

DRAWING HISTORY: A VISUAL TRIBUTE TO MARTA DANYLEWYCZ

Letia Richardson and Leslie Savage

This essay is a visual tribute to Marta Danylewycz, her work and her role as a feminist social historian in Canada. Like Danylewycz, the artists selected have earned recognition in their chosen fields. The images contain direct references to many of Danylewycz's themes. As well, they highlight and extend issues central to her work and explore themes Danylewycz shared: women and religion, ethnicity, reform, the family, education and work. Some of the paintings strike themes that are familiar; others are more enigmatic. The intent is both to stimulate thought about Danylewycz's ideas and to provoke a search for the elusive connections between history, art and society. We wanted not to illustrate mechanistically Danylewycz's themes but to reproduce images reflecting the special precision, breadth and grace that characterize her writing.

Mary Pratt's *Steamed Pudding*, for example, draws on the theme of domestic labour and food preparation that is the subject of Danylewycz's research on the home economics curriculum. But *Steamed Pudding* also captures the tension between the constraints and isolation of kitchen work and the deep rewards of the nurturing role. Similarly, Jori Smith's characterization of the young Quebec girl *Vitaline* attempts to bridge the gap between Quebec and Canadian culture, but on another level the painting projects the world of subjective experience and potentiality that is at the heart of research and writing in the history of education. Esther Warkov's *Rooster Boy Being Dropped into the City of Guilt* presents multiple images. Like *Gathie Falk's Chair with Fish and Maple Leaves*, it makes reference to Judeo-Christian traditions of sin and redemption. Warkov's central figure represents woman carrying the burden of civilization and, on a secondary level, her 'burden' symbolizes the many hats and roles worn and played by women in society. The associative meanings of Wanda Koop's *Airplane* and *Hayroll* evoke death and flight, life and death,

endings and beginnings, the regeneration of past as in the reconstitutability of technological flight and in symbolic allusion to the rise of the phoenix – the fusing of science and metaphysics, and the unknown mysteries of the future.

These paintings, contributed enthusiastically by the artists, stand as a memorial tribute to Danylewycz. Our comments suggest only some potential meanings which we hope will provoke future thought and discussion. We thank all the artists involved and believe that Danylewycz would have regarded their support and participation as complementary to her research.

Finally, visual images are no less powerful than words in the everyday formation of what we call knowledge. Linking these images with Danylewycz's work is one way in which her search for new perceptions and insights can be extended. We hope this essay stimulates a continuation of her ideas and shows the wealth of connections, seldom expressed, between art and history.

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Leslie Savage is also a doctoral student at the University of British Columbia. She is familiar with Marta Danylewycz's work through her earlier study of the Misericordia Sisters in Montreal and Edmonton. She has taught history of education at the University of Alberta and at present has a sessional appointment in the History Department, University of British Columbia. Her doctoral work is on women artists and education in Canada.



Betty Goodwin
Swimmer No. 4, 1983
oil, wash and graphite on paper
315 x 280 cm
Photo: Denis Farley



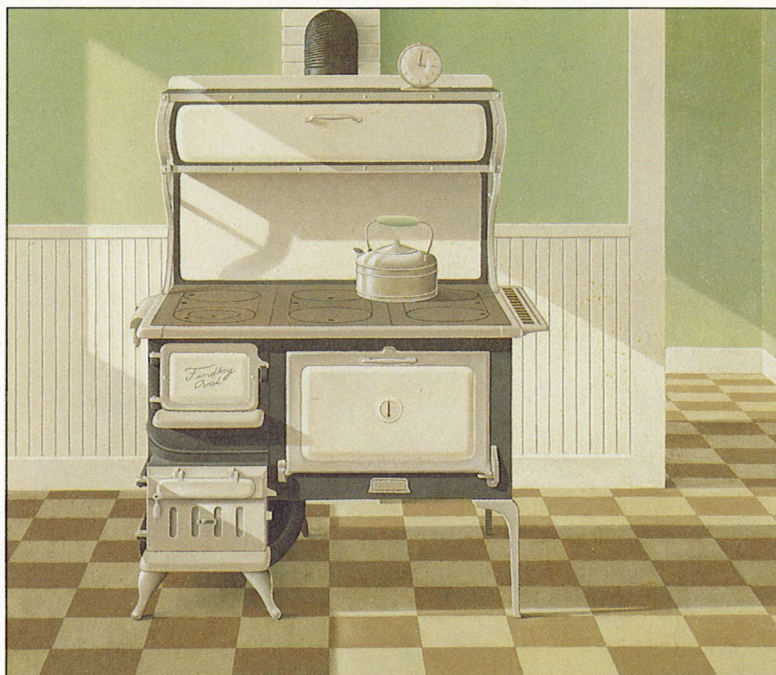
Jori Smith
Vitaline, 1952
oil on board
60.3 x 47.9 cm
Coll: Vancouver Art Gallery
Gift of Dr Max Stern
Photo: Edmonton Art Gallery



Robert Harris
A Meeting of the School Trustees, c. 1885
 oil on canvas
 99.7 x 123.2 cm
 Coll: National Gallery of Canada



Lillian Broca
The Life Which Is Unexamined Is Not Worth Living, 1982
 graphite on paper
 39.4 x 29.2 cm
 Coll: Jill Pollack
 Photo: Robert Keziere



Christopher Pratt
Three o'clock, 1968
 oil on masonite
 39.4 x 45.7 cm
 Coll: Mr & Mrs Irving Ungerman
 Photo: Carlo Catenazzi, Art Gallery of Ontario



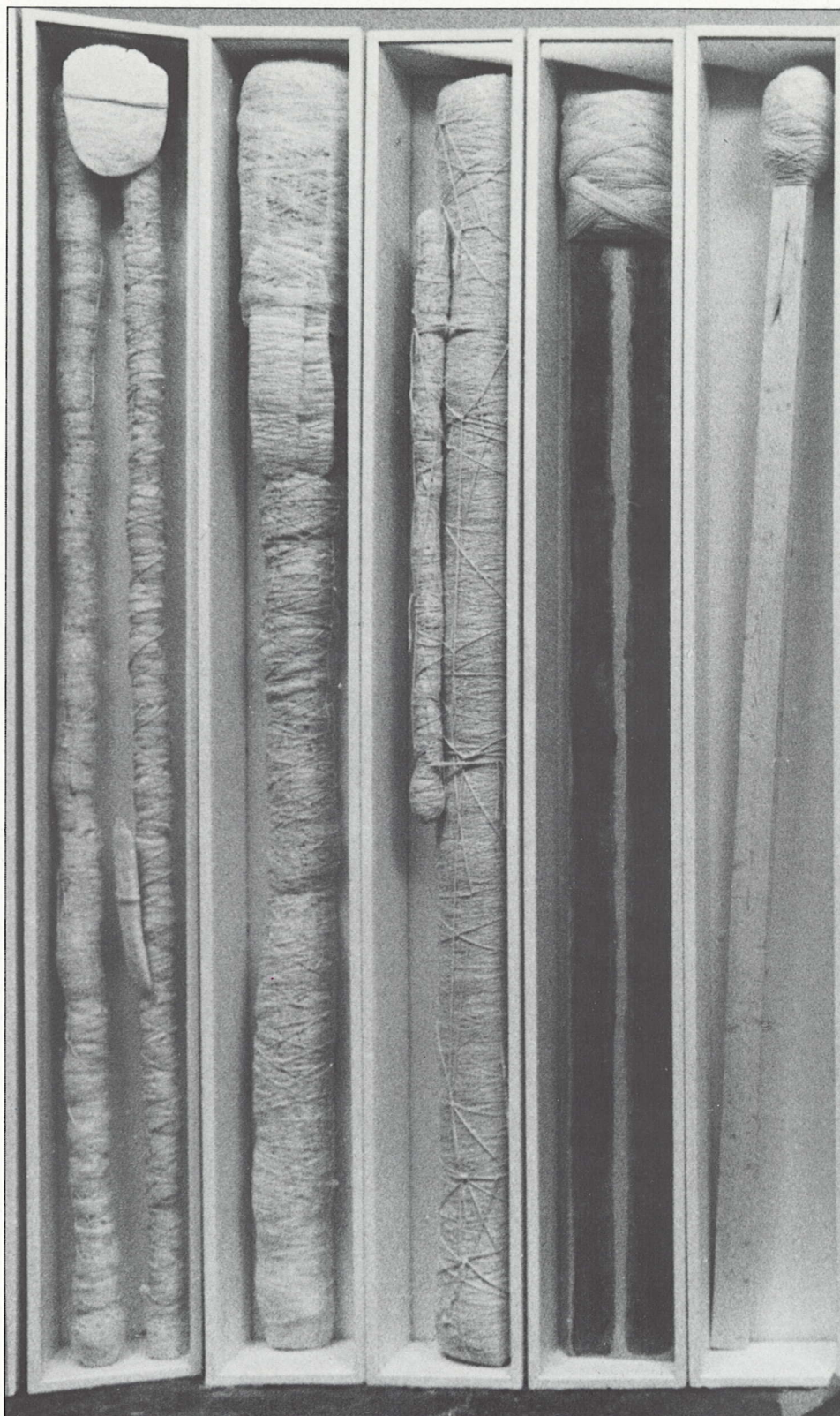
Mary Pratt
Steamed Pudding, 1977
 oil on gesso on panel
 55 x 55 cm
 Coll: Private
 Photo: Tom Moore



Mary Pratt
Wedding Dress, 1975
oil on board
116.5 x 60 cm
Coll: J. Ron Longstaffe
Courtesy Vancouver Art Gallery
Photo: Tom Moore



Esther Warkov
Rooster Boy Being Dropped into the City of Guilt, 1985
 graphite and coloured pencils on paper
 50.0 x 37.5 cm
 Coll: Phyllis and Marvin Shenkarow
 Photo: Ernest Mayer, Winnipeg Art Gallery



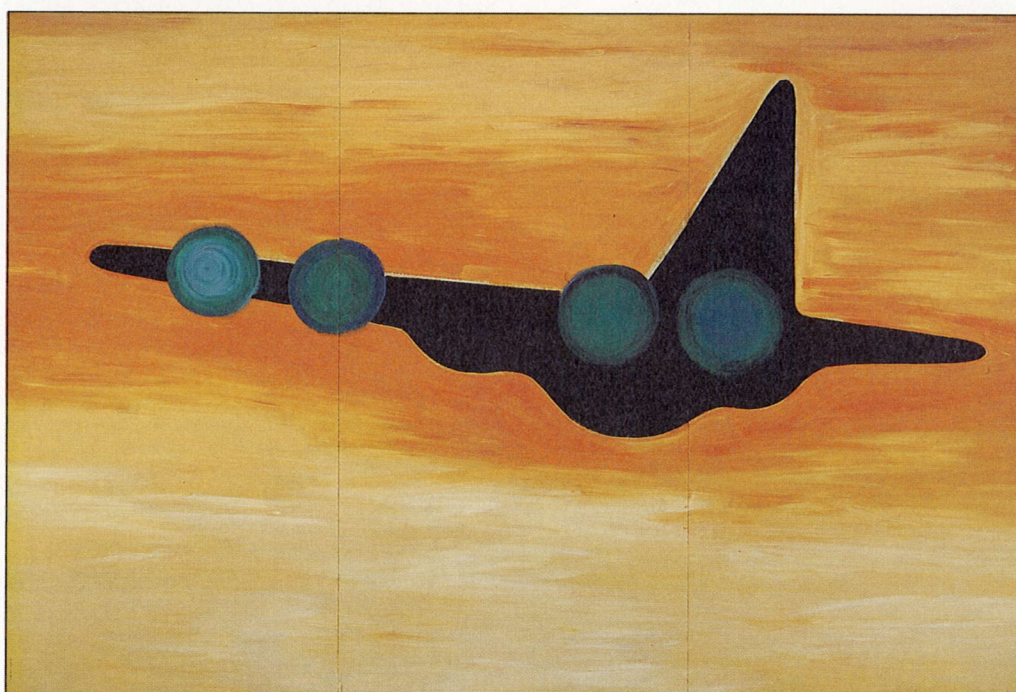
Irene Whittome
The White Museum II, 1975 (detail)
mixed media
assemblage: 14 boxes
each box: 219.1 x 25.4 x 15.8 cm
Coll: Art Bank of Canada
Photo: Yvan Boulerice



Gathie Falk
Chair with Fish and Maple Leaves, 1985
oil on canvas
105 x 75 cm
Courtesy Equinox Gallery, Vancouver



Wanda Koop
Hayroll, 1982
 acrylic and Roplex on plywood
 244 x 366 cm
 Coll: artist
 Photo: Ernest Mayer, Winnipeg Art Gallery



Wanda Koop
Airplane, 1983
 acrylic and Roplex on plywood
 244 x 366 cm
 Coll: Winnipeg Art Gallery
 Photo: Ernest Mayer, Winnipeg Art Gallery