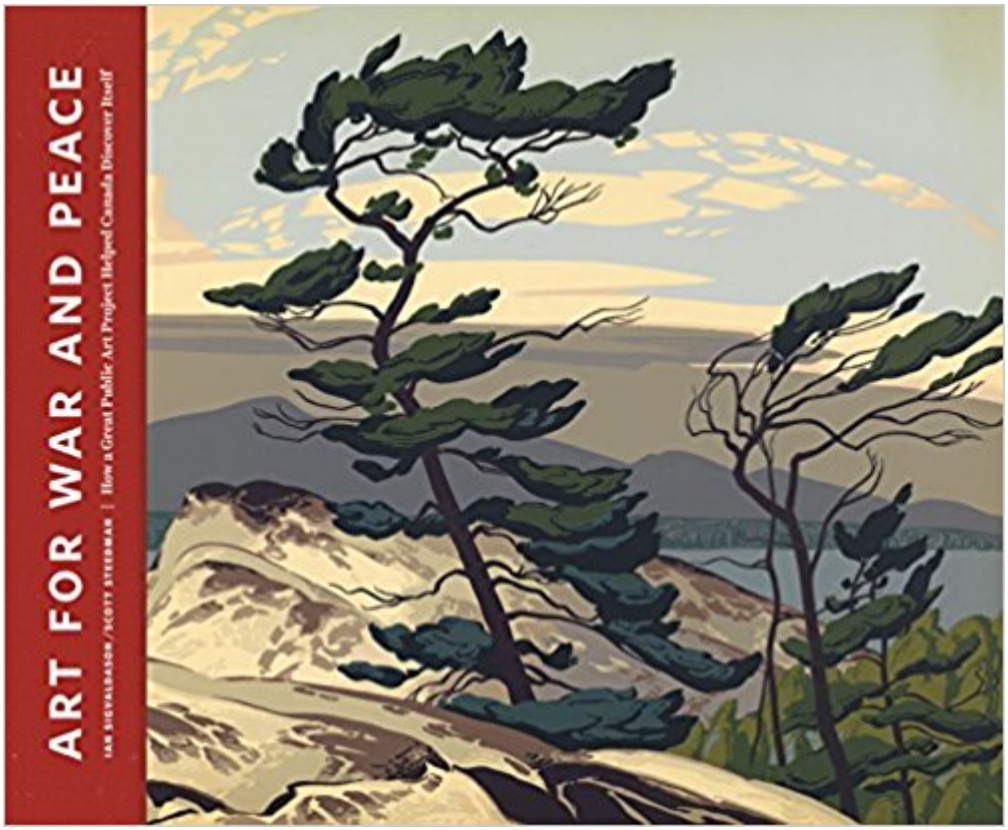
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Art For War And Peace: How A Great Public Art Project Helped Canada Discover Itself



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Synopsis

The Sampson-Matthews print program was the largest public art project in Canadian history. Launched at the start of the Second World War, it lasted 22 years and cost tens of millions of dollars. The exquisite, oversize silkscreens were based on designs by a whoÃ¢â ¬â„¢s who of CanadaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s greatest artists, including David Milne, Emily Carr, B.C. Binning, Lawren Harris and A.Y. Jackson, Tom Thomson, J.W. Morrice and Clarence Gagnon. The idea that launched the project was simple. Get CanadaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s best painters to contribute to the war effort by creating new works, guided by the National Gallery. Toronto printer Sampson-Matthews would turn these into high-quality silkscreens, which would then be sent to every military unit and government office from Britain to Ceylon. At the same time, target the home front: schools, libraries, banks, insurance companies. By 1943, the prints were hanging in EatonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s store windows from coast to coast. The images were so popular that the program went into overdrive after the war. Dozens more artworks were commissioned and tens of thousands more printed. Sets toured the USA, Soviet Russia, war-torn Europe; the Bank of Montreal put them in every branch. The grand landscapes became familiar backdrops for two generations of Canadians. The program was a grandiose exercise in art education, a coming together of culture, commerce and patriotism that only a world war could ever create. Watch the film Argo and youÃ¢â ¬â„¢ll see two prints in the Tehran embassy scenes, benevolent totems assuring the plotters that everything will be alright; this is Canada, relax. Art for War and Peace tells the story of the Sampson-Matthews prints, with full-colour reproductions of 112 silkscreens and contributions from several art writers, including Douglas Coupland.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Ian Sigvaldason and Scott SteedmanÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Art for War and Peace: How A Great Art Project Helped Canada Discover Itself uncovers an important chapter in the adolescent years of Canadian identity, detailing how these landscapes Ã¢â ¬â ¢ mostly of the Canadian Shield and painted mainly by Toronto urbanites Ã¢â ¬â ¢ came to be imprinted on our national DNA. In gorgeous, full-colour reproduction and stuffed with supplementary material such as sales catalogues, pages about framing options, and decals with care instructions (Ã¢â ¬Å“Should the surface become soiled it may readily be cleaned by sponging with soap and waterÃ¢â ¬Â•), the book is an expertly collected document of the early efforts made by a young, spirited country desperate to define itself." ~Toronto Star, Chris Hampton"This is a gorgeous book." ~Stephen Quinn, Host of CBC Radio's On the Coast

Ian Sigvaldason is the owner of the Pegasus Gallery of Canadian Art on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia; he has been mesmerized by the Sampson-Matthews prints for many years, and curates the website sampsonmatthewsprints.com. Scott Steedman is an editor, writer and publishing consultant, and an Adjunct Professor at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver. He co-edited Visions of British Columbia, winner of the 2010 City of Vancouver Book Award.

Excellent book with great illustrations.

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