

V

1946 - 1949
Return To The Arctic

The Windsor Star, May 11, 1946:

A Three-Man Show at the Willistead Gallery, Windsor: ...Wilson is a versatile clever painter, with sound technique and plenty of imagination... Reproduced Head Table. May 25 Reviewed Three-Man Show mentioning Arctic paintings, Head Table, reproduced Pie Social At Willisville.

Canadian Review of Music and Art had Hedley Rainnie's portrait of Wilson on the cover. The lead article, "A Canadian Painter in Seven League Boots" was about York by C.L. Hutchings. Four paintings were reproduced: Indian Harbour; Head Table; Burlesk No 2 and Fourteen.

Provincial Paper's Monthly Trade Magazine had Wilson's three portraits from the lumber camp, one on each of three covers throughout the year.

Saturday Night: In one of the Galleries... York Wilson home from Muskox... The OSA's new President, York Wilson will tell about 'Exercise Muskox' on Cavalcade. CBC.

AGT's 'Open Night,' Special Quiz with Frances Loring, sculptor; Martin Baldwin, Director AGT, York Wilson, painter and John Parkin, architect.

Eaton Galleries: "Four Moderate Moderns" included: Alfsen-Hall-Winter-Wilson.

Telegram: "Some Comments About a Primitive." by York Wilson.

Art Gallery of Hamilton, Women's Art Association, Hamilton Spectator: Painters Ignored Here. Canada has no place in the world of painting... It was interesting to note, Mr. Wilson said, that in the Standard Encyclopedia of Art, under biographical sketches of leading artists of all nations, not one of 45 representative Canadian artists is mentioned, while on the other hand 18 of the 28 American works referred to are

included in that book. The speaker blamed the fact of Canada having no place in the world of painters on this country's neglect of her people's talent and the lack of financial support to encourage leadership in this field... The speaker illustrated his lecture with slides of representative works of 45 Canadian painters in 300 years of Canadian art, also of 28 American artists...

Dr. O.S. Pokorny of Sarnia gave Wilson's Port Daniel, Quebec, 1945 to the Art Gallery of Sarnia; a beginning of the large collection of Wilson's work at this Gallery.

Canadian Art, February, by McInnes, CGP at the AGT: ...Paintings of York Wilson... achieve a timeless quality one normally expects to find in a painter like Hopper...

The OSA's 75th anniversary, 1947 included three new paintings, the largest Backstage, 48" x 40" - Telegraph Messengers and the Special Section depicting the Ontario Village. It was opened by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Hon. Raymond Lawson and the presidential address was given by York Wilson, followed by a supper for OSA members at our home. York conducted tours at the AGT and, as President, opened the exhibition at St. Thomas. It toured Ontario, with a selection going on a Western Circuit to the Edmonton Fair-Edmonton Art Gallery-University of Alberta-Winnipeg-Vancouver and Victoria. Being an anniversary, two catalogues were printed, a hard cover and a soft. The extra travelling stretched the government's small grant, but a splurge in catalogue sales and members' fees helped.

The small picture exhibition went to the Eaton Galleries, among others York sent Red Pyjamas modelled by our adolescent daughter Virginia, (has a sequence in Rome in 1958).

Some Press comments:

Photos of Jack Bush and York Wilson - reproduced Backstage: ...work of both men has added considerably... The Standard and Canadian Art, both reproduced Backstage; G&M "Excellent... quite legitimately holding a commanding space in... Backstage... brilliantly painted..."; Star "OSA Exhibit Marks... if OSA celebrated its 100th in 1972... the AGT will have to be enlarged... OSA Show is Magnet... York Wilson was elected president for the second time..."; Telegram, Ted Reeves (Sports) "Representatives from the OSA wanted to know what

I was going to do about their 75th Annual... talks about artists as athletes. Our president was a boxer..."; etc. (What they didn't tell Ted Reeves was after Wilson's first knockout he gave up the sport.)

This begins to show what artists can do when they have the support of their art galleries. Never have more Canadians been conscious of the visual arts and their art Galleries.

An unusual credit which was reviewed in the G&M on the Drama Festival. York had done the 'sets' for the play at Hart House, University of Toronto, "The Mighty Mr. Simpson."

Adjudicator Robert Spaight, a noted English actor and critic... That was quite... commented Mr. Spaight... The best performance was undoubtedly given by the scenery. The man responsible, York Wilson is, in my opinion, one of three or four in Canada, who have no betters in the world...

Another review describes the sets:

The barbaric and colourful settings and costumes by York Wilson found particular favour with Mr. Spaight, who judged the Dominion Drama Festival at Ottawa last year.

For the 68th RCA exhibition in Montreal, later Provincial Museum Quebec, York sent Beauty Contest, inspired by the many times he was asked to judge beauty contests, and it was reproduced. To the CGP in Montreal went Young Ladies, reproduced both in the catalogue and Saturday Night. It was purchased by Havergal College, the college for young ladies. To the CSPWC, Open Air Market with a comment from the Star:

Wilson, a lively and usually good-natured observer of humanity has contributed an animated market scene...

York Wilson, invited to speak to the Women's Advertising Club at Malloneys Art Gallery was reported by The Telegram: "98% OF ADS NOT CREATIVE," artist says...

The publisher of Marketing commented:

Not only did I find your viewpoint valuable and stimulating but the material was presented with delightful

humour which kept us enjoying ourselves at the same time.

An amusing letter came from Arts and Letters Club member, Harold M. Gully:

I am writing a self-improvement book entitled "Why Boys Leave Home." Please don't go to the States, York, because I want to include you in a small list of Anglo Saxons born in Canada who made great names for themselves in their native land...

National Home Monthly interviewed Wilson at length. He did a drawing demonstration for the AGT's weekly Open Night. American Artist magazine reproduced Wilson's painting commissioned by the O'Keefe Brewing Company.

Standard Oil of New Jersey commissioned Wilson to return to the Arctic, this time to Whitehorse in the Yukon to record the giant project of moving their refinery from Whitehorse to Alberta. The whole refinery was being taken apart bit by bit to be reassembled near Edmonton. York did paintings of machinery, the bare bones of the building just before dismantling and more. It was being moved in winter because with a 40 ton digester going down the Alaska highway the Teslin bridge was not strong enough and an ice bridge was built alongside. York followed in a hired taxi (\$75), listening to the rules of the Arctic from his driver.

As gas stations are few it is necessary to carry five gallons of gasoline. If the car stops for any reason, you must build a fire before checking the problem. In 50 degrees below zero, your fingers numb so quickly, you would not be able to strike a match.

They followed the digester and as it moved from the highway for the detour onto the ice bridge, it rolled down a slight incline from its strong specially built truck with its 16 wheels. Everyone was horrified. How to get it back on the truck? The men tried every device possible and finally managed to get it back on the huge vehicle. It then passed over the ice bridge without incident and all began to relax.

All the while York had been sketching furiously and his painting Point 804 Alaska Highway was the result. Most of the paintings now are in the Standard Oil of New Jersey collection.

As usual York had many interesting stories to tell on his return. The main street of Whitehorse constituted the town at that time and the buildings had false fronts, making them seem much bigger. The sketch for this is in the collection of Don McGibbon, a retired executive of Imperial Oil and his wife, Pauline, later Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. Apparently there was little by way of entertainment in Whitehorse and gambling held great interest. York met a man who had just won the entire town on the roll of a dice the night before. He was found in the local beauty parlour having his nails done.

Harry Rowed, a photographer from Vancouver had been commissioned to record the move on film. He and York spent most of their evenings together. There was a big loveable dog named Bessie at their hotel which they petted and talked to daily. No locks being on the hotel doors Bessie would push either one and slip in to spend the night on the rug by the bed. A couple of years later Harry had another commission in Whitehorse and thought to create mischief by sending York a letter saying,

You remember Bessie, well that little tramp is now sleeping with anyone who will have her.

You should have heard York trying to explain to me that Bessie was a dog and of course I played along saying, "Oh sure."

The AGT followed with an exhibition entitled OIL from the Standard Oil of New Jersey collection which included Wilson's Point 804 Alaska Highway and others. A press comment:

Portraits of An Industry. An exhibit that documents the oil industry is touring Canadian Art Galleries, attracting large attendances.

Art and Industry have combined to bring an outstanding exhibit of oil paintings, watercolours and drawings to art galleries and libraries in Canadian cities. The collection entitled "OIL" was commissioned as an art and educational project by the Standard Oil Company. Showings in Canada are being arranged by Imperial Oil Limited.

Paintings by four Canadians, Arthur Lismer, Will Ogilvie, Don Anderson and York Wilson - and 18 United States artists make up the collection. Each was assigned subject matter sympathetic to his style and medium and the collection

represents a new kind of documentation based on a close relationship between art and industry. The paintings cover all phases of the oil industry...

York Wilson went to Whitehorse to paint the mid-winter move of the refinery from Whitehorse to Edmonton. His canvases show the drama of dismantling the plant and moving it by truck over the Alaska Highway.

Star: An innovation in art shows is... York Wilson's work... in board room of McLaren Advertising... first of a series of small selective exhibitions... gives staff opportunity for quiet enjoyment and study of what today's Canadian painters are doing—and thinking.

When Wilson failed to get the commission for Gander Airport, Allan Jarvis, Director of the National Gallery was disappointed but said there will be others. Before long Malton Airport was to have a new terminal and Wilson was given the commission. Much time was spent over the sketch and he decided that various forms of transportation over the ages would be an interesting topic. Finally his cartoon was ready and presented to the committee, everyone was pleased with one exception, Controller Lamport. A reproduction appeared in the Press alongside a photo of Wilson at his drawing board.

Board approves \$4,500 Malton Airport Mural.

Controller Lamport during various meetings said: "It's just another case of champagne taste and a beer pocketbook... It's just like the expensive widening of University Avenue. We will have to take money from something else to pay for this. I think there are Toronto artists who would be glad to do it for nothing or failing that, some large store or business concern would foot the bill... Let Trans Canada Airlines pay, let anybody pay..." During the discussion it was accidentally called a "Murial,"... The word is mural, corrected Cont. David Ballfour. But, it was too late. The chamber rang with aldermen's laughter. From then on the project was nicknamed, and doomed. The Telegram came out with: "Council Spurns "Murial" \$4,500 Airport Beauty."

The fight still raged on into the new year, all three papers reporting more grumblings by the Aldermen, but many sensible

letters and articles appeared also.

FUND FOR CULTURAL EVENTS

The public was not edified by the absurd and time-wasting argument which City Council staged in rejecting the proposed mural painting at Malton Airport. And still less when, in a fit of generosity, the aldermen turned around and granted \$2,500 to the Ballet Festival, \$1,500 more than the Board of Control recommended. We have no complaint to make of the grant to the Ballet Festival, but the whimsical reactions of the Council to those cultural enterprises show that when it comes to the arts, the aldermen are out of their depth.

The incident again underlines the need to take all such grants out of the realm of politics. It has been the custom for many years for the Symphony, the Art Gallery, and other artistic groups, to come before the council, hat in hand like beggars, and ask for help. The results have invariably been niggardly in relation to the value of the work done by these groups in the cultural life of the city.

This newspaper has repeatedly suggested that the City Council establish a Fund for the Arts, supported by a fixed fraction of the mill-rate, from which grants of adequate proportions could be made to our cultural institutions.

If such a fund were being administered by a qualified group of citizens, such regrettable silliness as the squabble over the mural might have been avoided. Worthy cultural projects could know in advance what they could count upon from the city. The value of the outlay would be repaid many times over by the broadening of the musical and artistic life of the city, and in the favourable publicity which results from strong cultural activities.

American Artist magazine showed a large reproduction of Wilson's painting for the O'Keefe Brewing Company. This was in conjunction with the annual exhibition of the New York Art Director's Club held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. A lengthy article appeared: **INDUSTRY HELPS FINE ART EARN A LIVING IN CANADA.**

I quote: Biggest annual advertising contest on this continent—that of the Art Director's Club of New York—

received 8,000 entries last year. Signatures of surrealist Salvadore Dali, Robert Biggs and Thomas Hart Benton were among the entries. The entry of York Wilson, popular young president of the Ontario Society of Artists, was chosen among the best 50 to go on tour of the United States.

York and I took a motor trip to the United States which happened to include Cleveland, Ohio. In going to their Art Gallery, we had a big surprise. The rooms were so crowded that it was difficult to see the exhibition which included not only paintings and sculpture but crafts, ceramics, jewellery and so forth. The next surprise was that most of the work was sold! It turned out that they had a Women's Committee supporting local artists. Their promotion was clever, among other schemes, the buyers of last year were allowed in the gallery in the order of their purchases the previous year, a real hoedown.

We were so impressed we brought the news back to the AGT where luckily it fell on interested ears, like Lady Kemp, Mrs. Walter Gordon, Mrs. George Hendry and others. A group went to see for themselves and came back with all the information and started the first Women's Committee in Canada at the AGT, leaning heavily on York as their adviser. Other art galleries across Canada followed suit. This promotion by Women's Committees made a great change. Canadians started buying work by their own artists for the first time through Committee exhibitions. They took a small percentage on sales, also raising funds in other ways such as Gourmet luncheons. At first Committee members pledged to buy works themselves but finally the public protested that they had had first choice. This resulted in the birth of the Silent Auction where bids were dropped in boxes at each work and a draw was held on the final evening.

Another rewarding discovery on that trip was a visit to the Philadelphia Museum. It so happened there was a large exhibition of the French Impressionists, some had a complete room to themselves, an advantage in evaluating an artist's work. The collection made a lasting impression I've never forgotten although I've now seen most of the great Museums in the world.

With the Women's Committee now established at the AGT, whose members, including many artists' wives were working diligently behind the scenes. They interested people in Canadian art, boosted attendance at exhibitions and memberships, provided social functions and raised funds for the gallery. We served Gourmet

luncheons, cooking the food at home in pyrex dishes, bringing them to the gallery for re-heating and acting as waitresses.

A gift shop was created at the entrance selling eye-catching manufactured goods. Connie Matthews, a Board member, asked me to work in the shop on a time-sharing basis. I found little interest in these items and said, "If we had Canadian crafts to sell, I would be delighted." Connie said, "Oh we can't make any money on Canadian crafts." I said, "Sorry." In a couple of weeks she came back and said, "Ok! We will give you a chance, go ahead."

I took on the job knowing the crafts people had nowhere to exhibit their work, no Guild of Canadian Crafts existed then. I dug in searching out crafts people across the country, starting locally with potters like the Sadowskys, Harlanders, Duncan and others. They told me about weavers, jewellery makers and giving me names like the Dykemans in Nova Scotia, Karen Bulow in Montreal, an outstanding weaver in Alberta, the Burnhams and so on. The shop was redone with glass cases, shelves and new lighting. Fine Canadian crafts immediately piqued much interest; where else could you find such quality work in one place? The Art Gallery was pleased and built a display window in the entrance hall, the Park Plaza Hotel and permitted to use the Sculpture Court of the Art Gallery for two big sales a year. Members and their friends flocked to these sales and the merchandise quickly disappeared especially before Christmas. It was a new thing for many to be able to buy hand made articles and meet the artists.

I had two assistants, the sculptor Jean Horne and Helen Watson, as well as some Gallery members like Signe Eaton who would put her car and chauffeur at my disposal to pick up work out of town. This went on happily until 1960 when York and I left for an extended sojourn to Paris. I had been working full time but couldn't find anyone to take over. This was an early beginning of the magnificent shop to be found at the A.G.O. today. The Art Societies, artists and spouses worked hand in hand with the Gallery staff, Martin Baldwin, the Director, Margaret Machell and others. We were all one big family.

I had some experience selling when I served as a member of the Toronto Symphony Women's Committee (TSO), working on the annual rummage sale. I founded and started the "Picture Department." York and Cleeve Horne would appear after hours with a little drink and sandwich to revive Jean and me. The sale then was not only all day but well into the evening with departments

not yet sold out; finally left-overs were given to a charity. York and Cleeve, usually full of devilment, acted as hucksters calling out special items, steering customers into our booth and creating much fun and excitement.

Some astounding bargains existed; the merchandise was better in those days. It wasn't unusual to find works by the Group of Seven and other prominent Canadian artists which brought in big money like \$40. Of course no one knew there would be a Group of Seven. I even bought two works of an early artist and presented them to the AGT as Paul Duval said they had nothing of his.

The well-known skater Barbara Ann Scott, Paul Rockett (sports) and York Wilson were invited to judge a "Cover Girl" contest. Among others Canadian Home Journal ran the story commenting on each judge;

Meteoric is the word to describe the advance of York Wilson in the world of Canadian art.

It was true that York performed many public services in the advancement of art and artists reled on his leadership. At the time jealousies of his success and popularity were growing!

The Western Ontario Art League at the London Regional Art Gallery invited Wilson to speak, assist on jury to judge their work and present awards. Toni Onley won the award that year; Photos of the winners with Wilson appeared in the London Free Press. The Toronto Star:

Third Canadian International Color Slide Exhibition...
AGT... among the judges York Wilson...

The Little Gallery in Peterborough invited Wilson to have a one-man exhibition. Our Christmas card that year was a drawing Today's Religion (Multiple TV aerials on houses).

I will start 1948 with an odd interesting letter, some giving York hell!

Joseph Lister Rutledge
84 Forest Hill Road

, Toronto

April 5,

1948

Dear York,

I know I have a hell of a nerve to ask you to use up some of your time in making me a rough suggestion of a possible layout for this front cover, so there is no use your muttering to that effect. However I will greatly appreciate your help as I would like to do something with this publication and there is no money available for anything. Therefore I must beg.

As you will see this is a proper mess. But while I recognize that, I wouldn't know how to set out to improve it. The words are too many and too long but again I can't do anything about that. Possibly "The Canadian" could be subordinated.

However, it's in your lap so why should I worry.

My most grateful thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

J.L.R. (Editor, The Canadian Home Journal)

H.B. Beal Technical and Commercial High School
Dundas Street, London, Ontario

November 9, 1948

Dear Mr. Wilson:

Our selection committee was very much pleased with your ballet group and we have decided to use it for the annual presentation to the school of a Canadian artist's painting by the graduating class.

You will find enclosed a cheque for the \$60.00 in payment of the picture.

Yours very truly,

W . A .

McWilliams, Principal

Mr. York Wilson P.O.S.A.

Dear Sir:

I will be one of your audience at the Gallery, Wednesday to see your drawing demonstration.

Since you are president and dictator of the O.S.A. I will look for something exceptional. Last week Mr. Charles Comfort brought a ten-foot easel, fifty dollars worth of pre-war brushes and a trunk of other gadgets—to put on about five square inches of yellow grey. He knew too that the gallery light was yellow, yet he used that as an alibi for doing nothing except talk.

Don't draw any horses, that one in your "Apple Orchard"

is enough. He was out of proportion... proportion is design, and design is the essential in all artistic endeavour. Or did you draw the noble steed twice too long for its height to draw modernly that while his rear was working his head was thinking of and reaching for Oats.

(Handwritten)

Your M i k e

Angelo

1540 Pine

Ave., Montreal

Jan. 24/48

Dear Mr. Wilson -

I have always been enthusiastic about the aspects of life you like to paint. But man man man, why in the name of aesthetic genius waste your time only half doing a picture.

When I see a subject that's important, an understanding that's intelligent but a treatment that, in appropriateness and subtleties of color at least, gives about the same reaction as a stomachfull of green apples — I feel like letting nature take its course.

I can't tell you what to do to make a picture artistic dynamite but a few people with sensitive perception can tell you if you've succeeded when the full force of it knocks them down.

When I go to the Montreal Art Gallery to see one of their exhibitions, perhaps the spring one, I'd certainly like to have to walk over half a dozen connoisseurs lying prostrate in front of a York Wilson.

(Handwritten)

Cordially

James Mahon

The year found Wilson going at a fast pace which seemed to have become his lot. An important work appeared in the OSA exhibition, The Girls inspired by the members of our Thursknit Club which we had formed to encourage knitting articles for the soldiers during the war. I was the current president and we met in each other's homes every Thursday with our finished articles like turtle-neck sweaters, Balaclava helmets, mitts, and socks. When we had fundraising events, York would donate a painting as a prize. One year my closest friend, Christine Connor (later Hutchings) won the painting, which rather embarrassed us both, though a legitimate

win. York found it amusing that we called each other The Girls, though some were elderly.

The painting was purchased by Preston Bauer of Waterloo, president of the medical firm "Bauer." While York was teaching at Doon one summer, Mr. Bauer invited him to see his painting in position. He was surprised to find it had been placed standing on a table (though large) with an objet d'art in front, but it looked well. Mr. Bauer suggested he remove the objet and it wasn't quite as good. He had given much thought to placing his works of art as they were important to him. The Girls was reproduced in Art Digest, U.S.A.

On Mr. Bauer's death, a very thoughtful Albert Miller phoned me saying that he had bought the painting, which I appreciated for my records. At that time my accountant Al Rain, himself an ardent collector, had suggested it. Al had been helpful over a long period informing me as to the whereabouts of some of York's paintings and I gave him the main drawing for Local Dance in the collection of the AGO.

To the OSA, 1948/AGT - The Girls - the Special Section, The Painters Art in Laymans Language to tour; RCA/AGT York sent a portrait of his fellow artist Bud Feheley, disguised as a farmer with pitchfork in hand. To the CSPWC/N.G., the controversial Madonna and Child, later on tour to New Zealand, where it received an honourable mention. The Gallery there planned to buy it but a furor developed because the modern madonna was in shorts walking down a street reading a book while holding the hand of a small child, exactly as York had seen them! Red Pyjamas went to the CNE. To the Hamilton Art Gallery's 1st Winter Exhibition Children of Lac Mercier, a charming watercolour. The Gavin Henderson Galleries advertised "Nine Celebrated Canadian Painters" and reproduced Balottes.

York did a delightful drawing of Boris Hambourg, with his cello, Mayfair, March:

One of the great cellists of his time, he was born in Russia in 1884, son of Professor Michael Hambourg. Educated in England, Germany, Belgium, and France, speaks four languages. His continental touring began in London in 1904 and a few years later he came to Canada, where he founded the Hambourg Trio. He was one of the original members of the famed Hart House String Quarter, which played its swan song in 1946. Went barnstorming around the world with the

quartet, never missing a performance in 22 years. Has often appeared as soloist with the T.S.O. He is the president of the Hambourg Conservatory of Music (Toronto) and a member of the Beethoven Association of New York.

York was invited to have a one-man exhibition at the Arts and Letters Club, Toronto, in 1948. He had been a member since 1942 having been proposed by Leonard Brooks, a Canadian painter who taught at Northern Vocational School under L.A.C. Panton and has resided in Mexico since 1947. York agreed to the exhibition if the lighting and hanging space could be improved and helped this to come about. He is given credit at the Club for the improvement and also for instigating a jury, raising the quality of the exhibitions.

The Hamilton Spectator:

Open Minds In Judging Art Urged by York Wilson. A plea to keep an open mind in judging both the realistic and modern schools of art was voiced last night by York Wilson, president of the Ontario Society of Artists, as he formally opened the 54th exhibition of the Women's Art Association of Hamilton.

The president of the Women's Art Association of Hamilton had invited us to have dinner beforehand and we met at the Connaught Hotel. It was interesting that one of the committee members seated next to me pointed out some of the less expensive dinners on the menu, which they were told to choose, quickly following up with, "But as our guests you can order anything." I realized there were little funds for this sincere group of art lovers.

At the Hamilton Gallery, the ladies had brought and placed their tall plants, ferns and cages of canaries on the platform. York was seated among the plants and canaries while the president spoke and pinned special pins on each worthy artist. With the strong light during the performance, the canaries thought it was morning and started warbling their lungs out. York hidden behind the ferns and canaries was getting more and more perturbed as the evening passed. Finally he was introduced. Although he had prepared a full lecture, he declared that he would cut his lecture short in order to give them time to view the exhibition. If people hadn't been so serious, it was really a parody, the equal of George Bernard Shaw's, "The Critic." The picture in the paper with the two presidents showed York's discomfort.

In the Fall York had a solo exhibition at Eatons Fine Art Galleries, one of the best galleries at that time.

The G&M: York Wilson Has Brilliant Exhibition... at Eatons College Street which makes an artistic advance beyond even the cleverest things he has done in the past. The thrilling pictures are ballet studies... go beyond any superficial attractions to score by basic artistic virtues...

L'Entrechat went to Don and Pauline McGibbon's collection. The engraving house Rous and Mann Press chose March Past, in full colour for their calendar.

York again taught at the Doon Summer School enjoying the company of Fred Varley, later a member of the Group of Seven. Within three years York had become an Academician (RCA) from an associate in 1945, quite an honour as many remain an associate all their lives. It depends on elevation by their peers. The Laing Galleries were now showing Wilson's work permanently. Two paintings were commissioned by the Heinz Company and York spent two days in Leamington, Ontario sketching tomato pickers and another entitled Nursing Young Crops. Showbook ran a page "Canadian Art Comes of Age" and reproduced The Ballet School. At the Arts and Letters Club, Toronto, he designed the long, clever menu for the Christmas dinner with the "Boar's Head March," based on "God rest yee merry gentlemen," with members in their coloured jerkins, its colour depending on which branch of the arts they represented. He still taught three evenings a week between the AGT - Artists Workshop and the Ontario College of Art. He was doing too much and didn't want to take on the OCA, but the Director L.A.C. (Alec) Panton ensnared him with "It's your duty." Alec was a bit of a martinet. Leonard Brooks claims that is why he left teaching under Alec at Northern Vocational. Even today Leonard becomes emotional in referring to it, says Alec talked down to his instructors and sent nasty little memos.

Canadian Art, by Andrew Bell: "Toronto as an Art Centre" reproduced the ballet painting L'Entrechat.

In 1949 cocktail parties were popular and many living rooms were small. This meant too many people were jammed into a small space and at that time they needed more room as big hats and long cigarette holders were in vogue. This situation amused York when he painted Cocktail Party shown in the 1949 OSA exhibition. The OSA were invited to exhibit with the American British Gallery in

New York and included Pottery Market, a scene from a Mexican market.

A new system of voting by the five member jury of the OSA was devised by Cleve Horne and first used in this exhibition.

The Telegram reports below a picture of the jury judging paintings. These Ontario Society of Artists jury members each register their individual vote on the light panel behind them by pressing a button, assuring a poll in which none knows how his or her companion voted.

Dancing Class went to the RCA exhibition at the MMFA as his Diploma work which was accepted and joined the other diploma works of Academicians in the collection of the N.G. The N.G. sponsored the tour of the RCA exhibition on its western tour.

Cleve Horne did a sculpture bust, in plaster, of York and submitted it to the Sculpture Society of Canada exhibition at the AGT and later presented it to York.

Saturday Night, Paul Duval:

...For the third consecutive year the Women's Committee of the AGT counted up their proceeds and decided their annual sale of contemporary art was a great success and evidence of increasing active interest in art among Canadian laymen. Paintings and sculpture exhibited in these shows are by leading artists, but priced for the average purse... With Wilson's reproduction of The Resin Box.

The AGT had an exhibition "50 Years of Painting in Canada" in the Fall which included Welfare Worker.

The Robert Simpson Company (large department store) - **Eight Toronto Men Decorate a Room.** Mayor H.E. McCallum - Mart Kenney (orchestra leader) - Wes McKnight (sports broadcaster) - Martin Baldwin (Director AGT) - York Wilson, RCA - Samuel Hersenhoren (radio and concert conductor) - Ted Reeves (sports writer) - Turk Broda (Maple Leaf hockey star).

G&M reported: One of the most original rooms was dreamed up by artist York Wilson, a man who admits his decoration shows "a disorderly mind." Because he can't resist drawing on tablecloths, he scrawled freak table settings all over

a huge round coffee table. Two unframed canvasses—one of a heavy-headed violin player—were tacked up on a wall covered with sketches. ‘Any of my artist friends who want to practice on my wall are welcome.’

The most unusual room in the collection was done by artist York Wilson. He likes to sit on the floor, and expects his friends to like it too, so he provides lots of cushions. And his specially designed big round white table has the legs cut down so that no chair could possibly be used with it. The table looks to be set, but the place settings are drawn on the surface of the table—knives, forks, glasses, plates, each bearing a different creature—such as fish with head and tail over the plate edge, a cow, a chicken. One wall is covered with drawing paper so that the owner or his friends may feel free to sketch. The floor, of wide boards, is bare. He won the prize for the most ingenious room.

The Doon School of Fine Art’s 1949 prospectus shows the instructors to be York Wilson - L.A.C. Panton - Yvonne Houser and Gordon Payne. It shows a trio of Wilson’s students at their easel in the great outdoors, not far from the picturesque old mill.

Canadian Art, George Robertson, shows York Wilson interviewing artists over the air at the opening of the OSA exhibition. In the photo Tom Roberts, Claire Stewart, Cleeve Horne and L.A.C. Panton are seen waiting to be interviewed in one of the salons. What a different world it was then, most are in tuxedos or tails, always a very dressy affair at openings at the AGT.

The Canadian Home Journal invited York to illustrate a story by Phyllis Lee Peterson:

Montreal,

January 30th, 1949

Dear Mr. Wilson:

This is a note of appreciation for the very fine illustration which you did for my story and I hope that I will be fortunate enough to sell many more and to have you illustrate them.

Many thanks,

Very truly yours,

Phyllis Lee Peterson

One last letter in the files which must have pleased York, as a struggling artist trying to become known. It’s written on the

letterhead of the N.G.

January 10,

1949

Dear Mr. Wilson:

I asked the editors of "Canadian Art" if I might have the photograph of your picture, "L'Entrechat," reproduced in the last issue for my permanent files, but was advised to write for your permission. I hope that you will let me keep it, but I shall be glad to return it if you need it.

Yours sincerely,

R.H. Hubbard

Curator of Canadian

Art

The house at 8 Apsley Road has many memories, the recreation room walls with paintings by A.J. Casson - J.S. Hallam - L.A.C. Panton - Cleeve Horne - Wm. Winter - Angus MacDonald - Jack Bush - Sydney Watson and York Wilson, all have passed on except Cleeve Horne.

A charming painting of our daughter Virginia, in her nightdress coming down stairs, entitled Angel Descending the Stairs was painted there. I have no idea as to its whereabouts. Virginia posed quite often for York at that time and the memorable Red Pyjamas was painted there. Backstage went to the CNE in 1949.

The command of a telephone!

Y.W.