

Stamps mark centennial of influential Canadian art school

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OTTAWA -- A new stamp collection will honour Canada's best known school of artists, reproducing a group of landscapes first shown 100 years ago.

Among the paintings chosen for the collection are depictions of a fire-swept forest, a gritty mining town and a storm over the Great Lakes.

They were shown together for the first time on May 7, 1920 at what is now the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Canada Post said the show gave art lovers "their first look at paintings from what would become Canada's best-known school of art -- the Group of Seven."

Inspired by Tom Thomson, an artist who drowned three years earlier, the group was founded by Franklin Carmichael, Lawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson, Frank Johnston, Arthur Lismer, J.E.H. MacDonald and F.H. Varley.

Their "raw and daring depictions of the landscape gave birth to a unique Canadian aesthetic that influenced generations of artists," the postal service said.

Some 2,000 people attended the original show during its 20-day run. Only five paintings were sold but the exhibit received good reviews -- and collectors and major galleries took note.

The stamp booklet features "In the Nickle Belt," "Miners' Houses," "Glance Bay," "Labrador Coast," "Fire-swept, Algoma," "Quebec Village," "Church by the Sea" and "Stormy Weather, Georgian Bay."

The reproductions were drawn from six major Canadian galleries and photographs from the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Archives.