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CANADIAN ARTISTS

Statement by:

The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Wednesday, March 28, 2018

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Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, Canadian artists are again at the forefront, with tonight's presentation of the Governor General's Awards for Visual Arts and the current exhibition of the work of David Milne in the U.K.

First, I congratulate the 2018 Governor General recipients: curator Glenn Alteen; visual artists Bruce Eves and Spring Hurlbut; media artists Wyn Geleynse and Midi Onodera; photographer Sandra Semchuk; visual and performance artist Adrian Stimson; and ceramist Jack Sures, recipient of the Saidye Bronfman Award.

Each has pushed the boundaries of their media, creating compelling works which reflect today's issues and communities, and as Simon Brault, Canada Council CEO said, each continues "to change our perception of the world, and remind us that it is artistic creation that demonstrates our humanity."

Several weeks ago, the U.K.'s Dulwich Picture Gallery opened a third significant Canadian exhibition, *David Milne: Modern Painting*, following *Emily Carr* presented in 2015 and the *Group of Seven* in 2013.

On view until early May, this is the first opportunity Londoners have had to see this Canadian 20th century master's oils, watercolours and drawings on loan from public and private collections across Canada. London's *Telegraph* dubbed Milne "one of Canada's greatest modern painters," and the exhibition as "revealing an artist of true originality and vision."

David Milne, 1882 to 1953, painted in New York, overseas immediately following World War I, and for many years in his native Ontario. I was excited to learn decades ago that his international acclaim began early, when one of his works was purchased from the 1913 New York Armory Show for the Russian Emperor's collection, now supposedly in the Hermitage, though I've not found it there and those to whom I've posed the challenge haven't either.

Today I salute the collaboration of Canada's curators, writers and art galleries, led by curator Sarah Milroy and McMichael Gallery director Ian Dejardin on this excellent exhibition showcasing Canada to the world. Its accompanying impressive publication includes contributions by a number of writers: award-winning novelist and Order of Canada member Jane Urquhart; internationally acclaimed Canadian contemporary artist Ed Burtynsky; National Gallery curator Katerina Atanassova; AGO's Katharine Lochnan; historian Margaret MacMillan; Anne-Marie Ninacs of the University of Quebec; and Milne scholars David Silcox and UBC Professor Emeritus John O'Brian.

I was proud and moved when I saw *David Milne: Modern Painting* earlier this month. It was heartwarming to see and to hear comments of those who knew nothing about Canadian art, our landscape or places. Eyes were opened, and I overheard people talking about visiting Canada as a result.

I applaud the curators, collaborating writers and institutions.