer – this portion of Crawford's *œuvre* will remain a mystery.

Abstraction is not the only kind of work by Crawford that is no longer easy to find. An anonymous reviewer of a 1979 selection of works by Crawford suggests that "[s]he had a wonderful sense of humour as displayed in her 1940 *Impressions of the Festival*."[48] What kind of comedy did this work convey? Was it a satire akin to Miller Brittain's *Little Theatre Rehearsal*? Crawford did produce genre scenes. One, *Our Wartime Square*, was reproduced alongside Northrop Frye's review of the 1944 CSPWC annual exhibition, but this has no apparent trace of satire (Fig. 8).[49] The only work of Crawford's I have seen that seems to manifest a sense of humour is a small painting that hangs in an interior room of the Trinity Anglican Church in Saint John. It is a depiction of the church's weathervane which is "a six foot long gilt fish" that sits on top of the 210-foot high steeple.[50] Crawford has rendered the perspective so that it appears that the viewer is at the same level as the weathervane and she has framed the image to exclude the steeple entirely. The effect on the viewer is to see, from a distance, a painting of a fish in water; then, as one approaches, a fish in a blue sky with wispy clouds; and, finally, to recognize Crawford's subtle depiction of the support reaching up to the weathervane and to make the connection between the painting and its subject, the church's steeple, two hundred feet above one's head. This, I think, was a little joke. It has something, to borrow Jack Humphrey's vague critical language, of the "approach" of Magritte. *Ceci n'est pas un poisson*.

Clearly, there is much of Crawford's work that is not easy to find in original or even in reproduction. On the one hand, this can be attributed to neglect or discrimination – certainly there is a case to be made on this score – but on the other hand it is also the result of Crawford's own choices and ideas. From surviving evidence, it seems that Crawford never made use of the services of an art dealer. "People should buy paintings and not have them sold to them," she once wrote.[51] She staged numerous exhibitions in her own

8 | Julia Crawford, *Work and Relaxation (Our War Time Square)* as reproduced accompanying Northrop Frye, "Water Colour Annual" *Canadian Art* 1:5 (June–July 1944): 188. (Photo: author)

studio on Canterbury Street in Saint John.[52] For some of these she produced quite elaborate catalogues that list her major accomplishments and reproduce some of her best-known works. In one of these, she lists her solo shows – these included the New Brunswick Museum (1949 and 1957), the University of New Brunswick (1949), Acadia University (1949 and 1956), the University of Maine, Netherwood [Secondary] School, St. Stephen, New Brunswick (1950), St. Andrews, New Brunswick (1951).[53] Note that these are local and, with the possible exceptions of the latter two small towns, not staged in commercial/private galleries. This catalogue concludes by noting that her work was in "MANY private collections." The local art market, which was both small and not particularly adventurous in taste, was Crawford's principal market and it was one that she approached on her own terms.

Crawford made few sales to public galleries. In 1937, the Art Gallery of Toronto (now Ontario) was given *Still Life* (1937) by the Friends of Canadian Art (Fig. 6).[54] This painting and *Barnesville* were the extent of Crawford's representation in public collections until her "Know Your Own Artists"

retrospective show at the New Brunswick Museum in 1949 when she was fifty-three years old. From this show, the institution purchased several works and has continued to add to its collection of Crawford's work episodically henceforward, largely through bequests and gifts.[55] The NGC encouraged Crawford's desire to document the Second World War – "I should very much like to see you doing some war records," the director, H.O. McCurry, wrote to Crawford in December of 1943.[56] Crawford was enthusiastic. Some of her paintings, she wrote, would "get the atmosphere and be quite authentic – others would be somewhat imaginary and used to portray post-war ideals, etc."[57] By the following summer, Crawford had been in two different factories producing sketches of war manufacturing and wanted a letter from McCurry to support her in gaining permission to depict the selective services: "I must work on these War Records, even should it be necessary to borrow money to do so," she wrote.[58] Several months later McCurry responded that though Crawford would be "thinking hard things" of him, he had no budget to purchase any of her depictions of war industry.[59]

Neither during the war nor after did the NGC purchase one of Crawford's paintings. In the summer of 1956, after meeting the Gallery's director, Alan Jarvis, when he visited Saint John, Crawford sent Jarvis photographs of a few of her works for his consideration: "One hates to paint and also to be a salesman for one's work," Crawford explained, "but it seems if one is to survive one has to do this. Of course, some say women have no business to paint anyway – BUT IF ONE HAS TO PAINT, ONE HAS TO PAINT – be he or she a man or a woman."[60] Perhaps it was this letter that prompted a visit to Crawford's studio by NGC information officer Jean Ostiguy in November of that year. Ostiguy chose four paintings (*Birdsong* [1937], *The Wader* [1953], *When the Moon Shines* [1953], *The Star* [1954]) for Crawford to ship to Ottawa for consideration of purchase. Crawford wrote that her prices for these works ranged between $50 and $75, but "if the Gallery thinks they are too low or too high I would like to know."[61] Within a month Ostiguy wrote to explain that though none of the works she had shipped were going to be purchased, "we hope to be able to secure some of your best works in the near future."[62] According to Ostiguy, Crawford would soon receive instructions about when to ship the oil painting that had impressed him in her studio, but if these instructions were ever sent they were not filed.

Had Ostiguy been sincere about the NGC's hope to obtain some of Crawford's work in the near future, a golden opportunity presented itself little more than a year later. 1957 was a year of great personal misfortune for Crawford. As one who had "forced into [Crawford's] affairs," Eleanor Yuill wrote confidentially without Crawford's knowledge to NGC's chief curator, R.H. Hubbard, about Crawford's circumstances.[63] Her brother in the United

States had died after several operations to treat his cancer; Crawford had loaned him the entirety of her savings to pay for his treatment. She could no longer see with her right eye – her "good" eye, according to Yuill – as the result of a thrombosis and arthritis had severely limited her use of her right, painting hand. With Crawford facing destitution, the Saint John Art Club was organizing an exhibition of her work to raise funds. Yuill was concerned that the best works would be sold below their value. "You have seen some of her work, I know," Yuill urged Hubbard. "Do you really not think her work is worthy to be represented in the National Gallery?"[64] Hubbard did not answer this question directly in his response, but he did suggest that Yuill have "Alex Colville or some such person" make a selection of Crawford's best works and have them shipped to the NGC for consideration.[65]

Whether or not Alex Colville (1920–2013) or some other figure the NGC recognized as an authority was involved in the selection, a crate with twenty-one of Crawford's paintings arrived in Ottawa on 15 November 1957 with a letter of support and a brief biography of Crawford provided by George MacBeath, President of the Saint John Art Club.[66] A month later Hubbard wrote to Yuill with the bad news that when "everyone got together" to look at the paintings, they could not agree on one for a purchase.[67] Crawford's local supporters were not easily discouraged. Mrs. F.J. Cheesman was "bewildered in that among twenty-one works of a mature and dedicated artist of Crawford's experience not one suited the requirements." Cheesman thought it was because Crawford's paintings were not abstract that they were not purchased: "Are all our paintings . . . to be purely in universal language?" she wondered. But, she had not given up and her letter accompanied two more Crawford paintings: "if your men in the receiving room are a bit amazed over the crate they could not be blamed as it is a housewife's effort at carpentry." These paintings were Cheesman's favourites of Crawford's work, but she deferred to the expertise of the NGC. "[A] few years at the Grange School of Art, etc. could not make an art critic out of me so we commend these to the viewing of your committee there and live in hope that they might meet the requirements."[68]

Evidently, Cheesman's selections did not meet the "requirements" and, to make matters worse, the NGC did not return the paintings she had borrowed from Crawford in a timely fashion. In an effort to get her paintings back, Crawford wrote to Hubbard. Her letter suggests why Yuill had urged Hubbard to secrecy and Cheesman had explained that she was only able to borrow the additional paintings after much persuasion: "It is not my idea to force paintings on anybody," Crawford wrote. "In fact, I detest the idea. It matters not to me whether anybody likes my things or not and I'm not compromising."[69] Crawford recovered from her physical ailments and continued painting for the last decade of her life. In those years and in the

9 | Julia Crawford with the painting *North West Harbour, Deer Island*, photograph illustrating Willard Richardson, "Contest Win Surprised Her," *Saint John Evening Times-Globe,* 19 December 1959. (Photo: Joe Michaud, Silver print, 19 x 24 cm, Telegraph-Journal Archives, New Brunswick Museum, with permission of *The Telegraph-Journal*).

forty-five since, the NGC has yet to find one of her paintings that meets its requirements.[70]

In 1959, Crawford won second prize in Fredericton's Beaverbrook Gallery's competition for artists of the Atlantic Provinces. In the photograph accompanying the story in the *Saint John Evening Times-Globe* describing this honour, Crawford is standing, paintbrush in hand in front of the prizewinning depiction of Deer Island, the kind of painting that was in many ways her bread and butter (Fig. 9). Crawford told the reporter, Willard Richardson, that she would not have sent the painting had she known in advance it was a competitive show. "I do not favor competitions among paintings," she said. When she learned of the nature of the exhibition, she consoled herself with her self-assessment that "Mine is not a prize-winning picture." This was not the verdict reached by the contest's judge, Alan Jarvis, the now-former director of the NGC who had in recent memory not been able to find a work by Crawford that met the gallery's requirements.[71] As a matter of principle, however, Crawford was uncomfortable with the process of creating an artistic hierarchy even when she benefited from it.

Crawford's views about competition and marketing works of art were of long standing. In a report prepared for the Maritime Art Association on the activities of the SJAC in 1942, Crawford had only praise for André Biéler's (1896–1989) lecture on Mexican and Canadian art delivered in January. About Kathleen Shackleton's talk, "Art, the Machine and Reconstruction," though, Crawford had serious reservations. Shackleton was an unabashedly commercial fine artist who arrived in Saint John after completing a series

of commissions for the Canadian Pacific Railway. According to Crawford, Shackleton suggested that "artists in Canada should make use of sales specialists in seeking a market for what they created." Would not, Crawford wondered, "mediocre work be best sellers under these conditions"? If the artist "might be his own salesman," would "he become a better salesman than an artist"? At the end of Crawford's report it is difficult to discern whether she is summarizing Shackleton without comment, or continuing to editorialize: "It all simmers down to this: we want to have trust in our fellow men . . . no politics in art, no cheap competition, no outwitting, but tolerance and real help to one's fellow artist and real character with fine principles."[72]

When it came to helping her fellow artists, Crawford worked hardest to help Jack Humphrey, with whom she shared much in terms of sensibility; when it came to having trust in "fellow men," Crawford had more trust in some than others, and probably with good reason. When paintings by Miller Brittain and Stanley Royle (1888–1961) (RCA) were selected for an IBM exhibition in the winter of 1941, Crawford and Humphrey co-signed a letter of protest in the *Telegraph Journal*: "In view of the excellent publicity given recently . . . to the selection of pictures from New Brunswick for the International Business Machines (IBM) Exhibition, it may be of interest to many art lovers in the city and province to know that the paintings were not chosen by a regional jury as reported nor one of broader scope, but apparently without benefit of competition, by a member of the Royal Canadian Academy which represents a tory faction in Canadian Art."[73] Earlier, in a letter to Walter Abell, Crawford had voiced her suspicions that her part-time colleague at the Vocational school, Ted Campbell, was using his influence to steer the IBM selection: "This is merely Psychic, but Jack H. should have it and something should be done to prevent mistakes before they happen."[74] In the same letter, Crawford bemoaned the fact that Humphrey had never been able to obtain a teaching job. She blamed Humphrey's unemployment on Ted Campbell's monopolization of these positions:

> Ted Campbell now teaches at Vocational Night School, Netherwood, Rothesay Collegiate School, Normal School and at the UNB. Somehow I feel this is wrong – we should see to it that the work and PAY should be more evenly distributed. Why was Jack not given a chance or someone else? What should be done about that?[75]

There is no little irony in the fact that Ted Campbell replaced Crawford as a full-time art teacher at the Vocational school in the year that she was "Sick January . . . til June plus. Nervous Exhaustion."[76]

It is important to recall that the next line in Crawford's "Life History" is "Better." As she would later do after her difficulties of 1957, Crawford

rebounded after the end of her career at the Vocational. She went on to get a new job at Netherwood School for Girls, and also taught privately for the rest of her life. After her death, students published tributes to her, remembering her fondly as a fun-loving teacher.[77] She seems to have been keen to promote their success: in 1946 she succeeded in getting twelve students' work accepted at an International "Festival of Art" exhibition in Philadelphia, where they were the only Canadian representatives.[78] Through channels that are now entirely obscure, Crawford was hired to teach a ten-day summer painting course for the Algoma Art Society in Sault Ste. Marie in 1959. The closing exhibition attracted the attention of the local press and says something of Crawford's pedagogical methods and priorities: "[T]he whole presented such a kaleidoscopic array of color that visitors gasped in surprise and a little bewilderment as they came in. Miss Crawford had stressed the point that artists must use their imagination when they paint and they did."[79]

Crawford had a long and successful career as a teacher and she continued to paint, exhibit and sell until she died in 1968. She continued to have her work accepted in juried group exhibitions (*Flowers,* for example, was one of fifty-seven works chosen for the National Council of Women of Canada's "Canadian Women Artists" exhibition in New York and the subsequent travelling exhibition organized by the NGC) and to attract favourable critical notice.[80] Crawford made choices typical of many Canadian women artists: she never married, had no children, and needed to devote a great deal of her time to finding a way to make a living. This material need, though, did not alter her aesthetic ideals or her ambivalence about marketing her work. She was not particularly adept at building her career in a way that would be noticed in the centres of modern art, nor did she, like Hortense Gordon (1881–1961), have important allies in the field who could help her to do so. Yet, in the little archival material that remains, Crawford has left no traces of bitterness. I sense that she reported with pride on the NGC "Information Sheets" that Graham McInnes had mentioned her name in *A Short History of Canadian Art* (1939) and there is no evidence, save perhaps for the line about exhibiting where the artist is "not personally known," of Crawford resenting the absence of greater attention and support from Canadian critics and institutions.

It is easy to imagine that Crawford would be equally sanguine about her marginality in Canadian art historiography: after all, Tippett mentions her name not once but thrice in *By A Lady.* To make Crawford a member of an expanded Canadian canon would please those who collect Crawford's work, but it would have little to do with her "real life experiences." What strikes me as important in Crawford's case is the combination of her acceptance of some of the rules of being a modern artist – essentially, the aesthetic ones – and her resistance to other less explicitly stated rules: those involving competition, hierarchy, self-aggrandizement, and pursuit of larger than local markets.

Tracing the way that Crawford's *habitus* guided her trajectory in the field – both the forces and the *choices* that led to her present obscurity – illustrates some of the features of the field itself, specifically the characteristic elements of being an "artist" that have nothing to do with the creation of art. Thinking in this way might move us in the direction of committing what Bourdieu calls the "one unforgivable transgression" in the field of cultural production: to "call into question not a way of playing the game, but the game itself and the belief which supports it."[81]

In a very different context, Antonio Gramsci wrote, "whatever one does one is always playing somebody's game, the important thing is to in every way play one's own game with success – in other words, to win decisively."[82] Julia Crawford did not win decisively. She did, though, play her own game insofar as she was able. Recalling this with admiration leaves us seeing Crawford's life and career in the way she saw her own prize-winning designs: "probably . . . not so good" by conventional measures, but "original (absolutely)."

NOTES

1 Linda NOCHLIN, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" (1971), reprinted in *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 147.

2 Eleanor M. Yuill to R.H. Hubbard, 29 Oct. 1957. File 7.1-C, "Crawford, Julia," Box 258, "Correspondence with/re: Artists," (hereafter Crawford Correspondence), National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives (NGC).

3 Griselda POLLOCK, *Differencing the Canon* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 102. Pollock's italics.

4 Mary SHERIFF, "Individual Lives, Collective Histories: Representing Women Artists in the Twenty-First Century" (paper delivered at *Imagining History: A Canadian Women Artists History Initiative Conference*, Concordia University, Montreal, 3 May 2012). Accessed 31 Jan. 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M3iLQaPeZ2c

5 Norma BROUDE and Mary D. GARRARD, eds., introduction to *Reclaiming Female Agency: Feminist Art History After Postmodernism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 2, 3.

6 Norma BROUDE, "Mary Cassatt: Modern Woman or the Cult of True Woman," in *Reclaiming Female Agency*, 260.

7 POLLOCK, *Differencing the Canon*, 61.

8 Ibid., 107.

9 Perhaps the last word in this quotation, "experience" – another term that feminist historians such as Joan Sangster have recently argued needs to be reclaimed in the wake of debates over the "linguistic turn" in the 1980s and 1990s – speaks more clearly to the simultaneity and insuperability of structural constraint and individual agency. Drawing on and making connections between the work of Sonia Kruks and E.P. Thompson, Sangster describes how in interpretation historians can use

experience as a "junction concept" between social being and social consciousness. This, fundamentally, is compatible to the approach I suggest below using Bourdieu's term "habitus," which, too, is a "junction concept." See Joan Sangster, *Through Feminist Eyes: Essays on Canadian Women's History* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2011), 357.

10 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, as reproduced in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1972), 155.

11 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice,* trans. Richard Nice (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 52–54.

12 Pollock, *Differencing the Canon*, 61.

13 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 37.

14 Willard Richardson, "Contest Win Surprised Her," *Saint John Evening Times-Globe,* 19 Dec. 1959.

15 Susan Butlin, *The Practice of her Profession: Florence Carlyle, Canadian Painter in the Age of Impressionism* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2009); Elspeth Cameron, *And Beauty Answers: The Life of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle* (Toronto: Cormorant, 2007); and Laura Brandon, *Pegi by Herself: The Life of Pegi Nicol MacLeod, Canadian Artist* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005).

16 On Carr's "discovery" see Leslie Dawn, *National Visions, National Blindness: Canadian Art and Identities in the 1920s* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 293–309; on Munn and Taçon see Joyce Zemans, Elizabeth Burrell and Elizabeth Hunter, *Kathleen Munn and Edna Taçon: New Perspectives on Modernism in Canada* (Toronto: The Art Gallery of York University, 1988); on Pegi Nicol see Brandon, *Pegi by Herself.*

17 Avery Shaw, "The Work of Julia Crawford," *Education Review* (April 1949): 9.

18 Norman Bryson, *Word and Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 28.

19 Julia Crawford to Walter Abell, 21 Nov. 1941. Julia Crawford Papers (JCP), S117-10, New Brunswick Museum and Archives (NBM).

20 Author's interview with Peter Larocque, 13 Apr. 2012.

21 Jack Humphrey, "Seventh Maritime Annual," *Maritime Art* 2:2 (December 1942): 40.

22 Julia Tilley Crawford to Alice de Kessler Lusk Webster, 12 July 1943. Artifact file for the painting *Barnesville*, A45.730, NBM. My thanks to Peter Larocque for this source.

23 Graham McInnes, "World of Art," *Saturday Night* (8 Dec. 1937): 8.

24 Clement Morro, *La Revue Moderne* (Paris), 7 Nov. 1937, as reproduced in "National Gallery of Canada Information Form," 10 June 1944, Julia Crawford Documentation File (JCDF), NGC. Author's translation.

25 *Arts* (Paris), December 1938, as reproduced in "National Gallery of Canada Information Form," 10 June 1944, JCDF, NGC. Author's translation.

26 "National Gallery of Canada Information Form," 10 June 1944, JCDF, NGC.

27 As quoted in DWB [Donald Buchanan], "Brazil Sees Canadian Art," *Canadian Art* 2:3 (February/March 1945): 105.

28 "Art Exhibition is Continuing," *Saint John Evening Times-Globe*, 16 Dec. 1946. Jack Humphrey's *Indiantown* was purchased in the same exhibition.

29 Richardson, "Contest Win Surprised Her."

30 Julia CRAWFORD, "Saint John," *Maritime Art* 2:1 (October/November 1941): 22.
31 BOURDIEU, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 42.
32 "Julia T. Crawford (Life History)," JCDF, NGC.
33 "National Gallery of Canada Information Form," 10 June 1944, JCDF, NGC.
34 Kirk NIERGARTH, "Art and Democracy: New Brunswick Artists and Canadian Culture between the Great Depression and the Cold War" (PhD thesis, University of New Brunswick, 2007), 158–84.
35 Maria TIPPETT, *By A Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women* (Toronto: Viking, 1992), 64, 102, and 109.
36 Sara JOHNSON, "The Artists of Saint John," unpublished, n.d. (ca. 1985), collection of the author, 11–12.
37 In 1937 these lecturers included Ted Campbell, Violet Gillett, and Kjeld and Erica Deichmann. See NIERGARTH, "Art and Democracy," 153–57.
38 Ibid.
39 Atkins to Schaefer, 7 Dec. 1940, Carl Schaefer Fonds, MG30 D171, volume 1, file "Atkins, Caven," Library and Archives Canada. Many of the other artists mentioned in this letter are called by their first name or their last name alone, i.e. the "Miss" of "Miss Crawford" is anomalous.
40 Christina SABAT, "Julia Crawford 'Rediscovered'," *Fredericton Daily Gleaner,* 26 Feb. 1979.
41 SHAW, "The Work of Julia Crawford," 9.
42 "Saint John Artist's Work Wins Praise," *Saint John Evening Times-Globe*, 17 Dec. 1954.
43 James ADAMS, "Picasso Returns to Toronto," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 24 Apr. 2012.
44 "Art Exhibition Is Continuing," *Saint John Evening Times-Globe,* 16 Dec. 1946.
45 For example, in addition to "Art Exhibition is Continuing," see "Exhibition of Paintings Attracting Many Visitors," *Saint John Telegraph Journal*, 18 Nov. 1953; "Art Exhibition Receives Praise," *Saint John Telegraph Journal*, 12 June 1956; and RICHARDSON, "Contest Win Surprised Her."
46 RICHARDSON, "Contest Win Surprised Her."
47 "Painting Course Winds Up with Exhibition of Works," *Sault Ste. Marie Star*, 11 Aug. 1959.
48 "Crawford Paintings on Display," *Saint John Evening Times-Globe*, 18 Nov. 1979. Crawford's former students also recalled her sense of humour. See Helmer BIERMANN, "In Kind Memory of Julia Crawford," *Saint John Evening Times-Globe*, 6 May 1983.
49 Northrop FRYE, "Water Colour Annual," *Canadian Art* 1:5 (June–July 1944): 188. Crawford also produced scenes of industrial workers in a veneer factory in Saint John, some of which are in the collection of the New Brunswick Museum.
50 Website of Trinity Anglican Church, Saint John. Accessed 1 Feb. 2013, http://www.trinitysj.com/history.html
51 Julia CRAWFORD, "1942 Art Club Report to MAA," Saint John Art Club Papers, S85-1, file 37, NBM.
52 The exhibitions which received press coverage include ones held in 1946, 1947, 1953, and 1956, but there are also two undated catalogues for in-studio exhibitions in the NGC artist documentation file that both include mention of her show at the New Brunswick Museum in 1957, and hence must postdate that year. Press notices include "Art Exhibition is Continuing"; "Art Exhibition Wins Much Praise," *Saint*

John Evening Times-Globe, 28 June 1947; "Exhibition of Paintings Attracting Many Visitors"; "Art Exhibition Receives Praise."

53 "Catalogue of Paintings by Julia Crawford," n.d. [post 1957], JCDF, NGC.

54 Julia Crawford, *Still Life* (1937), watercolour on paper, 46.4 x 37.8 cm, acquired 1937 as Gift from Friends of Canadian Art Fund, Art Gallery of Ontario.

55 Author's interview with Peter Larocque, 13 Apr. 2012.

56 McCurry to Crawford, 2 Dec. 1943, War Records Applications (WRA), 5.41-I, NGC.

57 Crawford to McCurry, 11 Dec. 1943, WRA, NGC.

58 Crawford to McCurry, 15 and 23 Aug. 1944, WRA, NGC. The quotation is from the letter of 23 Aug.

59 McCurry to Crawford, 7 Nov. 1944, WRA, NGC.

60 Crawford to Allan [*sic*] Jarvis, 3 July 1956, Crawford Correspondence, NGC.

61 Crawford to Jean R. Ostiguy, 22 Nov. 1956, Crawford Correspondence, NGC.

62 Ostiguy to Crawford, 3 Dec. 1956, Crawford Correspondence, NGC.

63 Yuill to Hubbard, 29 Oct. 1957, Crawford Correspondence, NGC.

64 Ibid.

65 Hubbard to Yuill, 5 Nov. 1957, Crawford Correspondence, NGC.

66 George MacBeath to Jarvis, 13 Nov. 1957, Crawford Correspondence, NGC.

67 Hubbard to Yuill, 16 Dec. 1957, Crawford Correspondence, NGC.

68 Mrs. F.J. [Keturah] Cheesman to Jarvis, 27 Dec. 1957, Crawford Correspondence, NGC.

69 Crawford to Hubbard, 3 May 1958, Crawford Correspondence, NGC. The painting Crawford was most concerned that the gallery might have lost was titled, ironically given the circumstances described in Yuill's letter, *Compassion*. "I'm wondering where is Compassion?" Crawford wrote.

70 The NGC came close to a purchase, it seems, in 1960, when Claude Picher, the NGC's Eastern Liaison Officer, was purchasing works for a proposed "East Coast Painters Exhibition." After he visited her studio, Crawford wrote to Picher to explain that "The price of *Portrait of an Old Lady* should be $300. I like her but I might say minimum price would be $200. When do you wish to have the painting shipped?" No response from Picher is in the file. Crawford to Claude Picher, Eastern Liaison Officer, National Gallery of Canada, 7 July 1960, JCDF, NGC.

71 RICHARDSON, "Contest Win Surprised Her."

72 CRAWFORD, "1942 Art Club Report to MAA."

73 Undated clipping of letter to the editor, labelled *Telegraph Journal*, "Maritime Art Correspondence," JCP, NBM. Miller Brittain's portrait of P.K. Page, entitled *Pat*, and Stanley Royle's *Tantramar Marsh* were the works selected.

74 Crawford to Abell, 29 Nov. 1941, JCP, NBM.

75 Ibid.

76 "Julia T. Crawford (Life History)."

77 See, for example, BIERMANN, "In Kind Memory of Julia Crawford."

78 "To Display Work in Philadelphia," *Saint John Evening Times-Globe*, 15 Apr. 1946.

79 "Painting Course Winds Up with Exhibition of Works," *Sault Ste. Marie Star*.

80 "Canadian Women Artists Exhibit Work at Eaton's," *Toronto Telegram*, 6 Sept. 1947.

81 BOURDIEU, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 81.

82 Antonio GRAMSCI, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 154.

Julia Crawford et les règles du jeu

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Résister à la tendance téléologique de la forme est tout un défi pour les biographes. C'est-à-dire que considérer un sujet comme digne d'une biographie a pour présupposé d'avoir les habitudes de vie les plus reconnaissables. En d'autres termes, le choix du sujet d'une biographie (disons d'une femme artiste) conduit déjà aux genres de preuves (par exemple, les critiques d'expositions, les collections publiques, les prix atteints aux ventes aux enchères) qui lui ont conféré une place reconnue dans le domaine. En étudiant une figure marginale – une qui a connu peu de notoriété dans le domaine de l'art canadien, en l'occurrence la peintre du Nouveau-Brunswick Julia Crawford (1896–1968) – *pour sa marginalité* (et non pour l'en sortir, rétrospectivement), mon but est de donner un aperçu de la logique qui sous-tend le domaine ainsi que des normes de valeurs : les règles du jeu.

Pourquoi Crawford n'est-elle pas devenue une artiste « importante » de son vivant ou n'a-t-elle pas été « canonisée » par la suite? Tout d'abord, elle était du mauvais sexe. Une femme, artiste, moderne, au style évolutif, avait peu de chance d'être sélectionnée pour recevoir le traitement de vedette au panthéon de sa génération. Elle vivait au Nouveau-Brunswick, et, pendant longtemps, en ce qui concernait les institutions artistiques canadiennes centrales, la culture coulait comme le Saint-Laurent *vers* les Maritimes, et résolument pas en direction opposée. Ensuite, son âge a pu aussi jouer un rôle : elle était un peu plus âgée que ses pairs sur la scène locale et nationale. Il se peut aussi que sa marginalité ne soit pas du tout due à des éléments biographiques, mais esthétiques. Or, cet argument est problématique : quand les critiques contemporains s'intéressaient au travail de Crawford, leurs observations étaient positives – particulièrement si ces critiques se tenaient loin des cercles d'artistes où elle était « personnellement connue », comme elle le disait.

Vu que Crawford avait commencé sa carrière comme institutrice dans une école de campagne au Nouveau-Brunswick sans formation artistique, il ne faudrait pas sous-estimer le travail acharné et le talent qui lui ont permis d'exposer ses peintures au Canada et dans le monde, de se distinguer et d'être louangée par la critique. Crawford a fait les choix typiques de nombreuses

artistes canadiennes : elle ne s'est jamais mariée, n'avait pas d'enfants et devait se débrouiller le plus clair de son temps pour trouver un moyen de gagner sa vie. Elle a toutefois réussi à maintenir ses activités de création, continuant à se développer et à expérimenter en tant que peintre moderne pendant quarante ans, malgré ses difficultés personnelles et le manque de patronage et de soutien institutionnel. Et pourtant, l'*habitus* de Crawford n'était pas bien adapté pour engranger les récompenses que le milieu de la peinture offrait sur la scène locale, nationale et internationale. Elle était dans une certaine mesure naïve à propos des stratégies nécessaires pour « jouer le jeu », mais chose importante, elle *avait choisi* sa ligne de conduite. Crawford, par exemple, ne croyait pas à la concurrence entre les œuvres d'art. Ses sentiments à l'égard de la vente de ses tableaux étaient pour le moins ambigus, et envers les marchands d'art, dédaigneux. Ses insuccès et échecs, mesurés à l'aune des valeurs vénérées dans le milieu, peuvent aussi être interprétés comme des refus – refus traduisant des normes de valeurs différentes.

Une chose importante me frappe dans le cas de Crawford, c'est le mélange d'acceptation des règles de l'artiste moderne – essentiellement, les règles esthétiques – et sa résistance aux autres règles moins explicitement énoncées : celles qui ont trait à la concurrence, à la hiérarchie, à l'auto-encensement et à la recherche de marchés plus importants que les locaux. L'examen de la manière dont l'*habitus* de Crawford a guidé sa trajectoire dans le domaine – à la fois les forces et les *choix* qui ont présidé à son obscurité présente – illustre certaines des caractéristiques du domaine lui-même, plus précisément les éléments caractéristiques de l'état d'« artiste » qui n'a rien à voir avec l'art de la création.

Dans un contexte très différent, Antonio Gramsci a écrit : « Quoi qu'on fasse, on joue toujours le jeu de quelqu'un, l'important c'est de faire son possible pour jouer son propre jeu avec succès – autrement dit, de gagner de façon décisive ». Julia Crawford n'a pas gagné de façon décisive. En revanche, elle a joué son propre jeu tant qu'elle a pu. Se souvenir de cela avec admiration pourrait nous entraîner sur la voie de commettre ce que Bourdieu appelle une « transgression inexpiable » dans le domaine de la production culturelle : « mettent en question non une manière de jouer le jeu, mais le jeu lui-même et la croyance qui le fonde [. . .] ».