

Montreal faces



Celebrating the Beaver Hall Group exhibition



Philippe Brunet, Vice President of CLASSICA Music Festival with Montreal lawyer Pierre-Yves Chatillon.



Kent Hovey-Smith, Partner, Tidal Health Solutions with Linda Renaud, President, Montreal Press Club.



Brian Foss, co-director, Beaver Hall Hill Group exhibition with Sandra Paikowsky, Canadian art historian.



Sarah Ivory, Montreal art historian and consultant with Charlie Hill, formerly Curator of Canadian Art, National Gallery of Canada.

By Linda Renaud

Who knew that a discussion on how this exhibition, which recently completed an exceptional three-month run at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, would come to be as well received as the exhibit itself?

Both art lovers and aficionados turned out at the University Club to hear Brian Foss, co-curator of the museum display, talk about a show that was years in the making. During his presentation, Foss explained that just “finding” the work of the Beaver Hall Group, which consisted to 29 local artists (half of them women, which was unusual at the time), “...proved to be a challenge.”

While founded in 1920, the group did not have stated goals other than to ensure their work was exhibited;

which is why they rented their own space on Beaver Hall Hill. With the support of A.Y. Jackson, co-founder of the Group of Seven, the Montreal group flourished. However, by the late 40’s, the members dispersed leaving very little documentation behind. The exhibit at the MMFA featured 21 of the artists, many of their paintings culled from museum storage as well as private collections.

While the group is known for its portraits and typical Montreal landscapes (churches, winter scenes), their work also stood out for its distinctively modernist look and composition (angular faces and bustling downtown streets). As Montreal was the center of jazz in the 20’s the group’s vibrant and colourful imagery suited the times. Even the shimmer of the paintings drew attention. “You just want to feel the paint!” exclaimed Foss.



Laurier Lacroix, Quebec art historian with columnist and gemologist Olga Shevchenko.



Peter Kerr, publisher and editor, *The Montrealer* with Jelena Neylan, University Club board member.



Sheila and Dr. Victor Goldbloom, former Liberal MNA who recently released his memoir.



Mary Rivard, President of the Atwater Library Computer Centre and husband Claude Rivard, financial consultant.



Montreal painter and sculptor Nancy Lydon with Ron Meisels. The couple has supported the MMFA for 40 years.



Natalie and Reford MacDougall with their daughter Alexandra, a staff member of the MMFA.

Photos: Julian Haber