The Art of Nation-Building: Two Murals by Charles Comfort (1936-37)

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ABSTRACT

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Gillian MacCormack

In the late 1920s, Canada experienced a new wave of nation-building art as part of a major mural movement sweeping Europe and North America. It reached its zenith in the 1930s, and provides the context – artistically, socially, politically and economically – for the two murals considered in this thesis. Such murals were modern in their focus on contemporary, usually urban issues, industrial subject matter, the image of the blue collar worker and its links to the Art Deco movement – "that vehicle of moderate nationalism" as architectural historian, Michael Windover, put it. All these characteristics are reflected in two highly acclaimed works by the leading and most prolific Canadian muralist of the 1930s and beyond: Scottish-born Charles Fraser Comfort, A.R.C.A. (1900-1994). At a time of serious unemployment for most artists following the market crash of 1929, Comfort achieved two significant accomplishments pertinent to Canada's twentieth century art narrative. As the sole muralist of the day to obtain important commissions from the new "princes of patronage", industry leaders, he painted *The Romance of Nickel* (1936) for Inco for the Canadian Pavilion at the 1937 *Exposition internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne* in Paris, as well as the series of eight interior panels (1937) for the Art Deco-inspired, Toronto Stock Exchange (Design Exchange), and designed its exterior stone frieze and steel medallions on the front door. Comfort's second accomplishment was the particular way this already well-established landscape artist, water colourist, portrait painter and graphic designer also reflected contemporaneous preoccupations with the image of the blue-collar worker, in Cubist-inspired Realism. In this way, his two murals of 1936-37 indicate much about the distinctive approach of Canadian artistic developments of the decade with their emphasis on design and "moderate" modernity.

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My particular thanks also to Charles Hill, author and retired Curator of Canadian Art at the National Gallery of Canada (NGC). I am most grateful to him for taking the time to share his thoughts on Charles Comfort and *The Romance of Nickel* during my day of research at the Archives a year ago. He was also kind enough to provide me with a copy of his Acquisition Document for this mural's consideration by the NGC, which, along with his catalogue, *Canadian Paintings of the Thirties*, were invaluable scholarship resources. Philip Dombowsky, head of the NGC Archives organised this meeting, and provided follow-up information. I would like to thank him sincerely for his efforts. My grateful thanks also to Sara Nickelson, Curator of the Design Exchange Museum, (formerly the Toronto Stock Exchange) for arranging my visit there and providing me with an important source of architectural and mural information regarding its construction in 1937.

Finally, I wish also to express my great appreciation to Melinda Reinhart for her technical and image research assistance, Dina Vescio for her patience with my many questions and requests, and Kate Manley for her advice on imaging.

DEDICATION

To Bryan,
who introduced me to Canadian art many years ago,
and who has supported and encouraged me
throughout this thesis exercise.

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"*What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.”*

Pericles, 5th century B.C.

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"*As an artist he is a humanist realist whose paintings are characterized by a spirit of organized freedom and technical conservatism. For him, the visible world is the valid point of departure for a work of art. He envisages his world as being inexhaustibly inspiring and meaningful.*"

Charles Comfort writing about himself, 1974.

"To bring art into everyday life is not the duty of the rich connoisseur: it is the task of the industrial corporation, of the advertising agency, of municipalities and provinces. We in Canada have been backward in relating art to utility."

Donald Buchanan, "Design in Industry", *Saturday Night*, December 29, 1934.

INTRODUCTION

Between the mid-nineteenth century and World War II, Canada experienced three waves of nation-building art (two of them part of major mural movements sweeping Europe and North America). The first – what art historian, Marylin McKay, calls the European-based Mural Movement – arrived on Canada's shores in the 1860s and lingered on until the 1950s. Its subject matter glorified "material progress, Christianity, sovereignty and cultural imperialism."[1] This was seen as a means of establishing a "distinct identity"[2] for a modern nation state and, this is key, as "the culmination of a materially and culturally progressive history that belonged exclusively to Western culture."[3] This decidedly imperialist attitude was interpreted in the late nineteenth century through realistic, Academic-styled murals, which Eleanor Bittermann describes as generally depicting "groups of calmly dignified, allegorical figures painted in quiet tones." The ideal for painters in the 1880s, says Bittermann, was the "flat, tranquilly-decorated compositions of pageantry" by the French muralist, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898).[4]

The second wave was home-grown, and emerged post-World War I in the form of the Group of Seven's iconic, wilderness landscapes. The Group's distinctive painterly style developed throughout the first decade of the twentieth century and concretized in the 1920s. It represented a new Canadian approach to modernism and was acclaimed as such well into the twentieth century. Critically, its subject matter, described by various scholars as "primitive, harsh environments" is seen from late twentieth and early twenty-first century perspectives as a regional expression of nationally-held values (many of its best known paintings illustrated northern Ontario lakes and forests).[5] Nevertheless, in the 1920s and well beyond, these landscapes were highly acclaimed as national symbols, representative of Canada's identity as a

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[1] Marylin J. McKay, *A National Soul: Canadian Mural Painting, 1860s-1930s* (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 5.
[2] McKay, *A National Soul,* 62.
[3] McKay, *A National Soul*, 4-5.
[4] Eleanor Bittermann, *Art in Modern Architecture* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1952), 17.
[5] McKay, *A National Soul*, 12.

"North American" nation independent of "mother" Britain, or as historian, Ramsey Cook, put it, "not governed by inherited traditions."[6]

The third wave of nation-building art provides the context – artistically, socially, politically and economically – for the two murals I will consider in this thesis. It emerged in Europe and North America in the late 1920s as muralists on both sides of the Atlantic moved increasingly towards closing the gap between art and society, and towards a harmonization of art and architecture. What made it modern and very different from the other two waves was its focus on contemporary issues, industrial subjects and the figure of the worker.[7] A further distinguishing factor was its close links to the Art Deco movement, what architectural historian, Michael Windover, refers to as that "vehicle of moderate nationalism…because of its eclecticism of style and its flexibility to visually frame the local within the modern, thus reinforcing a moderate status quo."[8] In fact, the socio-political and artistic importance of this 1930s nation-building wave of mural art cannot be overestimated. Arthur Lismer, surely with an eye to that "harmonious" relationship between art and architecture, noted in 1933 that for Canada, murals "are signs that our democracy, which is still adolescent, is slowly achieving a new renaissance through more coordinated activity in the designing of structure and its decoration."[9] French art critic, Philippe Diolé, summed it all up in a 1934 *Beaux Arts* article when he cried*:* "*On demande des murs!...*.There is no artist today who is not eager to confront the hard discipline of the mural."[10] Sixty years later, art historian and curator, Rosemary Donegan, said in retrospect that "within the art world, murals were the great public art spectacle of the period…artists saw them as the answer to the growing disjunction between the artist and society. Murals would provide a new mass audience for art."[11] In an essay on Charles Comfort's style she notes, "modern architecture, particularly modern institutional architecture was seen as the perfect scale and location for artists to find a general public."[12] In 1937, the streamlined-moderne Art-Deco styled Toronto Stock Exchange provided just such an ideal backdrop.[13]

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[6] Ramsay Cook, "The Triumph and Trials of Materialism 1900-1945," in *The Illustrated History of Canada*, ed. Craig Brown (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys Ltd., 1987), 439.

[7] Rosemary Donegan, "Legitimate Modernism: Charles Comfort and the Toronto Stock Exchange," quoted in *Designing the Exchange: Essays Commemorating the Opening of the Design Exchange* (Toronto: The Design Exchange, 1994), 53.

[8] Michael Windover, *Art Deco: A Mode of Mobility* (Québec: Presses de l'Université de Québec, 2012), 188.

[9] Rosemary Donegan, "Muscled Workers, Speeding Trains, and Composite Figures: Charles Comfort's Murals," in *Take Comfort: The Career of Charles Comfort/La carrière de Charles Comfort* (Winnipeg: The Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2007), 36.

[10] Philippe Diolé, *Beaux Arts* 102 (December 14, 1934): 1, quoted in Romy Golan, *Muralnomad: The Paradox of Wall Painting, Europe 1927-57* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2009), 66-67.

[11] Donegan, in *Designing the Exchange*, 51-52.

In the 1930s, and indeed beyond, Charles Fraser Comfort, A.R.C.A. (1900-1994) was Canada's foremost and most prolific muralist (fig. 1). He was born in Edinburgh, Scotland and immigrated to Winnipeg at age twelve with his family. He went to work almost immediately to help support his family but continued to paint, a childhood hobby, in his spare time. When he entered some watercolours in a local YMCA competition, its judge, Fred Brigden, was so impressed he offered the young Comfort a job as an apprentice at his Brigden graphic art studio in Winnipeg at three dollars a day. Comfort was to work there for fifteen years, and later at the company's studio in Toronto when he moved there in 1925 with his wife Louise Irene Chase. By that point, his career as a fine arts painter had progressed rapidly in parallel to his main revenue-producing work as a highly skilled graphic artist. In 1932, he received his first commission for public art. By this time, he was already a water colourist of note, a portrait painter of key Canadian political, artistic and business figures, and an acknowledged landscape artist who would go on to win first prize in the historic, 1938-39 *Great Lakes Exhibition of Regional Art* with *Lake Superior Village* (fig. 2).[14] In a 1973 interview with art historian and curator, Charles Hill, Comfort explains how he got started in mural painting. His response reveals much about the spirit of a young artist ready to try anything new, particularly if it meant revenue in hard times.

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[12] Donegan, "Muscled Workers, Speeding Trains, and Composite Figures: Charles Comfort's Murals," in *Take Comfort*, 36.

[13] *Art Deco*: a flexible, style-conscious, politically useful, mobility-driven and optimistic artistic movement deriving its name from the 1925 *Exposition des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes in Paris*. In *Art Deco: A Mode of Mobility*, Michael Windover notes its adaptability to local cultures worldwide. Art Deco designers, he says, promoted the change of appearance (in architecture or product design). It *imagined* modernity in the interwar years, but ultimately reinforced the pre-existing social order, an aspect which suited a range of political systems worldwide. In Canada, consumer taste for Art Deco was developing by the late 1920s in architecture such as the Montreal and Toronto Eaton's stores, hotels like Toronto's Royal York, private homes, like Ernest Cormier's Pine Avenue house in Montreal, and the Toronto Stock Exchange building. It also entered Canadian homes in the form of French-designed Art Deco furnishings and, as Windover remarks in "Listening to Deco," in the form of Art Deco-designed radio sets. This "thoroughly modern product" was beginning to be widely purchased by fashion and technology-conscious Canadians, just when the CBC happened to be expanding its network and programming.

[14] An American-based phenomenon of the 1930s and 1940s with nationalist undertones led by Thomas Hart Benton, and espoused by artists from Ontario, the Maritimes the Prairies and West Coast. The movement emphasized local nationalism and artistic preoccupations with mainly rural subjects as different, but legitimate art, equally worthy of interest at a time of overwhelming importance placed on European trends, subjects and styles by mainly American art markets and critics. See Christine Boyanoski, "Charles Comfort's Lake Superior Village and the Great Lakes Exhibition 1938-39," *Journal of Canadian Art History* 12/2 (1988): 174-5. See, also, Victoria Nixon, "The Concept of 'Regionalism' in Canadian Art History," *Journal of Canadian Art History* 10/1 (1987): 30-32.

Comfort: “I think it was simply the challenge… I just decided to try it and I did. I had no training in it at all, but I had the capacity of being able to translate onto a large scale from a sketch in my hand.”[15] For subsequent murals, Comfort says he “used the old [fifteenth century method of transferring a design to a wall] idea of doing a cartoon on brown paper and perforating the lines and then pouncing it onto the canvas with a chalk bag.”[16] Comfort’s first public art commission involved the creation of a 6.10 metre-long mural for the foyer of new Toronto offices for the North American Life Assurance Company (to our knowledge, no archival photographs of it remain). He worked on canvas assisted by his friend, Carl Schaefer in the new studio he had just opened with artists, Will Ogilvie and Harold Ayres. The Assurance Company building was later torn down, and with it, Comfort’s mural; there would be many more such commissions between the 1930s and the 1960s.

Two of them happened in quick succession in the late 1930s. The first was *The Romance of Nickel* (fig. 3) commissioned in 1936 by Canadian global mining giant, Inco, for the Canadian Pavilion at the 1937 *Exposition internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne* in Paris, and the focus of Section I of this thesis. The second was the series of eight, vertical panels (fig. 4) completed in 1937 for the trading floor of the new Toronto Stock Exchange (TSE), as well as the limestone bas-relief frieze of striding figures (fig. 5) on the building’s façade, and the steel medallions of the front door (fig. 6). Both these exterior, architectural features are considered to be hybrids of Art Deco and *streamlined moderne*.[17] The interior murals, which Comfort referred to in 1937 as “a one-man show,”[18] depict industries traded on the Exchange in “Cubist-inspired Realism.”[19] They will be considered in Section II.

This thesis will argue that these murals illustrate how Charles Comfort achieved two significant objectives pertinent to Canadian art history. As an integral part of the twentieth century mural revival sweeping Canada, Europe and the United States, their Art Deco-inspired energy and optimism helped to promote nation-building aspirations and priorities of a new Canadian art patron: industry leaders. Secondly, their focus on the worker as a “figure of idyllic labour relations” in Cubist-inspired Realism tells us much about the distinctive approach of Canadian artistic developments with their emphasis on design and “moderate” modernity.

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[15] Interview with Charles Comfort, 3 October 1973, *Canadian Painting in the Thirties Exhibition Records*, National Gallery of Canada Fonds, National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives. 53, clip 5.

[16] Ibid. Also see Margaret Grey, Margaret Rand and Louis Steen, *Charles Comfort – Canadian Artists 2* (Toronto: Gage Publishing, 1976), 48.

[17] Tim Morawetz “Art Deco Becomes Moderne: The Stylistic Composition of the 1937 Toronto Stock Exchange Building,” in *Designing the Exchange: Essays Commemorating the Opening of the Design Exchange* (Toronto: The Design Exchange, 1994) 43.

[18] Donegan, in *Designing the Exchange*, 65.

[19] Ibid., 54.

My main arguments are three-fold, and will emerge throughout this thesis as I analyse each mural from formal, social and social art history methodologies. I will first consider how they demonstrate the way that a modern and politically moderate form of Social Realism[20] was seen as a useful complement to Art Deco architecture in 1937 Paris as in Canada. Indeed, in metropolitan Canada (i.e. Toronto and Montreal), local interpretations of this movement were springing up in the form of the new Toronto Stock Exchange and Montreal’s Central Station (1942), but also in the work of interior designer Jacques Carlu’s original, ninth floor restaurant in Montreal’s Eaton’s store (designed by architects Ross and Macdonald), as well as in Ernest Cormier’s iconic Art Deco-style house on Montreal’s Pine Avenue (fig. 7). In both Sections I and II, I will consider the ways Canadian artists like Charles Comfort interpreted Art Deco’s flexibility and movement, compared to their European, American and Mexican peers, who had more politically militant agendas. Secondly, I will argue that Comfort’s two 1937 murals illustrate a distinctly Canadian approach to Social Realism – one which idealizes and “glorifies” the worker’s role in society, as opposed to the down-trodden, over-worked figures in Thomas Hart Benton’s iconic *America Today* (1930-31) or, the men and women “porte-paroles” of Soviet socialist ideology at the 1937 *Exposition internationale* in Paris. This discrepancy was part of a widespread discourse, which will be addressed in Section II in terms of just how much North American, but particular Canadian artists felt their art should or should not, or in Comfort’s case, “could or could not” openly criticise social issues of the day. In considering this very 1930s dilemma, I will argue that for Comfort in particular, it was quite conceivable that the importance he personally placed on bringing art closer to people, could indeed be reconciled with the very specific realities of his corporate mural commissions. That reality was that his patrons for the two murals of this thesis were not private art lovers, nor the Church, as in 17th to 19th century Quebec, nor the federal government, as would begin to occur in the early 1940s with the War Artists' Program, and in 1945 with the Canada Council. They were the "new princes of patronage": Canadian industrialists. As will be demonstrated in Sections I and II, Comfort clearly had no doubts about what might seem from an early twenty-first century perspective to be a contradiction between his values as a socially conscious artist, and the pragmatic task of creating a mural to respond to a corporate client's business and nation-building goals.

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[20] An international art movement of the late 1920s and 1930s focusing attention on the everyday conditions of primarily working class people, with overt political overtones and critical of current social structures. It reflects the struggle for social justice, which led artists to fashion an art aimed at revealing the harsh realities of contemporary life. Alejandro Anreus, Diana L. Linden and Jonathan Weinberg, eds., *The Social and the Real: Political Art of the 1930s in the Western Hemisphere*. (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press University Park, 2004), xv-xvii.

My conclusion will summarise an overriding theme of this paper: that these particular 1930 murals by Charles Comfort remain a highly visible, integral and important artistic response to Canada's socio-economic and artistic narrative of the early twentieth century. As such, they deserve a far greater acknowledgement by critics and professionals in current Canadian art circles. Given their enormous public, critical and media recognition in the 1930s and 1940s, I am pleased to join the handful of art historians and critics who are expressing a renewed interest in these nation-building murals. In light of my research, my initial interest, precisely because I felt they form the least acknowledged aspect of burgeoning artistic developments of the period, still stands. And despite new, scholarly investigation into this period since Charles Hill described it in 1975 as "the decade without a definite image in Canadian history,"[21] I have, nevertheless, tended to use his observation as a "guiding slogan" in my own exploration of the decade and its leading Canadian muralist.

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[21] Charles Hill, *Canadian Paintings in the Thirties* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1975), 11.

Section 1: *The Romance of Nickel*: Representing Canada in 1937 Paris with "Authority and Dignity"

In the wake of the 1929 market crash, Canada was faced with severe unemployment and extreme financial hardship. It was also a time of great soul searching among artists on both sides of the Atlantic as they debated how to reflect, in a meaningful way, the social, economic and political upheavals of the day. In Canada, particularly Toronto, young artists were increasingly looking for inspiration to the "strong social realist school coming from studios in New York."[22] For instance, Carl Schaefer (1903-95) was attracted by the Regionalism of Charles Burchfield (1893-1967) and Miller Brittain (1912-1968) of St. John, New Brunswick by the expressiveness of New York's Fourteenth Street School. Charles Comfort, with his focus on technically perfect design, was inspired by the "machine-like Precisionism"[23] of Charles Sheeler (1883-1965), who he had met and admired on an earlier trip to New York.[24] Charles Hill refers to Sheeler's "careful tonal colouring and careful rendering of simplified form…his themes are mechanical and functional objects."[25] Both these characteristics apply equally to Comfort's two 1937 murals.

Framing all these tentative, artistic explorations of modernity was the Great Depression's catastrophic two-fold impact on the economy – and ultimately on artists' lives. That impact was both industrial, due to the decline in foreign investment and demand from abroad, as well as agricultural, due to shrinking markets in Europe and the Soviet Union for Canadian grains.[26] In his 1973 interview with Charles Hill, Comfort talks frankly about the direct impact on his Toronto peers, many of whom were losing their jobs:

> I think artists probably suffered as much as anyone. In the course of the decade, many of them just disappeared. One is Lowrie Warrener. Now he was a promising man and he had intentions of being a sculptor. For

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Precisionism: "the first indigenous modern-art movement in the US and an early American contribution to the rise of Modernism". It "first emerged post-WWI and celebrated the new American landscape of skyscrapers, bridges and factories." See: Margaret Blair Grey, Margaret Rand and Lois Steen, *Charles Comfort: Canadian Artists 2. Canadian Art Series* (Agincourt, Ont.: Gage Publishing, 1976), 66.

[24] Hill, *Canadian Painting in the 30s*, 19. Also, Precisionists' "consistently reduced their compositions to simple shapes and underlying geometrical structures, with clear outlines, minimal detail, and smooth handling of surfaces. Such artists kept 'European influences' at arm's length by selecting subjects from the American landscape and regional American culture," http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/prec/hd_prec.htm. Accessed June 3, 2016

[25] Ibid., 71-72.

[26] Cook, in *The Illustrated History*, 443.

> instance, those things [carved limestone murals (1942)] I did for Central Station. He advised me about the casting of it**.** But he could not make a go of it. Then Bob Ross, who I think had promise, I thought of the greatest order. Well he had to get a job, a teaching job, same as Carl [Schaefer] did, and he never painted again.[27]

Comfort also admitted those early Depression years had "a tremendous impact on my life." He had to sell his car, and he and Louise were forced to move from their house.[28] However, he was still luckier than most. "We never starved. I was very fortunate. We all survived."[29] Comfort's survival was due in part to teaching contracts at the Ontario College of Art in 1935 and in 1938 at the University of Toronto. More significantly for his career as Canada's premier muralist, his financial and artistic survival was due to commercial contracts from advertising agencies like Cockfield Brown, catalogue advertising for Eaton's, and ads for Imperial Oil, the *Canadian National Railway Magazine,* and *Saturday Night* magazine.[30] Most importantly, he was commissioned to paint murals for blue-chip Canadian business leaders like the North American Life Assurance Company, Inco, the Toronto Stock Exchange, as well as for Crown corporations like Canadian National Railways with *Captain Vancouver* (1939), painted for the lobby of Hotel Vancouver, and later, the murals of Central Station (1942) in Montreal. According to Charles Hill, Comfort was the only Canadian artist during the 1930s to have the opportunity to work on a number of business-related mural projects.[31] This is not to suggest that Canadian business limited its art patronage entirely to Comfort during the Depression decade. Albeit on a much more reduced scale than a mural commission, Toronto's T. Eaton Company, for example, hired a number of artists to do window displays.[32] Meanwhile, Comfort, unlike most of his peers, was free to focus on contemporary themes of socio-economic importance in meeting the nation-building, industry-driven objectives of his business patrons in both murals examined in this thesis, *The Romance of Nickel,* and those of the Toronto Stock Exchange. Both glorified modern technological progress in equally modernist "Cubist-inspired Realism," as Rosemary Donegan described them. A couple of notes here might be appropriate regarding the many interpretations of *Social Realism* in the 1930s. American artists never referred to themselves as *social realists,* says editor, Alejandro Anreus in *The Social and the Real.* Canadian artists in particular referred to such imagery as *proletariat realism*, and according to essayist, Patricia Hill, *Social Realism* was “not so much a style as an attitude towards the role of art in life in the 1930s.”[33] The modernist murals of Charles Comfort reflecting his albeit, “less than socially critical” approach to realism were at least contemporary in iconography and in the times. This was a far cry from the subject matter, styles and period of the few other mural commissions offered to unemployed Canadian artists as part of local, make-work programs. They include Montreal’s municipal government’s commission to thirteen French and English-speaking artists in 1931 to paint murals for Mount Royal’s Chalet on the subject of French-Canadian history from 1534 to 1760. In Toronto, the Royal Ontario Museum’s make-work program commissioned historical illustrator, Charles Jefferys (1869-1951) in 1932 to paint four murals on the theme of human life from the Paleolithic era to the Bronze Age. Three years later, it hired George Reid (1860-1947) to execute 34 painted panels based on the history of the world up to the Bronze Age.[34] However, none of these civic and institutional “make-work” efforts were on par with President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s extensive Works Progressive Administration/Works Projects Administration (WPA) program designed to provide unemployed American artists with a job. Hundreds of schools, post offices, libraries and state capital buildings throughout the US benefited from the creative talents of these muralists.[35] Comfort says he and fellow artists were certainly aware of the WPA programs, “reading about them in *The New Yorker*” and hoping for a similar program in Canada, as he relates to Charles Hill in his 1973 interview. It was not to be. Nevertheless, Comfort did find gainful employment designing ads for both Eaton’s and Inco’s catalogues (fig. 8). As art historian, Mary Jo Hughes, points out, they provided opportunities to “experiment with the effect of line and texture and apply design elements found in contemporary art to build drama, express character and narrative – all crucial in appealing to a popular audience.”[36] This commercial work also provided him with on-the-job experience in the “art” of good client relations. As Comfort explains in his own words: “It is never a question of what you or I like best in art, but always of how effective this drawing will be in attracting and finally compelling the public to like and buy your goods."[37] Comfort would soon be applying such pragmatism directly to mural commissions. In the meantime, as a socially conscious artist, he was already highlighting the role of the worker in his ads as central to industry's march towards modernity and technical progress. This took the form of his ubiquitous inverted "Y-shaped" worker in Figure 8, who could be seen as literally driving the wheels of industry. We might also interpret the ad's iconography as the personification of the alienated labourer, working in a dark and dangerous environment for the benefit of capitalism. However, Comfort would have been guided here by his client's needs and "product message." It was not his business to draw attention to the situation's potential for social critique. As Comfort pointed out in a 1931 lecture, "[some commercial artists] take up a new idea like modernism and run away with it…and lose sight of the primary purpose of advertising… that art when applied to advertising is, after all, merely a means to an end, and that end is the selling of goods."[38] Donegan, among others, says Comfort transferred that same, focused understanding of a client's needs to his work as a muralist, "adapting through a synthesis of form and style to the architectural scale and public role of mural painting."[39] Indeed, notes Donegan, not only was "faith in murals as a social and political form widely advocated, [but] modern architecture and particularly modern institutional architecture was seen as a perfect location for artists to reach a wider, general public.[40] Working in such an environment, it is quite possible that Comfort would also have accepted these societal reactions as a means of reconciling his artistic iconography in murals for corporate clients, with his own humanist sentiments.

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[27] Interview with Charles Comfort, 3 October 1973*, Canadian Painting in the Thirties Exhibition records*, NGC Transcript, 89, clip 7.
[28] Ibid., 52, clip 5.
[29] Ibid., 72.
[30] Donegan, "Muscled Workers, Speeding Trains and Composite Figures: Charles Comfort's Murals," in *Take Comfort,* 35.
[31] Hill, *Canadian Paintings in the Thirties*, 91.
[32] Hill, "Introduction," *Canadian Paintings in the Thirties*, 10-20.

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[33] Alejandro Anreus, ed. Introduction. *The Social and the Real: Political Art of the 1930s in the Western Hemisphere*. (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press University Park, 2004), xvi.

[34] McKay, *A National Soul*, 33, 46-47.

[35] Golan, *Muralnomad*, 36-37.

[36] Mary Jo Hughes, “Rare Feast – Charles Comfort’s Life and Career,” in *Take Comfort: The Career of Charles Comfort/La carrière de Charles Comfort* (Winnipeg: The Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2007), 17.

By the mid-1930s, the dire economic impact of the Depression on Canada's economy had finally been recognized by Conservative Prime Minister Richard Bedford Bennett and his government for the long-term situation it really was. Notes Ramsay Cook, "the tragedy for Canada was that no one realized the extent of the crisis – even politicians felt it was a short term situation."[41] And while the 1935 elections returned the Liberals under Mackenzie King to office along with certain social reforms, a whole new set of nation-building priorities distinct from those of the 1920s were also clearly required. As in Comfort's ads for Inco, they would reinforce the job benefits of Canada's new technical and industrial knowhow and capabilities. Importantly for Comfort, Art Deco's *streamlined moderne* style was *itself* seen to symbolize a sense of prosperity and hope for the future. Industrial designers like Raymond Loewy were quick to use *streamlined moderne* styling in packaging, for example, to boost product sales. He points out that, "in the stagnant economy of the decade, getting things 'moving again' was a common desire…The *streamlined* form came to symbolize progress and the promise of a better future."[42] By the early 1930s, many Canadians were experiencing the Art Deco "look" in handmade and machine-produced homeware via their local department store. Since Canada had declined to enter any designs at the 1925 *Exposition des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes* in Paris, Art Deco's acknowledged birth-site, French-designed furnishings were subsequently ordered by Eaton's and Simpson's for sale in their stores across the country.[43] The Art Deco style also began appearing in the sitting-rooms of the nation via that new "must have" commodity: the radio set. Michael Windover notes that the purchase of an Art Deco-designed radio would probably have carried the suggestion for consumers that they "seemed knowledgeable about contemporary fashions and new technologies."[44] On the international stage in Paris and in Canada, both *The Romance of Nickel* and the murals of the new TSE carried these messages of modernity, technical progress and the promise of a brighter future in their themes and iconography.

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[37] Charles Comfort, cited in "Muscled Workers, Speeding Trains, and Composite Figures: Charles Comfort's Murals," *Take Comfort*, 35.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., 36.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Cook, in *The Illustrated History*, 443.

The Romance of Nickel (fig. 3) is now part of the permanent Canadian collection at the National Gallery of Canada, thanks to Charles Hill's intervention in March of 2014 to have the Gallery acquire the mural.[45] It is very striking with its angular forms and warm earthy tones. Created with the assistance of Caven Atkins and Harold Ayres[46], the mural is painted in oil on canvas and measures 213.5 x 610 cm. It tells the story of nickel, its extraction by the miner, its industrial applications as interpreted by the small figure of the scientist, and finally, how nickel benefited modern day Canada in building its transportation infrastructure. The mural depicts great movement and action, two fundamental characteristics of Art Deco,[47] led by the powerful, forward-leaning figure of the driller driving into stone. In 1936, *Montreal Gazette* art critic, Robert Ayre, suggested that he "gives a sense of labour's massive power, while the metallurgist peering into the microscope suggests the keen penetration of science."[48] The mural's background is filled with images of civilian airplanes, a train, a bridge, other urban structures and a grain elevator, which would serve as a conscious, or unconscious link with the like-minded architecture of the Canadian Pavilion itself. It would be interesting to know whether Comfort had prior knowledge of the Pavilion's design in developing his mural, but my research has not revealed any such information. An Inco sales manager recalls that it was the Department of Mines who requested his company in 1936 to develop an art exhibit for the Canadian Pavilion at the 1937 *Exposition internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne* in Paris.[49] Inco in turn approached Charles Comfort with the commission – no doubt based on the scratchboard drawings for company ads previously mentioned, which he had been producing since 1932. In his 1973 interview with Charles Hill, Comfort describes his relations with Inco: "essentially my association with the Nickel Company was that they had asked me earlier to do a number of institutional drawings in their magazines. I did a lot of drawings for them …I went to Sudbury, to Rossport, in 1935, that was when I got the sketch for *Lake Superior Village* (fig.2), but I did at least seven or eight sketches of slag heaps, and mine heads and the stacks."[50] Comfort also produced a painting from some of those sketches entitled *Smelter Stacks, Copper Cliff,* 1936 (fig. 9) now owned by the National Gallery of Canada. Charles Hill quotes Comfort calling his "smoky stacks" of the painting "the grey lady of Copper Cliff [who] rose 574 feet above the smelter sheds, her face to the weather, her hair blowing in the wind."[51] Comfort also notes that Inco's agents showed little interest in acquiring the painting, since it depicted an aspect of their industry that they did not wish to publicize.[52]

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[42] Donald J. Bush, *The Streamlined Decade* (New York: George Braziller, 1975), 2-3, quoted in *Designing the Exchange*, 41

[43] Alan C. Elder, "Designing Canada," in *The Visual Arts in Canada: The Twentieth Century*, 80.

[44] Windover, "Listening to Deco," in *Art Deco: A Mode of Mobility*, 219.

[45] Charles C. Hill, "Justification for Acquisition of 'The Romance of Nickel' by Charles Comfort, National Gallery of Canada, 31 March 2014 (unpublished). n/p.

[46] Donegan, in *Designing the Exchange*, 64.

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[47] Windover, *Art Deco: A Mode of Mobility*, 30, 35, 187.

[48] Hill, "Justification for Acquisition of "The Romance of Nickel" by Charles Comfort, National Gallery of Canada, 31 March 2014 (unpublished). n/p.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Comfort/Hill interview transcript, NGC archives, 86.

[51] Hill, "Justification for Acquisition of "The Romance of Nickel" by Charles Comfort, National Gallery of Canada, 31 March 2014 (unpublished) n/p.

[52] Ibid.

Interestingly, as suggested by art historian, Anna Hudson, *The Romance of Nickel* was an exceptional, perhaps a first instance of the worker as subject of a North American government-approved (but not financed) mural.[53] One can only speculate how pleased the Canadian government of the day, not to speak of Inco, must have been with Comfort's iconography of an employed worker, totally focused on his work, and at home in an environment of modern technology. An image to make Canadians proud and confident of their future? An iconography designed to send a message that Canada was a prosperous country in the uncertain and politically turbulent times of the late 1930s? A mural depicted in modern Cubist-inspired Realism, indicating an awareness of international artistic trends? In any case, the mural's mechanical-looking, labourer-at-work could clearly be differentiated from most artistic depictions of workers throughout the Exposition. For example, compared to the worker couple striding towards an idealised future, as portrayed in Vera Mukhina's 40-metre high, stainless steel sculpture, *Kolkhoz Farmer and Worker* atop the Soviet Pavilion, and, as Hudson, notes from, "Josef Thorak's [three] classicizing heroes of *Kameradschaft* (Comradeship) placed at the entrance of the National Socialist German Pavilion."[54]

The Canadian government's selection of Inco as patron for the large-scale art work it required for its pavilion at the 1937 *Exposition internationale* would seem a natural, given the government's global trade and economic priorities, and Inco's well established image. The company had been a leading player in mining and a giant in Canadian industry since the turn of the century. However, there was a controversial side to its storied history, revealed only in the post-war period. It seems that in the years leading up to World War II, it was prepared to sell its products to any buyer, no matter what its political bent. As producer of 90% of the non-Communist's world's nickel, it was, in fact, supplying both the Allied and Axis sides with the metal. In fact, as far back as 1916, there were reports revealing that "a German submarine, the 'Deutschland' had slipped into an American port and left with a cargo of refined Ontario nickel."[55] By 1934, there was further concern that European countries were stockpiling nickel for war purposes. Comments Martin Lynch in his examination of the history of Mining: “The rest of the world had it within their power to prevent, or certainly to retard the German buildup. Yet ships laden with Canadian nickel…continued to dock at Germany’s Baltic ports.”[56] Clearly, Canadian nickel and its world-renowned producer would have been in the news well before Comfort’s mural found its way into the Canadian Pavilion in Paris of 1937. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note from our current perspective that the Canadian government of the day appeared to be quite comfortable sanctioning this very visual and public display of a key natural resource, its industry leader, and the image of a machinist as representative of Canadian society.

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[53] Anna Victoria Hudson, "Art and Social Progress: The Toronto Community of Painters, 1933-50." PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 1997, 137.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Joe Martin, "The Advent of Nickel: From Discovery to Mid-20th Century," Joseph L. Rotman School of Management (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2005), 8. http://www.republicofmining.com/2009/02/18/inco-case-study-background-reading-the-end-of-monopoly-a-new-world-for-inco-part-3-of-3/ Accessed August 30, 2016.

Perhaps this was due to the message conveyed in *The Romance of Nickel,* which can also be seen as Inco’s celebration of its *raison d’être*. It highlights nickel’s role in building Canada’s infrastructure, with twentieth century technology that binds (Canadian) space*,* an expression used by Maurice René Charland, in reference to transportation technologies like the railway, which helped nineteenth century Canada construct a national identity.[57] The mural also reflects other artistic styles of the day. Mary Jo Hughes notes its abstract background shows the influence of the Italian-American Futurist, Joseph Stella’s “man-made structural elements” as depicted in *Brooklyn Bridge* (fig.10). Comfort himself claims this painting had a great effect on him when he viewed it ten years earlier at the *Société Anonyme*’s ground-breaking modern art exhibition of 1927.[58] In 1936, just before it was rolled up and shipped to Paris, Robert Ayre described *The Romance of Nickel’s* design as “worked out in great diagonals with all elements perfectly organized.”[59] Again, Comfort’s acute sense of organization here can be directly linked to his graphic arts experience, refined since his early years as a commercial artist at Brigden studio. His sense of organization in the design of this mural also reflects a trend among Toronto artists of the Canadian Group of Painters towards using design and form as their new “expressive language” in order to make “the Western tradition of painting more contemporary.”[60] Charles Hill adds that these young artists had also been influenced by aestheticians like Clive Bell and Roger Fry, who emphasised “significant form and pure art”.[61] This stylistic approach was seen by many as a way to distance themselves from the widespread and traditional Canadian subject matter of the 1920s – landscapes. In fact, says art historian, Sandra Paikowsky, by the late 1920s, the “majority of Canadian artists had [already] begun to turn away from heroic images associated with wilderness landscape and to move towards subjects that better reflected the common experience of Canadians…[such as] themes from everyday life.”[62] Instead of wilderness, Canadian modernists expressed “a renewed desire to emphasize the landscape as a site of human habitation and cultivation.”[63] This in turn evolved into a growing interest in art and its relationship to society. Critic, editor, and painter, Bertram Brooker (1888-1955), notes that this new approach also allowed young artists like Comfort to bring their paintings “closer to the modern movement in other countries.”[64] For example, Comfort notes towards the end of his 1973 interview with Charles Hill that his peers, particularly Brooker, showed interest in the work of the Canadian-born, British artist and writer, Wyndham Lewis (1882-1957). The modernist, short-lived movement he founded, Vorticism, sought to relate art and literature to the industrial process via “geometrical and semi-abstract art based on machines and architecture.”[65] However, despite some Cubist-inspired similarities between, for example, Lewis’ 1914 painting, *Workshop* (fig. 11) and *The Romance of Nickel,* that was not where Comfort’s interest lay. Instead, his preoccupation with technically perfect design and line and figurative art prompted him to experiment with the “harder edge to his organic forms” seen in Sheeler’s earlier “urban” landscapes like *Classical Landscape*, 1931 (fig. 12). Comfort applied these further simplifications into smooth ordered elements in his murals of the 1930s like *The Romance of Nickel.*[66] Such stylistic influences aside, it is fair to say that the overriding influence on this mural was Art Deco’s characteristics of movement, progress and change. Furthermore, we know that Comfort was quite comfortable transferring such eye-catching Art Deco signifiers as much to *The Romance of Nickel,* as he had earlier to his ads. According to Roland Marchand, this "advertising" approach to attracting the public's attention had been part of the times since the late 1920s. In *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-40*, he calls the American capitalist way "the democracy of goods,"[67] where admen saw themselves as "missionaries of modernity, striving to help people adjust to and accept the realities of an economy of abundance."[68] Comfort was not an "adman" in that sense, but his graphic art experience helped him to grasp the power of the same eye-catching iconography to communicate, particularly when displayed on a gigantic scale, as in a mural.

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[56] Martin Lynch, *Mining in World History*, (London: Reakton Books Ltd., 2002): 286, quoted in “The Advent of Nickel: From Discovery to Mid-20th Century,” 12.

[57] Maurice René Charland, “Technological Nationalism,” *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*. 10/1 (1986): 196-220.

[58] Hughes, “Rare Feast – Charles Comfort’s Life and Career,” in *Take Comfort*, 16.

[59] Hill, “Justification for Acquisition of “The Romance of Nickel” by Charles Comfort, National Gallery of Canada, 31 March 2014 (unpublished). n/p

[60] Anna Hudson, “Charles Comfort’s Moment in the Relationship of Art and Life, 1935-45,” in *Take Comfort: The Career of Charles Comfort/La carrière de Charles Comfort* (Winnipeg: The Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2007). 47.

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[61] Hill, *Canadian Paintings in the Thirties*, 11-12.
[62] Sandra Paikowsky, “Modernist Representational Painting before 1950,” in *The Visual Arts in Canada: The Twentieth Century,* eds. Anne Whitelaw, Brian Foss, and Sandra Paikowsky (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2010), 121.
[63] Ibid., 127.
[64] Lora Senechal Carney, “Modern Art, the Local, and the Global, c. 1930-1950,” in *The Visual Arts in Canada,* 99.
[65] Richard Humphreys, Wyndham Lewis, Biography, http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/wyndham-lewis-1502 Accessed June 13, 2016.
[66] Hughes, “Rare Feast – Charles Comfort’s Life and Career,” in *Take Comfort*, 17.

The abundance of activity in *The Romance of Nickel* reflects this, but also demonstrates Comfort's own philosophy that "style should [also] encourage viewers to contemplate the relationship between art and life."[69] "The role of the artist," he said, "is to contribute to the cultural life of the community with honesty, sincerity and deep integrity towards his work and in relation to his generation."[70] Such reflections indicate the importance Comfort placed on visual communication with "new content, which might be more broadly understood."[71] Again, one can see how Art Deco's emphasis on change, as in fashionable change as a means of appealing to a wider public, perfectly suited Comfort's stylistic approach to his murals. In fact, the Art Deco-styled mural's potential for broad communication was well recognized in the early twentieth century. Notes Marylin McKay, many artists "turned to modern mural painting as a way of using readily recognizable subject matter to produce a group response."[72] For most North American muralists of the late 1920s and 1930s, but not Comfort, this meant a figurative iconography often inspired by the Social Realism style emerging from the studios of New York. An example would be Ben Shahn's very personal approach to this style (fig.13), with its focus here on the impact of hard, economic times on blue-collar workers. However, many muralists of the day were also influenced by the earlier, massive historical, figurative and socially critical murals of the Mexican trio: Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros. They would also have been aware of the work of José Maria Sert (1876-1945). His dramatic ceiling mural, *American Progress* (1937) in the Rockefeller Center's main lobby replaced an earlier work by Rivera, which glorified Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin, to the dismay of the Rockefeller family. When Rivera refused to alter his theme, his mural was removed.[73] Comfort and his peers in Toronto may have even visited some of the civic and business sites in New York, San Francisco and elsewhere where Rivera's, and subsequently Sert's highly figurative murals were displayed *in situ*. These iconic works were an integral part of what Alejandro Anreus calls "the art of social responsibility… a Pan-American phenomenon – a call for art that was responsive to day-to-day struggles of the working class."[74] Anreus notes that during the Depression, many North American artists believed their art [literally] became 'realistic' *because* they engaged the great economic and political issues of society." Their goal was to "create art which would reveal the harsh realities of contemporary life."[75]

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[67] Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1985): 217, quoted in Paul Rutherford, "The Culture of Advertising," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 13/3-4 (1988): 105.
[68] Marchand, xxi in Ibid.
[69] Hudson, "Charles Comfort's Moment," in *Take Comfort.* 49.
[70] Hughes, *Take Comfort*, 27.
[71] Hudson, "Charles Comfort's Moment," in *Take Comfort.* 46.
[72] McKay, *National Soul*, 194.

This, however, was not the objective nor theme of *The Romance of Nickel.* Instead, this didactic mural, an allegory perhaps, had another message: Canada's, and by association Inco's, technical knowhow as the foundation for a modern nation and its prosperous future. Comfort's illustration of the worker is central to this scenario, just as "he" is to the TSE murals. In both, he is portrayed as the heroic driver of this industrial building block for Canada, and I will expand on this point in Section II. Also part of that discussion will be Charles Hill's comment that *The Romance of Nickel* focuses on the *activity* of the worker and not his *humanity*. It is a valid criticism and one that distinguishes Comfort's murals from other, contemporaneous works in the United States, and earlier in Mexico. For now, however, suffice to say that his *Romance of Nickel* was seen to represent Canada in Paris, in critic, Ayre's words "with dignity and authority."[76]

The 1937 *Exposition internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne* (fig. 14) was first and foremost about national identity. In the case of France, this was manifested mainly via its artistic achievements over the centuries. It was also designed to be one giant, make-work program by the *Front Populaire*, the left-leaning coalition government of the day. In France as in Canada, thousands of unemployed artists were badly affected by the economic crisis of the 1930s. In the end, 348 artists and 257 sculptors were selected for 345 decorative murals in French theme pavilions, each receiving one commission.[77] The results were certainly not uniform in terms of style and theme, as is evident in *La Musique Profane* (1937) by Maurice Denis (fig. 15) and in the decorative murals on *Le pavilion du Thermalisme* (1937) by André Tondu, Louis Dussour and Yves Brayer (fig. 16). Meanwhile, for the other 44 participating nations, including Canada, national identity was highlighted through the promotion of national technological progress and commercial activities. In *Paris 1937: Worlds on Exhibition*, James Herbert calls the result a "comprehensive view of man's achievements to date," but also quotes General Commissioner, Edmond Labbé, saying: "it isn't good enough to produce, we must sell," reflecting his dreams for a World's Fair able to stimulate a moribund global economy.[78] On a more threatening note, the Exposition also demonstrated "national power" at a critically uncertain time in Europe in the form of Soviet Union versus Nazi Germany confrontation. Just a glance at the placement of their two pavilions, facing it off, so to speak, in great, monumentalist style (fig.17) gives a sense of the tension that pervaded the Exposition.

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[73] Carol Vogel, "Stripping Away the Darkness as Murals Reborn," *New York Times* (July 26, 2009). http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/27/arts/design/27rockefeller.html. Accessed June 13, 2016.
[74] Anreus, *The Social and the Real,* xiii.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Hill, "Justification for Acquisition of "The Romance of Nickel" by Charles Comfort, National Gallery of Canada, 31 March 2014" (unpublished). n/p.

The Canadian Pavilion (fig. 18) was designed by the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission in London, and appears to be squeezed in beside Great Britain's. In fact, though well situated with the Eiffel Tower as backdrop, it is rather unfortunately described in a publication brought out for the Exposition's fiftieth anniversary in 1987 as an "annex to Great Britain's Pavilion." In the same manner, Belgium was "accompanied" by the Congo.[79] In a 1994 article, architectural historian, Elspeth Cowell, compares designs for the Canadian Pavilions in 1937 Paris and 1939 New York, describing the former as "a literal miniaturization of a concrete grain elevator tacked on to the side of the British Pavilion."[80] It was opened by Canadian Prime Minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King, but barely mentioned in official Exposition documents.

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[77] Rosi Huhn, "Art et technique: La lumière," in *Cinquantenaire de l'Exposition internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne* (Paris: Paris-Musées, 1987), 394.

[78] James D. Herbert, *Paris 1937: World on Exhibition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 18.

[79] Institut français d'architecture, *Cinquantenaire de l'Exposition internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne* (Paris: Paris-Musées, 1987), 162.

[80] Elspeth Cowell, "The Canadian Pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair," *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada* 1/19 (March 1994): 14.

Very little visual documentation remains to this day. However, one can ascertain from brief news reels of the period, such as those produced by British Pathé[81] that its exterior walls were decorated with six, carved wood, low relief appliqued sculptures representing what appear to be loggers, fishermen and miners. Given this rather clichéd view of Canada, along with a giant sculpture of a buffalo, visitors must have been surprised to find a massive art work in moderne-style inside. Furthermore, *The Romance of Nickel's* iconography would have revealed a different image of Canada – suggesting industrial strength, technological knowhow and a message of "people at work." Nevertheless, compared to its menacing Soviet and German counterparts, Canada's Pavilion must also have seemed a model of tranquility with its close resemblance to a Prairie grain elevator. In fact, the role of the grain elevator and its importance to the critical agricultural sector in France, and thus the Exposition itself, was much touted in *Cinquantenaire,* the Exposition's fiftieth anniversary publication. This was quite possibly due to the single grain elevator, which forms the most eye-catching edifice at the *Centre rural*, a sort of homage to French rural life situated on an island in the Seine. To the best of my knowledge, there is no mention or critical review of *The Romance of Nickel* in any media or official Exposition documentation. Nevertheless, visitors would not fail to notice its distinguishing style and tone from most other murals – famous or otherwise. The most iconic ones included the Exposition's most recognizable mural – Picasso's *Guernica* (fig. 19) painted following the bombing of that town earlier in April 1937. Romy Golan notes that most of the Exposition's murals were "nomadic" by nature, designed largely to be mounted, taken down from their exhibition sites and possibly remounted elsewhere.[82] This was certainly the intention for *The Romance of Nickel,* which was originally destined for New York's 1939 Exhibition, best remembered, says Cowell, for its significant display of *streamlined moderne* style.[83] But, in the end, it was not included. Interestingly, some of the mural's iconography did manage to emerge in New York, including the concept of 'industrial progress' in the form of a driller right in the foreground of a mural by the American WPA artist, Seymour Fogel (1911-1984). Entitled *Rehabilition of the People* (fig. 20), it curiously also includes the figure of a young man seated to the left of the driller, gazing at this worker with empty, open hands resting on his knee, possibly reflecting the hope of employment in the oil fields. A further figure from *The Romance of Nickel* may also have inspired Fogel in his 1938 mural executed for the Social Security Building in Washington, DC. Entitled *The Wealth of the Nation,* its iconography includes what could be Comfort's "scientist" from *The Romance of Nickel*, seated at a table inspecting, in this case, his chemical experiment in a glass bottle, instead of peering through a microscope. Both images signify progress and a hopeful future. Both artists could be said to be inspired in different ways by the multi-image activity and social realism of Diego Rivera murals. In fact, Fogel actually worked on the "infamous" *Man at the Crossroads* mural in Rockefeller Center at Rivera's invitation.[84] Meanwhile, in 1937 Paris, murals on exhibition brought together different artistic threads of the period – Social Realism, second generation Futurism, even Impressionism, reflected in Raoul Dufy's monumental *La Fée Électricité* (fig. 21). Golan calls this massive, wraparound painting "the great crowd-pleaser at the Fair."[85] It tells the story of the discovery of electricity in an "anecdotal mode" via portrayals of its inventors throughout history, each depicted in period costume. Dufy, explains Golan, has used a new chemical medium developed in the early 1930s – "resonated oil emulsified in gummed water" on which he superimposed his "quasi-Day-Glo colours."[86] In reflecting on the general characteristics of the Exposition's murals, she says both Art Deco and Social Realism were often paired with social, or Soviet-inspired socialist realist themes to express a new humanist approach to decorating architecture. Certainly, many murals were inspired by some aspects of Art Deco and its socially conservative style and depicted what could be interpreted as a celebration of the working class.[87] Both this observation, and Windover's additional point that "Art Deco offers an idyllic picture of labour relations at a time of great economic unrest,"[88] would apply to the glorified worker image in Charles Comfort's *The Romance of Nickel*. But – so does Windover's cautionary reflection on this issue. The problem, he notes, arises when an image or sculpture of a labouring worker is associated with a financial institution, as in Comfort's exterior frieze and murals for the TSE, or in the case of industry, as in *The Romance of Nickel*. In both contexts, a Windover analysis from our twenty-first century perspective might deduce that "the worker image simply tended to aestheticize an overarching capitalist system and its inherent values."[89] I would question, however, whether such concerns would have occurred to Comfort in his 1930s context. In 1937 Paris, his mechanized worker was also up against other artistic interpretations, such as the photomural, appearing for the first time on an extensive scale at this Exposition. It was especially evident in the Soviet and German Pavilions,[90] but also in Le Corbusier's *Pavilion des Temps Nouveaux*, where his series of this innovative art form (fig. 22) depicts photographic stills of actual human figures, as opposed to Comfort's more angular, painted images. In fact, Comfort's industrial themes, combined with a highly organized, designed iconography, distinguish his mural from almost all others at the Exposition, where Social Realism was interpreted with more humanistic, expressive figures in a less technologically-oriented context. Back in Toronto, however, a new version of Comfort's mechanical-looking workers as "Art Deco's idyllic image of labour relations" was being unveiled to critical and public acclaim as a positive sign of modernist times in an Art Deco setting that itself was seen as an architectural gem.

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[81] Canadian Pavilion opening, 1937 Paris Exposition internationale, http://www.britishpathe.com/video/canadas-pavilion-opened-at-paris-exhibition/query/exhibitions Accessed August 28, 2016

[82] Golan, *Muralnomad*, 20.

[83] See Elspeth Cowell, "The Canadian Pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair," *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada* 1/19 (March 1994): 13-20.

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[84] "Murals by Seymour Fogel," http://www.artofseymourfogel.com/murals Accessed July 11, 2016.
[85] Golan, *Muralnomad*, 33.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Windover, *Art Deco: A Mode of Mobility*, 32.
[88] Ibid.

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[89] Ibid.

[90] Golan, *Muralnomad*, 123.

Section 2: The Murals of the Toronto Stock Exchange: Highlighting the Prospect of A Better Future

The public and critical acclaim for Charles Comfort's eight murals on the trading floor (fig. 23) of the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSE), along with its exterior frieze and steel medallion-decorated doors, were in response to their modernist characteristics, as well as for the pragmatic, reassuring image of economic stability they represented. Rosemary Donegan calls them "Comfort's most accomplished work."[91] Others describe the panels as the first modern interpretation of mural work in Canada.[92] Comfort's "most accomplished work" was designed for a building (fig. 24) seen in 1937 as a striking example of combined *streamlined moderne*, Art Deco and Classicism.[93] At a time of major, Depression-related cuts in public spending, the TSE was a key project of the day for Toronto with its $750,000 price tag "representing a significant portion of the city's total construction activity in 1936-37."[94] The architects of the TSE, now Toronto's Design Exchange Museum, were local, Allan George (1873-1961) and Walter Moorehouse (1884-1977) along with their new associate, the award-winning British painter and design architect, Samuel H. Maw (1881-1952). At the time, Maw was already well-known and respected in Toronto as the "client's" architect responsible for supervising the 1931 construction of the Art Deco-styled Eaton's store on College Street (1928-30),[95] itself designed by the iconic, Montreal architectural firm of Ross and Macdonald, who Maw had previously worked for.[96] Ross and Macdonald's firm was known for its landmark, so-called "block buildings" in Montreal, for example the Dominion Square Building (1928-40) and in Toronto, for the Royal York Hotel (1927-29). By the late 1920s, Ross and Macdonald was considered to be Canada's largest architectural firm.[97] As part of his supervising activities for Toronto's Eaton's store, Maw had suggested Jacques and Anna Carlu as designers for its famous, seventh floor Auditorium and stunning, Round Room restaurant, with its alcoves and central water fountain.[98] Where the new TSE was concerned, it would, in fact be his name that would become most associated with the building. *Time Magazine* refers to its architecture as "Maw's Modernism."[99] Finally, it was Maw who hired Charles Comfort, a fellow member of Toronto's Arts and Letters Club*,* to design and paint the interior murals, and design the exterior frieze.

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[91] Donegan, in *Designing the Exchange*, 65.

[92] Charles Hill, "Charles Comfort," *Canadian Encyclopedia* (May 22, 2008). http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/charles-fraser-comfort/

[93] Morawetz, in *Designing the Exchange*, 36.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid., 37.

[96] http://www.dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/2069

[97] See Jacques Lachapelle, *Le Fantasme métropolitain: L'architecture de Ross et Macdonald* (Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2001).

Comfort's twenty-two-and-a-half metre-long by over one-and-a-half metres high flat, Indiana limestone frieze (figs. 5/25) on the TSE*'*s reinforced concrete façade preludes the style of his murals inside. It encompasses thirty-one, life-size figures, mainly "heroic workers" – all but two marching from right to left in a "tightly-structured geometric pattern."[100] They represent Canadian industries – miners, farmers, white-collar and factory workers, but also travelling salesmen, bankers, a top-hatted stockbroker, and even a scientist. For many years, the "oldest joke on Bay Street" was that the 'stockbroker' (figs. 5/25) appears to have his hand in the pocket of the miner in front of him – an image Comfort insists was unintentional.[101] "I absolutely deny it," he told *The Toronto Star* in 1977.[102] His strident, angular figures were cut with a pneumatic chisel by German-trained stonemason, Peter Schoen, assisted by George Chadwick. Comfort himself actually carved a small section of the one-inch-deep stone relief, because he felt "a stone mason has to know how deep to make an incision, and I wanted the background bush-hammered."[103] Architectural historian, Tim Morawetz, says this approach tends to accentuate further the motif of modern industry.[104] The frieze, he says, is Deco, while its flat surface and "sleek aerodynamic feel" are *moderne.*[105] The iconography of these inverted, Y-shaped figures 'in continuous, forward-leaning motion' is similar to those of his earlier sketches for Inco ads. It is also picked up in some of the eight murals decorating the east and west ends of the TSE trading floor, particularly in the *Oil* panel (fig. 26). The frieze is eye-catching, but so are some of the "distinctly Art Deco" features of Maw's façade.[106] According to Morawetz, Maw designed a "flat façade with only slightly recessed wings…all features characteristic of stripped classicism." In addition, he notes that "the façade's Art Deco-inspired vertical elements, the trading-floor windows along with slightly set back wings, energize the façade's central block and enhances its verticality."[107] Also typically Art Deco are the façade's horizontal features, the limestone cornice over the vertical windows with its repeating pattern of large and small stylized leaves, and those "ubiquitous 1930s 'speed stripes,'[108] which appear to underline the name of the building.

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[98] Morawetz, in *Designing the Exchange*, 37.

[99] "Miner's Mart," *Time Magazine* (April 5, 1937), 74, in *Designing the Exchange*, 37.

[100] Morawetz, in *Designing the Exchange*, 54-55.

[101] Donegan, in *Designing the Exchange*, 37.

[102] Irvin Lutsky, "Designer Denies that Frieze Depicts a Worker Rip-Off," *Toronto Star* (October 19, 1977): n/p.

[103] Margaret Blair Gray, Margaret Rand and Lois Steen, *Charles Comfort*: *Canadian Artists 2* (Agincourt, Ontario: Gage Publishing, 1976), 50. The bush-hammered technique employs "an instrument with small modules which pockmark the stone so that it catches dirt, making a dark uneven background for the figures and emphasizing the depth."

[104] Morawetz, in *Designing the Exchange*, 43.

[105] Ibid., 43.

Originally, four artists, including Comfort, were invited to submit sketches for the interior panels. However, by December 1936, the architects' committee had selected Charles Comfort to design and paint all eight. He would be assisted by Harold Ayres and Caven Atkins.[109] Each panel, painted on canvas, was to measure 4.9 x 1.2 metres and was to reflect approximately four activities in the process of industrial production of each industry.[110] Four of the industries are highlighted in Figure 27. For example, in *Pulp and Paper*, a logger in the top, left-hand corner pushes logs into a river for transportation to a mill, depicted in a second section and identified by a pile of sawdust. This borders on two small sections illustrating the production of paper. A further section provides a rather amusing image of two newspaper sellers calling out their wares. Interestingly, they are illustrated with heads and shoulders painted beyond the confines of their section. A final enclosed box brings one back to the beginning of the process with an ax and logging tool. By the late 1930s, mural decoration for a stock exchange was not necessarily an original idea. Donegan notes that the concept for the TSE could have been inspired by the "flamboyant murals of the great Mexican painters so widely acclaimed in the North American popular press of the day."[111] According to Charles Hill, "the TSE took its cue from the *San Francisco Exchange*, [when it] invited Charles Comfort to paint large panels for their new building."[112] In its *Luncheon Club*, "the Mexican Communist artist Diego Rivera (1886-1957) had combined such industries as mining, forestry, and oil in one organic whole dominated by the massive figure of the goddess of nature."[113] (fig. 28) The late author and expert on Rivera's mural work in San Francisco, Masha Zakheim, explained in an earlier essay that the *Allegory of California* [fig. 28] covers the staircase wall and ceiling between the tenth and eleventh floors of the Coit Tower, which houses the Exchange, and that the goddess figure is modeled on a famous tennis player of the day – Helen Wills Moody.[114] The fresco was also Rivera's first to be painted in the United States.[115] Whether Comfort was aware of this particular mural at the time of his TSE commission is unknown, but both murals incorporate the concept of industry, the importance of mining, and both appear to look to a productive future. Comfort did, however, indicate very definite ideas about the design, theme and approach he envisioned for his murals in his proposal to Samuel Maw. Each panel, he said, should be "bold and dynamic in conception while being grave and restrained in treatment."[116] Actually, Comfort was given *carte blanche* for this commission. As he wrote in a letter in 1981: "No one dictated the theme or style to be employed, the style was in keeping with other work I was producing at the time. I doubt if, in the thirties, the term 'Art Deco' had been coined!"[117] In fact, it had, since the term had emerged from the 1925 *Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes* in Paris. Much later, it would be popularised by Bevis Hillier in a 1968 issue of *Art Deco.*[118] Meanwhile, in a 1949 speech to the Women's Art Association in Hamilton, Ontario, Comfort emphasised three guiding principles for his approach to mural painting: "[it] has to meet the limitations of architecture, they must suit the problems of the people in the building it will adorn, and it especially must tell a story."[119] Comfort's murals for the TSE met all three criteria. Most represent industries traded on the Exchange: *Oil, Refining*, *Smelting* and *Transportation and Communications* at one end of the trading floor, and *Pulp and Paper, Agriculture, Mining* and *Construction and Engineering* at the other. The emphasis on mining reflects the amalgamation in 1934 of the former Mining Exchange with the Stock Exchange.[120] The murals were designed to be clearly seen from any angle of the room [i.e. from a distance], but, notes Donegan, "they have a tendency to break down when observed in detail."[121] As with *The Romance of Nickel*, the colours are warm and earthy – sienna, ochre, muted blue, silver and red oxide. A further commonality is the wide range of activity depicted. In the TSE panels in particular, each one is compartmentalised either by linear separations or by the natural forms of piping, for example. In *Refining* (fig. 29) a rainbow sections off a worker pouring a liquid metal, while the ubiquitous inverted Y-shape figure appears at the top. In *Transportation and Communications* (fig. 30) the outline of grain elevators separates a ship from the engine and airplane above it. Importantly, as he did with *The Romance of Nickel*, Comfort emphasises design and form as a means of carrying the TSE murals' nation-building message: that industry/business, technology and natural resources are the building blocks of a stable, modern and prosperous future for Canadians – all driven by the worker. Nevertheless, as Charles Hill and others have so rightly indicated, the iconography of both the TSE murals and *The Romance of Nickel* lacks humanity. This observation undoubtedly refers to Comfort's composite figures and their placement in a designed setting, as opposed to a real-life one. One can speculate that he may have wanted to represent an image of "everyman", so that anyone could imagine himself as the "heroic worker" in a Depression-era environment. I would also suggest that this approach was transferred directly from his advertising iconography, itself designed to appeal to a broad range of consumers. Importantly, at a time of great economic and social hardships faced by factory and mine workers throughout North America, it is also true that *The Romance of Nickel* lacks any sign of social critique. This sense of connection with "worker reality" is clearly present and felt in the contemporaneous murals of Thomas Hart Benton, Diego Rivera and Maxine Albro (1903-1966), for example, in the way she interprets California fruit workers painted in a 1934 mural for the aforementioned Coit Tower in San Francisco. Was this omission in the Canadian murals simply a misreading by Comfort of the times and their impact on ordinary people? Or, was this apparent lack of visual value judgment a result of a general way of thinking, and painting – for whatever reasons – that was peculiar to Canadian artists during those Depression years? Comfort, as Director of the Department of Mural Painting at the Ontario College of Art (1935-38) and later as Associate Professor in the Department of Art and Archeology at the University of Toronto (1938-60), would certainly have been aware of Rivera's dramatic, figurative Social-Realism and

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[106] Ibid., 41

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Donegan, in *Designing the Exchange*, 61.

[110] Ibid., 60-61.

[111] Ibid., 52.

[112] John Lyman, "Art," *The Montrealer* (April 1937), quoted in "New Developments in the Canadian Group of Painters," in *Canadian Paintings in the Thirties,* 91.

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[113] Hans F. Seeker, *Diego Rivera* (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1957), 177, quoted in "New Developments in the Canadian Group of Painters," *Canadian Paintings in the Thirties,* 91.
[114] Masha Zekheim, "The Allegory of California, Historical Essay," (1998) FoundSF. http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Allegory_of_California. Accessed July 3, 2016.
[115] http://deyoung.famsf.org/programs/artist-studio/frescoes/allegory-california-diego-rivera-city-club-san-francisco
[116] Donegan, in *Designing the Exchange*, 60.
[117] Ibid., 61.
[118] Morawetz, in *Designing the Exchange*, 47.
[119] "Talk on Murals by Noted Artist," *The Hamilton Spectator* (March 26, 1949): n/p.
[120] Donegan, in *Designing the Exchange*, 60.

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[121] Ibid., 61. I agree here with Donegan. I have personally mounted the elevated crosswalk at one end of the trading floor where one can view four of the panels at eye level. The result, in my opinion is not nearly as impressive as from the floor.

Benton's "raw emotional realism" in the high profile murals of both artists.[122] Comfort had visited New York to view Benton's ten-paneled *America Today* created for the New School for Social Research - indeed, in terms of design, action, form and theme, his 1937 murals have a certain commonality with some of its panels. Both muralists are dealing with technological progress and the role of the worker, but whereas Benton uses a socially realistic, figurative style, Comfort's focus is on form and design, interpreted in Cubist-inspired Realism even in his depiction of workers."[123] My impression is this approach was not meant in any way to denigrate the importance Comfort places on the worker as a person, and so central to the theme of his 1937 murals. On the contrary, he must have felt that using eye-catching graphic designs would speak more easily and directly to the everyday viewer. It follows, then that Comfort's form-design approach to the portrayal of the worker in both *The Romance of Nickel* and particularly, in the Art-Deco-housed TSE panels and exterior frieze, was simply his way of presenting the concept of "moderne" to his viewers. In Windover's words: "Art Deco provided a vision of what the 'modern' looked like."[124] However, the "moderne" could also be interpreted through the figurative, Social Realism of *America Today*, and again, comparisons can be drawn between the active, forward movement of machine 'power' in Benton's *Instruments of Power* panel (fig. 31), and the stance of his figures in *Steel* (fig. 32), with Comfort's *Oil* (fig. 26) mural, for example. Where all these panels diverge is in the style and portrayal of the worker. Those in Comfort's murals are faceless, anonymous and mechanical. Overall, Benton's are realistic, wearing brightly-coloured clothing, and one senses their humanity and a certain feeling of sympathy for their heavy workload. His workers remain a much more typical depiction of the "worker" in Depression-era art of the US, and in the Mexican murals created at various civic sites in the US. At the time, notes Anna Hudson, the worker "embodied widespread concern for individual and communal well-being."[125] In addition, the "image of the muscled worker, so often pictured in 'New Deal' art [also] functioned as a symbol of American democracy and productivity."[126] In the same way, Rivera's "Clenched Fists" (fig. 33), "which sprout from the raw wealth of the earth" in his fresco cycle, *Detroit Industry* for the *Detroit Institute of Arts,* reflect how socially-conscious Mexican and American muralists had confidence in the "powerful union of art and labor."[127] Hudson talks about a certain collaboration between labour unions and business (as suggested in *The Romance of Nickel*, and in the TSE frieze and murals) where "the worker becomes a meaningful site of associations to art and contemporary life, and a metaphor for the artist who sought a place in the everyday struggle for social progress."[128] Given this widespread North American discourse around "art-worker-society", it is all the more curious, at least at first glance, that Comfort's murals seem to lack any particular social statement or values, and his images of workers still stand out as lacking in individuality and humanity. Or, is it?

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[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid., 54.

[124] Windover, *Art Deco: A Mode of Mobility*, 264.

[125] Hudson, "Art and Social Progress," 140.

[126] Ibid., 137. *New Deal Art* refers to "the sponsorship by the US Treasury Section of Fine Arts of over one-thousand murals and three-hundred sculptures between 1934-43 for post offices, courthouses and other federal buildings across the United States." The WPA program referred to earlier in this thesis was separate from this "Section."

A critical if basic reason for Comfort's specific depiction of the worker as "glorified" has already been stated in this thesis – his murals were not "designed" to be concerned with social or economic conditions. This is important to emphasise. Unlike the public, government-commissioned murals of the US and Mexico, Comfort's work came from business and industry. The capitalist objective was pragmatic, not socially or historically-inclined, and thus the need to "glorify" material progress, and the role of the anonymous worker as driver of industrial technology. Nevertheless, Comfort achieves this objective in his 1937 murals via iconography which reflects the strong presence of Art Deco characteristics – optimism, progress, change, machines, and the "newest and latest," while always conserving the status quo. But there are other factors crucial to this argument around Comfort's "glorified" workers. The approach, themes and styles of Depression-era painters in Toronto and elsewhere across the country were also dictated by the particular economic and social, even geographical environment that was Canada of the 1930s. Some clarification on this point would now be opportune.

As elsewhere in the Americas and Western Europe, Canadian artists, muralists or otherwise had to survive the Depression years without the social safety nets of make-work programs offered by governments in Washington, Mexico City and Paris at the time of the 1937 *Exposition internationale*. They were on their own to drum up work, if they could. And many could not. In *Canadian Painting in the Thirties,* Charles Hill talks about the terrible physical and mental toll of financial hardship even among painters like Emily Carr, who suffered a heart attack, Fred Varley's severe personal and financial situation, and the mental breakdown suffered by an undernourished Jock Macdonald.[129] There was also the geographical factor. Canada itself, a huge land mass with a relatively small number of artists, approximately 3000 or so[130] spread out from coast to coast, presented little opportunity for banding together to demand government assistance and recognition. In fact, artists came together for the first time only in 1941 at the Kingston Conference of the Arts. Recognition (or more accurately, a lack thereof) was part of the challenge for modern muralists. Canada of the 1930s and beyond was a much more conservative society in terms of general artistic knowledge and taste than either the United States or France. The Canadian art market was also very small, with only a few commercial galleries in Montreal and Quebec. Comfort has remarked on this point, and so has Marylin McKay. In *A National Soul,* she notes that Canadians of the 1930s to 1950s found much of the subject matter and styles of modern murals to be too avant-garde for their tastes.[131] A combination of all these factors meant that artists who wished to make a social statement or criticism in a modern style, and ultimately sell the painting, were obliged to do so overtly, often in prints or small easel paintings for publication in art or political revues.[132] Or, they produced oil paintings, exhibited in shows organized by art societies or art galleries, which simply reflected the social conditions of ordinary Canadians. This might take the shape of a desolate-looking house and landscape, such as the powerful, Depression-era image depicted by Carl Schaefer in *Corn Stooks* (fig. 34). Comfort himself made what I thought was an impassioned plea for social awareness by artists to reflect the plight of ordinary people as the real symbol of Canada: "We have seen bleak mountains and weather-warped trees [referring to Group of Seven wilderness landscapes as symbols of Canada]; now I will show you bleak, weather-warped lives; these are just as true of Canada; perhaps the most important part of Canada."[133] Although Comfort was referring specifically to his landscape, *Unpainted Barn,* and not to his murals, this comment does speak of his own humanity and values. Sandra Paikowsky would appear to confirm Comfort's viewpoint here when she points out that unlike many American painters, Canadians during the Depression years and later did not necessarily advance political activism through the agency of Social

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[127] Ibid., 137.
[128] Hudson, "Art and Social Progress," 144.

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[129] Hill, *Canadian Paintings in the Thirties*, 15.
[130] McKay, "Canadian Political Art in the 1930s: A Form of Distancing," in *The Social and the Real,* 80.
[131] McKay, *A National Soul*, 204.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Charles Comfort, quoted in Robert Ayre, "Canadian Group of Painters," *Canadian Forum* 14/159 (December 1933): 100.

Realism. Instead, they generally "responded to a widespread social consciousness by expressing their empathy with ordinary hardship."[134] By the mid-1930s, this rather low-key response was gaining traction. A Socialist critic, Graham McInnis, acknowledged this, saying he had found and defined a Canadian solution to the art and society controversy. He called it "a homegrown and distinctive art that got beyond the northern landscape and mirrored the compelling human issues of the day."[135] At the same time, he continues, "this 'distinctive art' held onto the emphasis on form and aesthetic emotion so central to modernism."[136] However, there was no place for reflecting the compelling human issues of the day in murals designed for the glorification of industry as a builder of Canada's economy. Comfort may have had *carte blanche* to use Cubist-inspired realist 'form' in his TSE and *The Romance of Nickel* murals to elicit a response from the public, but it came with the unspoken assumption that there would be no social criticism of capitalism. Such were the realities of Canadian socio-economic and artistic life in the 1930s. They also served as a framework for Canadian painters trading opposing opinions in the monthly opinion journal, *Canadian Forum,* over the value (or not) of art in the service of society.[137] For example, sculptor, Elizabeth Wyn Wood (1903-66), expressed one, albeit extreme side of the debate in an article entitled "Art and the Pre-Cambrian Shield": "one cannot view everything in terms of politics and economics," [something she considered to be merely the] "plumbing and heating" of society."[138] This position elicited a strong rebuttal from recent, European immigrant and painter, Paraskeva Clark (1898-1986), in an article entitled "Come out from behind the Pre-Cambrian Shield," in the left-leaning, "pale pink"[139] *New Frontier* journal. Clark roundly denounced Wyn Wood's "complacency and self-satisfied remoteness," accusing her of "promoting preciousness in art." [140] In-between these two extremes, there was a growing sense among the majority of Canadian painters that art should reflect the issues of the day, that it should be more available to the general public, and not just the elite who could afford to acquire oil paintings. As part of this discourse of the 1930s on the merits of a relationship between art and society, art historian, Richard Striner, offered some interesting observations in a paper entitled *Art Deco: Polemics and Synthesis.* He refers to the positive impact, in particular of *streamlined Art Deco* on Depression-era America. He noted that a number of cultural historians had commented that its popularity is due to its inherent "themes of cohesion, unity and smooth coordination…inspiring for a culture attempting to transform disaster and trauma into [something positive] – an opportunity for twentieth-century pioneering and community rededication."[141] Art Deco's success in this area must ultimately have had much to do with Michael Windover's observation of its "appeal to emotion, to fantasy and spectacle."[142] He talks about Art Deco's architecture being designed "to reinforce and enhance views of modernity – including notions of progress and processes of modernization – but *not* necessarily to make space for critical reflection."[143] This observation applies to Comfort's murals for the TSE and its exterior frieze – designed as they were to appeal emotionally to passers-by and traders, while projecting a sense of security and stability at a time of economic uncertainty.

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[134] Sandra Paikowsky, "Modernist Representational Painting before 1950," in *The Visual Arts in Canada*, 133.
[135] Lora Senechal Carney, "Modern Art, the Local, and the Global c.1930-1950," in *Visual Arts in Canada*, 107.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Hill, *Canadian Paintings in the Thirties*, 15.
[138] Elizabeth Wyn Wood, "Art and the Pre-Cambrian Shield," *Canadian Forum*, 16/193 (February 1937): 14, quoted in "Modern Art, the Local, and the Global," in *The Visual Arts in Canada*, 101.
[139] Carney, "Modern Art, the Local, and the Global," in *The Visual Arts in Canada*, 105.
[140] Ibid., 106.

This widespread discourse around the role art could/should play in society during the 1930s was based on two opposing points of view: should art be used to further or highlight social reform, or should art remain outside or 'above' such discussions. In addition to the Wyn Wood/Clark debate mentioned earlier, Arthur Lismer saw art as a social responsibility, mirroring, to a limited extent Alejandro Anreus's theory of a "Pan-American wave of socially responsible artists who believed their art was 'moderne' precisely because it reflected the social issues of the day."[144] Lismer's concept, however was more esoteric: "art as an extension of all facets which would combat ugliness and make man a socially-minded creatively alive and peaceful citizen of a larger community."[145] Others, like David Milne (1882-1953) and Bertram Brooker (1888-1955), and those of the Society of Independent Artists in the United States, denied any "non-aesthetic purpose" for art, claiming instead that "it was an expression of personality and inner feeling concerned only with the formal expression of the individual's reaction to reality."[146] However, by the mid-1930s, such observations were overridden by a whole generation of young artists like Comfort, who demanded the 'humanist' goal' of "art in the service of society."[147] For Comfort, the arts were among "the most important manifestations of culture, inasmuch as they contribute to the enlightenment of the human mind."[148] Despite such grandiose sentiments, many art historians agree there was little evidence of social comment reflected in the art of this decade. Critic, Frank Underhill, said as much in an article in *Canadian Forum,* when he argued that "while the international crisis [Spanish Civil War, the rise of Communism and Fascism] was compelling European and American artists to go either red or dead, Canadian artists and writers seemed engaged primarily in "rustic' ruminations."[149] In fact, instead of putting their socio-political efforts into paintings, many artists were putting them into the printed word or political activities in support, for example, of the one Canadian brigade fighting in Spain, the Mackenzie-Papineau Batallion, a force that happened to represent the largest number of volunteer soldiers after France.[150] Marylin McKay calls the phenomenon "a form of distancing." She says social consciousness among Canadian artists tended to take the form of articles "in support of art which supported a proletarian society"[151] in revues like the Communist-based Progressive Arts Clubs' *Masses.* Another Communist-inspired revue, *New Frontier* carried drawings and prints by several, socially-active artists, including Paraskeva Clark's impassioned article on the need for action by artists in society, and for cultural commitment in political and economic life.[152] The same revue published a special issue in December 1936 when Madrid was under attack[153] featuring an article entitled "Where I Stand." Signatures by "prominent Canadians", including Charles Comfort, took up three-and-a-half pages.[154] Anna Hudson says that by 1937, both "Comfort and Paraskeva Clark saw themselves as workers laboring to correct social injustice and the poor deal for culture in Canada."[155] Given this current climate with its focus on the worker, it is not surprising that his image dominated Comfort's murals, as he did in other socially-inclined murals of the period. In the early 1980s, art historian, Lorna Farrell-Ward, wrote that "the 'noble' worker was the familiar art school anatomy study…[of the 1930s].”[156] Nevertheless, even the limited production of easel paintings depicting workers, and supposedly reflecting social issues were often ambiguous in their message. For example, Miller Brittain’s (1912-68) *Longshoremen off Work* (1936) (fig. 35) portrays a group of workers walking along. One appears to be shouting, two look worried, one strides along smoking his pipe and two others are chatting and smiling. What is one supposed to make of this statement?

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[141] Richard Striner, "Art Deco: Polemics and Synthesis*," Winterthur Portfolio* 25/1 (Spring 1990): 30.
[142] Michael Windover*, Art Deco: A Mode of Mobility*, 31.
[143] Ibid., 32.
[144] Alejandro Anreus, "Introduction," in *The Social and the Real*, xiii.
[145] Hill, *Canadian Paintings in the Thirties*, 15.
[146] Ibid.

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[147] Ibid.
[148] Hughes, "Rare Feast," in *Take Comfort – The Career of Charles Comfort*, 11.
[149] Frank H. Underhill, review, "*Yearbook of the Arts in Canada*," ed. Bertram Brooker, *Canadian Forum* 16/191 (December 1936): 28, quoted in *The Visual Arts in Canada*, 105.
[150] Hudson, "Art and Social Progress," 140.
[151] Marlyin McKay, "Canadian Political Art of the Thirties," in *The Social and the Real,* 76.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Lora Senechal Carney, "Modern Art, the Local, and the Global," in *Visual Arts in Canada*, 105.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Hudson, "Art and Social Progress," 141.

Some artists of the 1930s found a more easily distributed and less expensive medium for social or political statement in graphic or commercial art forms, such as posters. They were seen as “more democratic” than expensive oil and canvas. Watercolours too were widely used, since as Charles Hill notes “the expression of a subjective vision could be more rapidly laid down.”[157] However, social commentary even in these two art forms was limited, again due in great part to Canada’s specific socio-economic situation. Its relatively small employment market compared to elsewhere in North America, meant that workers lucky enough to have a job were reluctant to “rock the boat” by complaining, or appearing to protest their working conditions or salaries. For artists, the reality was simply a lack of public interest in art reflecting social or political comment, most of all in the realm of murals.[158] Comfort’s hard-won commissions in this field came from patrons with money to spend on this art form, provided it reflected or furthered their nation-building, business-oriented objectives. They were not about to commission works that criticized capitalism. Instead, they required murals that, to quote Charles Hill, offered “instantaneous eye-catching effects.” Comfort himself acknowledged these effective characteristics originating in advertising, which he subsequently seamlessly incorporated into his TSE and *The Romance of Nickel* murals. He said as much during a talk delivered in December 1931 on “Modern Art in Advertising” with reference in particular to his landscapes and portraits of the early 1930s. He noted that the blend between his commercial and expressive work had been a great advantage, and suggests that the impetus for employing modern art in advertising had generally been the need for new modes of expression – [a characteristic so inherent to Art Deco design]… which lead, stand out, attract…rather than a deep philosophical move.”[159]

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[156] Lorna Farrell-Ward, “Canadian Political Art in the 1930s: A Form of Distancing,” in *The Social and the Real*, 76.
[157] Hill, *Canadian Paintings in the Thirties*, 12.
[158] Ibid., 17.
[159] Christine Boyanowski, “Lake Superior Village,” 190.

Importantly, Comfort also wondered whether there was anything more to it than “these curious angular and distorted shapes that catch our eye and challenge our intelligence….and why [this] could be applied acceptably to industrial design and yet ‘cause a dog-fight’ in the painter’s hand.”[160] In any case, by the mid-1930s, such contentious questions no longer mattered. Comfort had dropped commercial work altogether, opting instead for teaching positions and his mural commissions. His clients for the foreseeable future were business or industry leaders with their highly pragmatic and self-serving nation-building messages. The themes and subject matter of his 1937 murals were dictated by business needs not social issues, clearly “distancing” his public art from those other high profile, contemporaneous murals in North America and Europe, which did happen to focus on the social issues of the era. However, in terms of style and approach, his 1937 murals, along with the frieze he designed for the exterior wall of the TSE*,* were no less part of the Art Deco movement sweeping Europe and North America. Many of its murals incorporated its fundamentally action-oriented, optimistically-inclined modern characteristics. Some, like Charles Comfort’s panels for the Toronto Stock Exchange, and Diego Rivera and José María Sert for the Rockefeller Center in New York, for example, were also designed to harmonise with outstanding Art Deco-style architecture. In Canada, the TSE murals stood out and were well received because they stood for “moderate” modernity. They played to their conservative public and business clients’ desire for the modern, while “reinforcing the status quo.”[161]

The impact of the TSE murals on critics, business and the public of the day was well documented from artistic, social and economic perspectives. At the official opening in March 1937, *Montreal Gazette* art critic, Robert Ayre, noted that “this is a tame way of beginning what is really an exciting piece of news. Canada has acquired a set of murals.” On a more effusive note, he commented “Comfort has felt the big drama of Canada, its materials and its men…he has given them valid and thrilling form.”[162] Graham McInnes, writing in *The Canadian Forum* describes the murals as “compositionally effective, but also accurate technical and social documents.” He refers to Comfort’s sense of unity in the murals, achieved through the “facial types of the workers," and by the way his subdued colouring in each mural "merges from one level into the next."[163] *Time Magazine* called the TSE itself "the most up-to-date trading floor in the world,"[164] but it was TSE President, H. B. Housser, who spoke for public expectations, while voicing his own, corporate objectives for the Exchange itself. At the ground-breaking ceremony a year earlier he had noted: "It is our hope that this building may stand as a mark to the country's future prosperity, one that may be destined to perform a most useful service in the economic life of Canada."[165]

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[160] Ibid.

[161] Michael Windover, *Art Deco: A Mode of Mobility*, 198.

[162] Robert Ayre, “Toronto Stock Exchange Murals Greatly Stimulate Canadian Art,” *The Montreal Gazette* (April 24, 1937) in Donegan, *Designing the Exchange*, 64.

Charles Comfort's eight murals for the Toronto Stock Exchange, along with its exterior stone frieze and front door medallions, are dynamic symbols of modernity as interpreted in Canada of the 1930s, and of the way art and architecture could be designed in harmony. They also remain a rare example of how the moderne was adapted to meet the needs of business and its nation-building agenda.

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[163] Graham McInnis, "Contemporary Canadian Artists – No. 3 Charles F. Comfort," in *The Canadian Forum* (April 1937): n/p.

[164] Morawetz, in *Designing the Exchange*, 34.

[165] "Toronto's New Stock Exchange Building Corner Stone Laid," *The Monetary Times* (August 12, 1936), 18, quoted in Ibid., 40.

CONCLUSION

Speaking from the vantage point of 1951, critic Pierre Duval acknowledged Charles Comfort's leadership in mural art in Canada of the 1930s, while noting "the regrettable lack of retrospective interest in this vital, though neglected field of architectural art."[166] Such – albeit rare –latter recognition for Comfort's mural art, and the significance of the art form itself in interpreting artistic and socio-political developments, were the starting points for my overall argument here. They justify my contention that Comfort's two 1937 murals deserve a more in depth, second look and acknowledgement by twenty-first century critics and academics. Why? I contend they represent prominent, extant and distinctive artistic contributions to Canada's cultural narrative of the early twentieth century. For example, Charles Comfort's role as the sole muralist commissioned by industry leaders during the 1930s may in itself be worthy of further study and analysis. It is, after all rather remarkable that at a time when contemporaneous art movements and social preoccupations were *not* typical subjects for Canadian muralists, it was industry that provided Comfort with the opportunity to portray the worker as central to "nation-building" technical progress. In this context, it is fair to say that Comfort, the moderate interpreter of modernity, occupied a unique position. His ability to depict the blue collar worker in Cubist-styled Realism, in step and on equal footing with other levels of society, and symbolic of industry's nation-building aspirations, can be seen as a milestone in Canadian artistic developments of the time.

At its official opening in March 1937, there was huge enthusiasm from both public and critics for the TSE, its murals and the Art Deco frieze on its façade. The following month, Robert Ayre reflected general reaction to these "modernist" murals and frieze when he wrote: "not only important in themselves, but they represent a spirit of enterprise on the part of the builders that is tremendously encouraging to Canadian art. It is to be hoped that other institutions will follow the lead [of the TSE] and they will show as good sense in getting designs that are as dynamically contemporary as these."[167] On the other hand, it is true that *The Romance of Nickel* was unsung and ignored by European critics and the media during the 1937 *Exposition internationale des*

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[166] Pierre Duval (1951), quoted in Donegan, "Muscled Workers, Speeding Trains," *Take Comfort: The Career of Charles Comfort*, 40.

[167] Ayre, "Toronto Stock Exchange Murals Greatly Stimulate Canadian Art," *Toronto Star* (April 24, 1937).

arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne in Paris. Nevertheless, I reiterate my argument that by its very presence in this global arena, Comfort's mural could be viewed as a critical artistic and economic signifier of both Canadian and more general Western artistic trends. First, its design, style and iconography demonstrated the way a Canadian muralist had adapted Social Realism and Art Deco characteristics to promote important nation-building objectives with "moderate modernity," Michael Windover's "tradition in *moderne* dress."[168] Second, its subject matter, in the context of this international arena. It helped to reinforce a mining company's image as a global leader driving the economy through its employment of blue collar workers, while positioning Canada on equal footing with other nations as a modern, prosperous and technically advanced sovereign state.

My various readings over the past year and a half have revealed the 1930s to be a time of great movement, and excitement about and experiments in different artistic styles. In Comfort's case, this included American influences of Regionalism and Precisionism in his landscapes of the 1920s and 1930s, and a Cubist-inspired Realism reflecting Art Deco's flexibility, optimism and movement in his murals. As mentioned earlier, Charles Hill described the 1930s as "the decade without a definite image in Canadian history."[169] It is true that his context was the fact that "the 30s were sandwiched between the domination of the Group of Seven's landscapes as symbols of Canada in the 20s and the excitement around abstraction in the 40s and 50s."[170] However, with all due respect, I cannot agree with this assessment. Neither does Marylin McKay, among others. She argues that the 1930s in Canada did indeed have a definite image – "one of reserve and restraint," and thus distinguishing itself from the artistic interpretations of social issues portrayed by artists in other countries.[171] The Depression Decade was a time when artists on both sides of the Atlantic were seeking ways to express a new sense of humanism in art – whether in realistic style or overtly – in order to better respond to society's needs. It was a time when murals like *The Romance of Nickel* and those of the Toronto Stock Exchange could, and did depict a certain harmony between industry, artist, and worker. I do not necessarily share many of art historian Barry Lord's Marxist opinions. However, I believe he is quite right to state that "the art of the

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[168] Windover, *Art Deco: A Mode of Mobility*, 35.
[169] Charles Hill, *Canadian Paintings in the Thirties* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1975), 11.
[170] Ibid.
[171] McKay, "Canadian Political Art in the 1930s: A Form of Distancing," in *The Social and the Real*, 94.

30s had an extremely important character of its own" at a time of rising social realism and working class culture.[172] Both these points can be said to have influenced the iconography of Comfort's corporate murals discussed in this thesis. The worker, depicted in a figurative, socially realistic style in the great, socio-historic paintings of the Mexican muralists, as the muscled, overworked labourer of Thomas Hart Benton's *America Today*, or as the powerful, if mechanical worker of a Comfort mural, do indeed seem to be the leading "image" in many high-profile examples of public art of this era. In terms of Canadian artistic developments, Lord calls the 1930s "the first great period [of the twentieth century] in which our artists moved on from the landscape to the painting of our people."[173] Many North American painters cited in this thesis – among them Sheeler, Brittain, Shahn and Comfort himself with his murals, and portrait of Carl Schaefer as *The Young Canadian,* were responsible for this evolution towards an inhabited urban landscape. In terms of murals, Comfort was the leading protagonist in a march towards an art form, which would prove to be meaningful to many ordinary Canadians – located as they were in very public sites. That he achieved these objectives was due in great part to his extensive training as a commercial artist, whose highly perfected design techniques and eye-catching iconography would speak to the everyday person. His client-oriented approach earned him the respect, and commissions, of corporate Canada of the day. His subsequent murals provided them with a unique opportunity to engage with an artist and the common worker. However, as Comfort's artistic oeuvre continued to develop over the ensuing decades, this was just one of his many goals. As Mary Jo Hughes points out in an essay entitled "Rare Feast – Charles Comfort's Life and Career," "[Comfort's] goal in art after all was not the creation of an identity or of one recognizable style by which he could be associated, rather it was about finding new ways for his art to explore the world and express its fascinating and ever-transforming nature."[174] Since Comfort did indeed continue to "explore the world" over the ensuing three decades, there appears to be real potential here for further scholarly analysis of how his evolving style reflected – or differentiated itself – from other twentieth century art developments. His evolving style included his late, Art Deco-influenced murals for Montreal's Central Station (1942), his forays into abstraction in the late 1940s and 1950s, and additional mural works, albeit of a historical and allegorical nature, in the late 1960s for the Reading Room of what was then, Public Archives of Canada, now Library and Archives Canada.

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[172] Barry Lord, "Canadian Painting in the Thirties at the National Gallery of Canada Ottawa," *ART Magazine* 21 (Spring/Summer 1975): 14. See also Barry Lord, *The History of Painting in Canada: Toward a People's Art* (Toronto: NC Press, 1974).

[173] Ibid.

[174] Mary Jo Hughes, "Rare Feast – Charles Comfort's Life and Career," in *Take Comfort. The Career of Charles Comfort – La carrière de Charles Comfort* (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2007), 27.

In 2007, *Winnipeg Free Press* writer, Morley Walker, referred to Comfort as "a lion of Canadian art in his day, and his day spanned much of the twentieth century."[175] It is my hope that in building on late twentieth and early twenty-first scholarship around Charles Fraser Comfort's highly acclaimed 1937 mural commissions for business, my specific approach has now shed new light on their important contribution, along with other artistic developments of this momentous decade, to Canada's cultural narrative of the twentieth century. As such, both deserve renewed critical and academic interest and acknowledgement of their importance within the greater North American and European context of the 1930s.

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[175] Morley Walker, "WAG delves deeper into lion of Canadian art," *Winnipeg Free Press* (February 8, 2007): D4.

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FIGURES

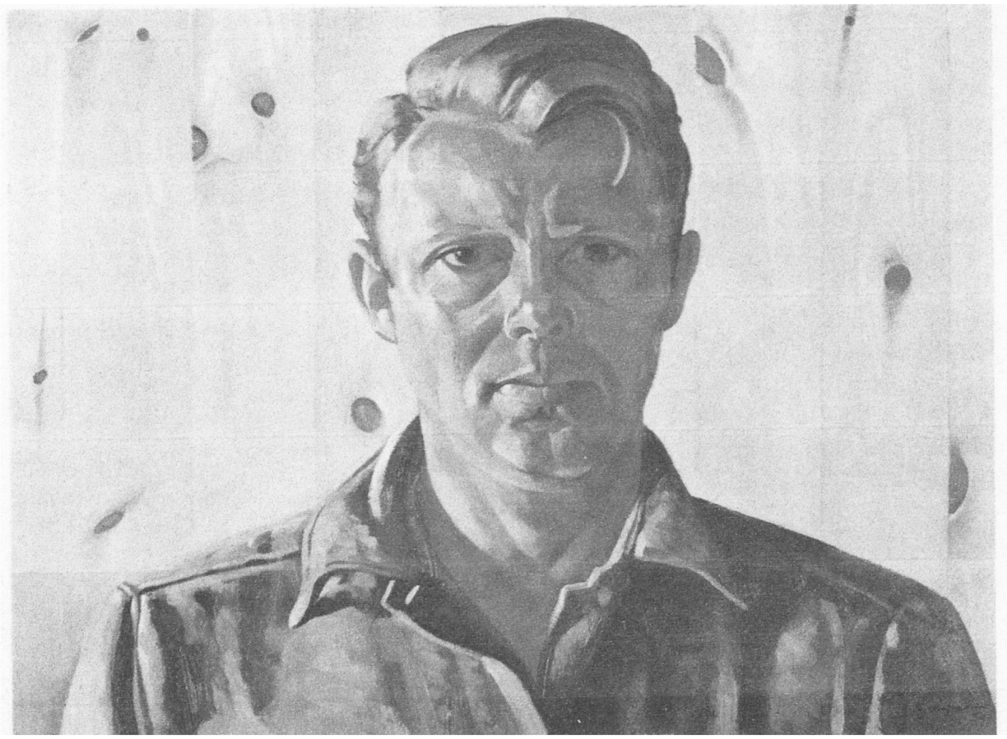


Figure 1. Charles F. Comfort, *Portrait in August,* oil on canvas 20 x 26, Kenora, Ontario. August 1934. Mrs. Charles Comfort.

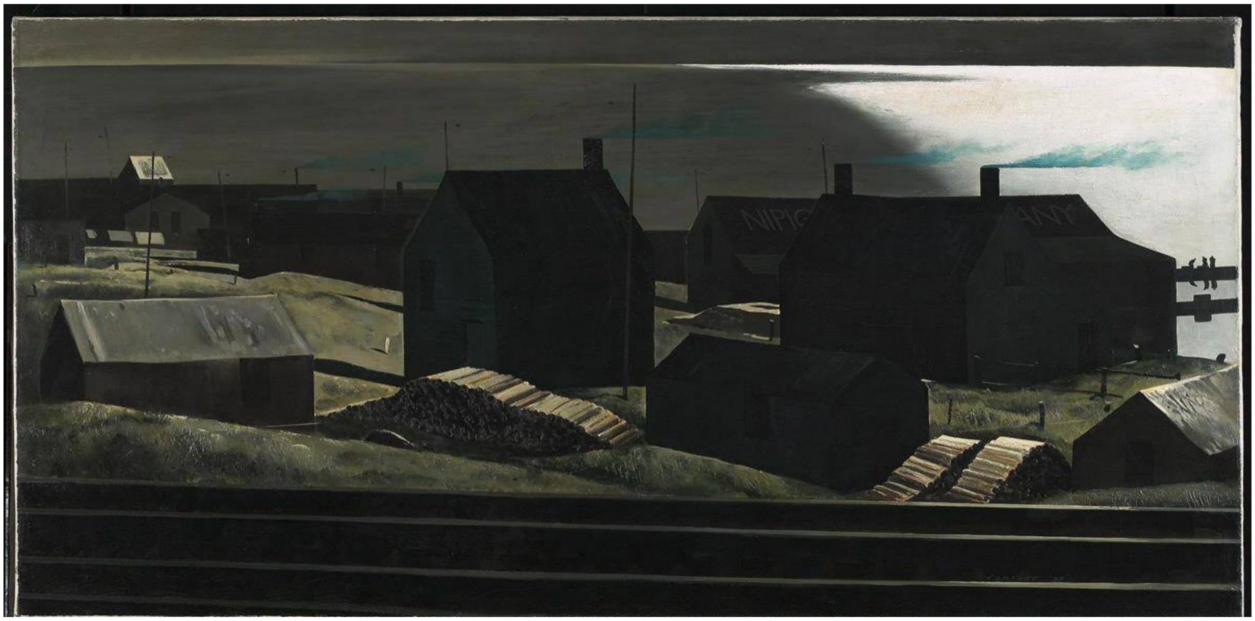


Figure 2. Charles F. Comfort, *Lake Superior Village,* 1937, oil on canvas, 108 x 177.8 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Gift from the Fund of the T. Eaton Co. Ltd for Canadian Works of Art.

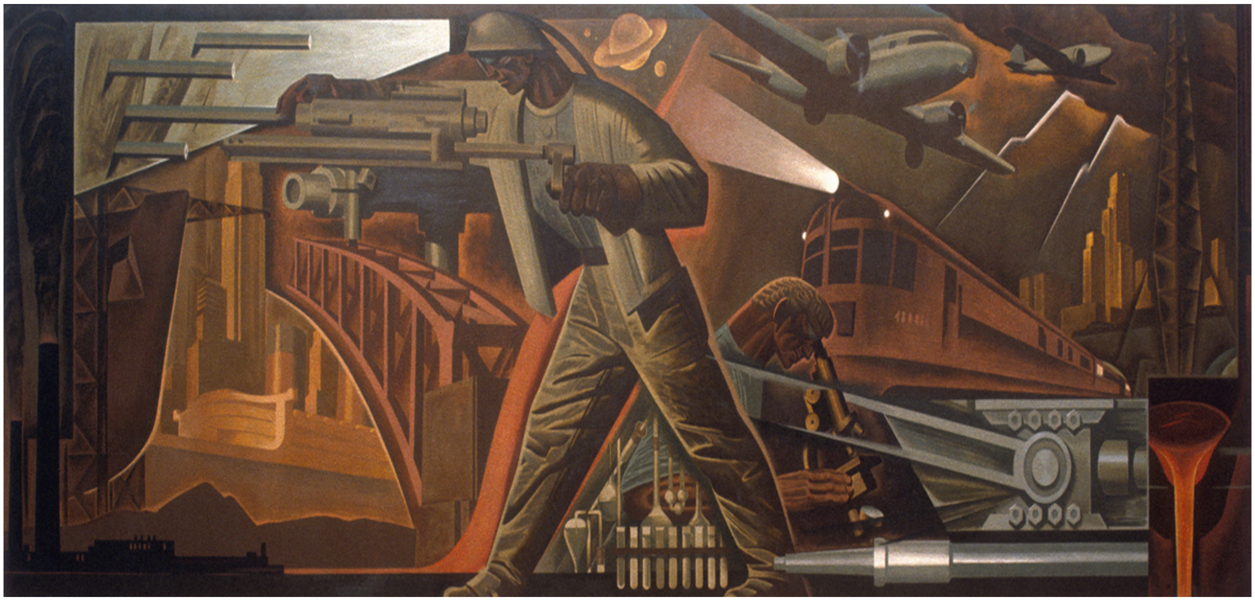


Figure 3. Charles F. Comfort, *The Romance of Nickel* 1937, oil on canvas, 213.5 x 610cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

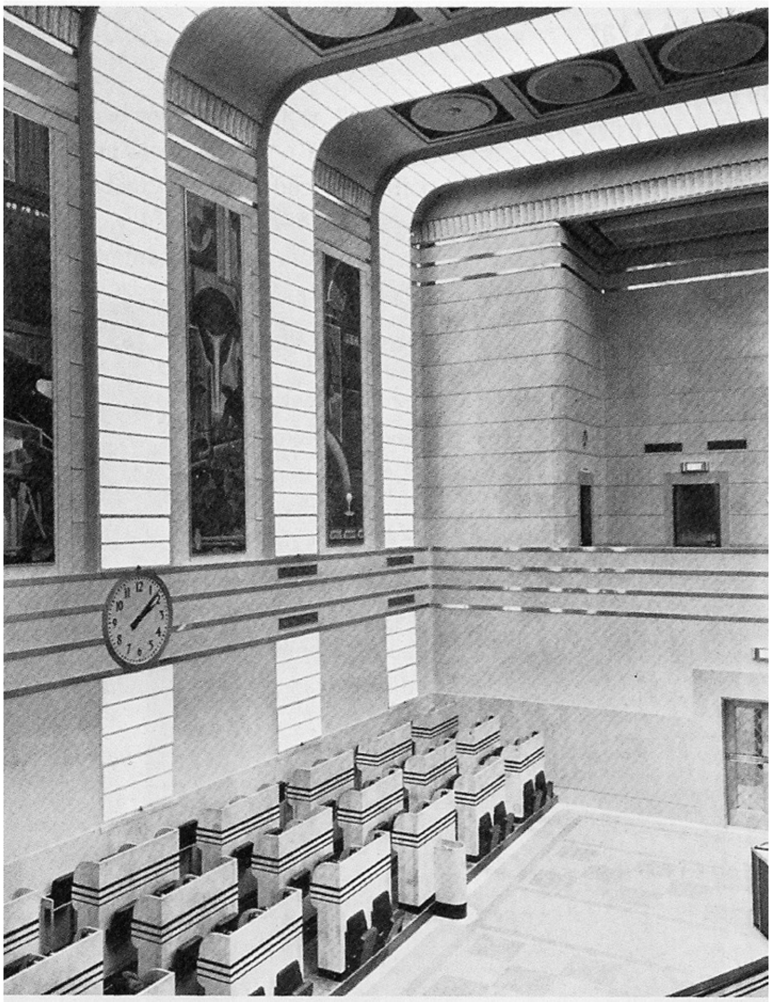


Figure 4. Charles F. Comfort, three of eight panels, oil on canvas, 4.87 x 1.21m, Trading Floor, Toronto Stock Exchange, 1936-37. George & Moorhouse (architects), Samuel Maw (associate designer), Toronto.

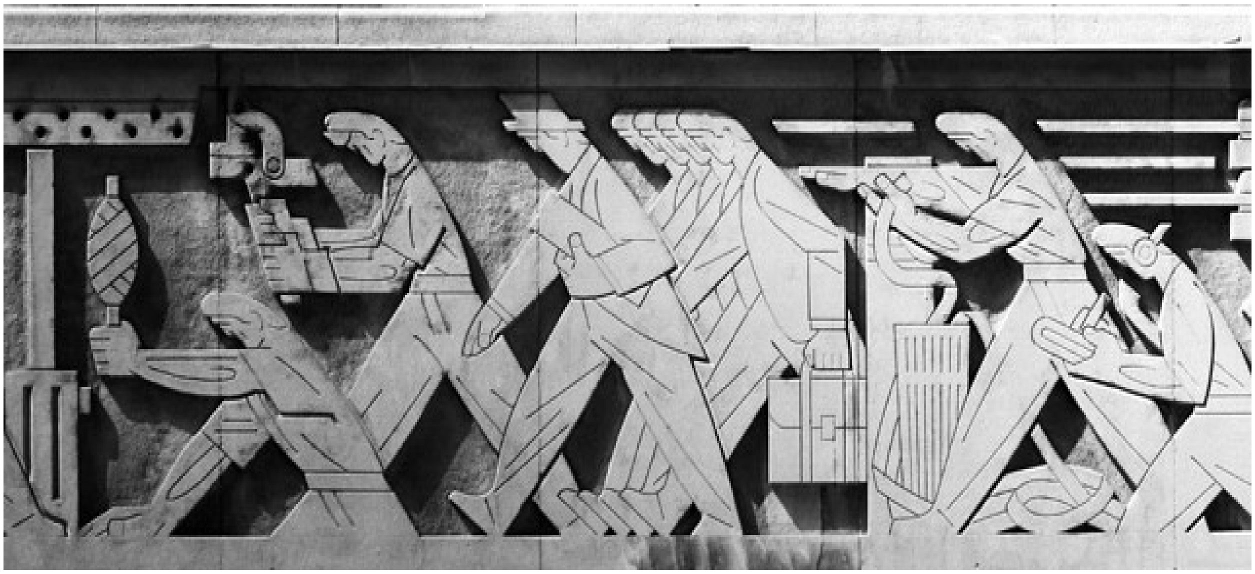


Figure 5. Charles F. Comfort, detail, the Indiana limestone façade frieze, 22.5 x 1.5m, The Toronto Stock Exchange Building (Design Exchange), Toronto, 1937.

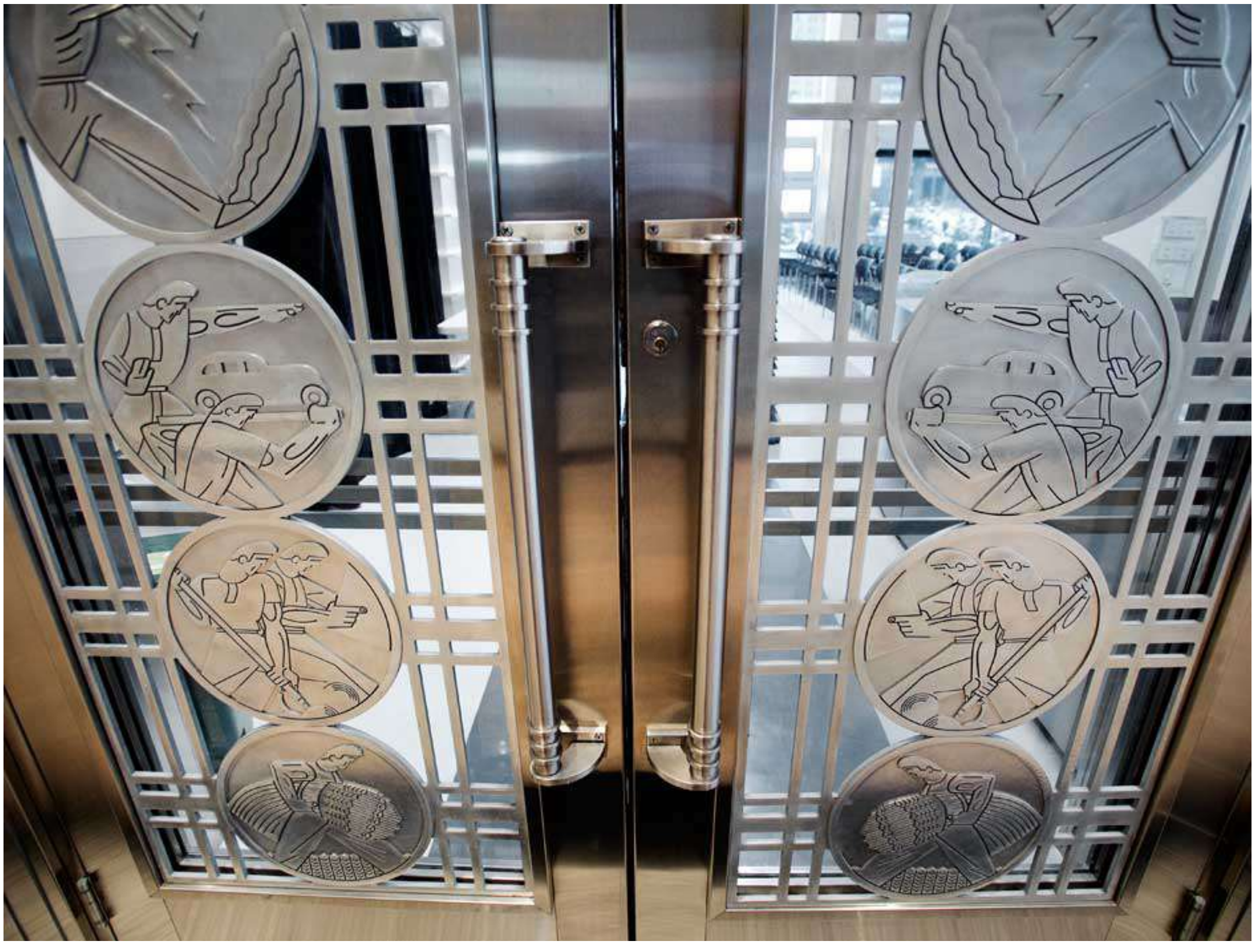


Figure 6. Charles F. Comfort, detail, steel medallions, The Toronto Stock Exchange Building (Design Exchange), Toronto, 1937. Photograph by Peter J. Thompson/National Post.

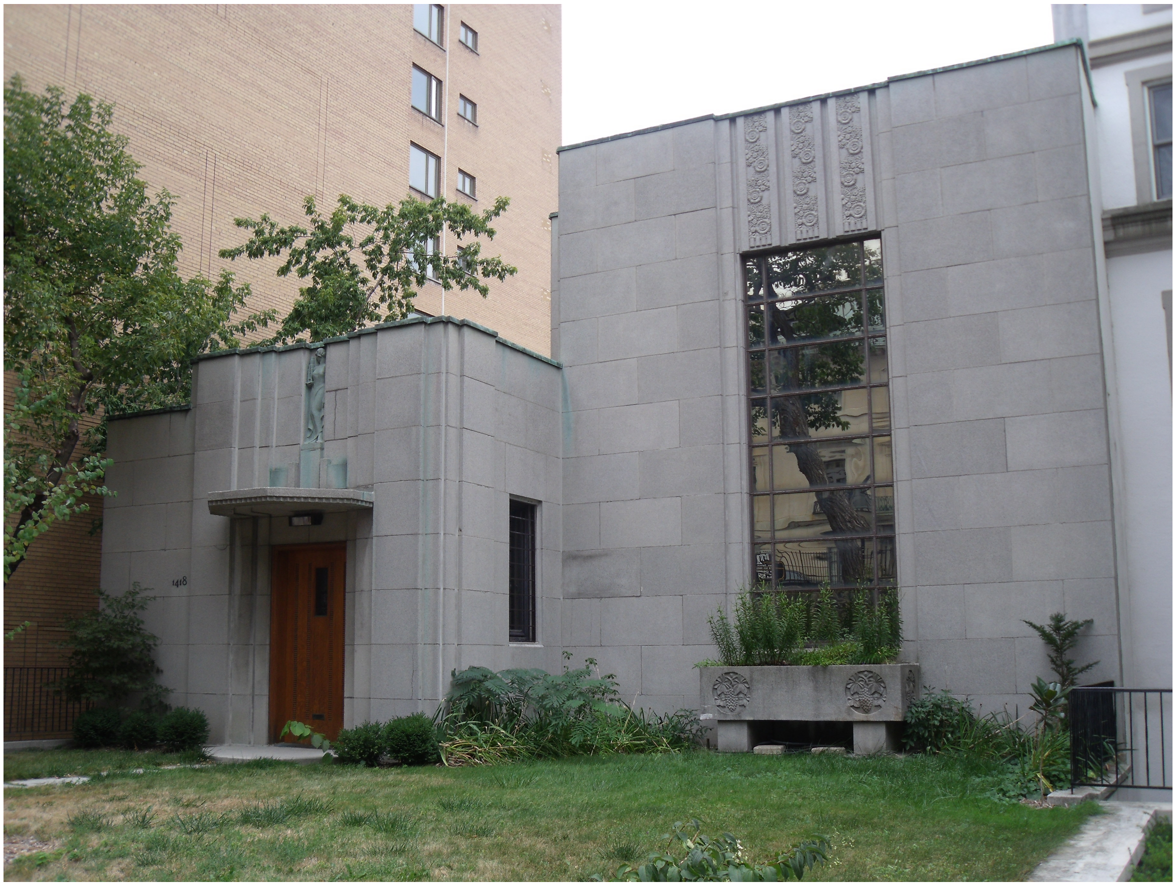
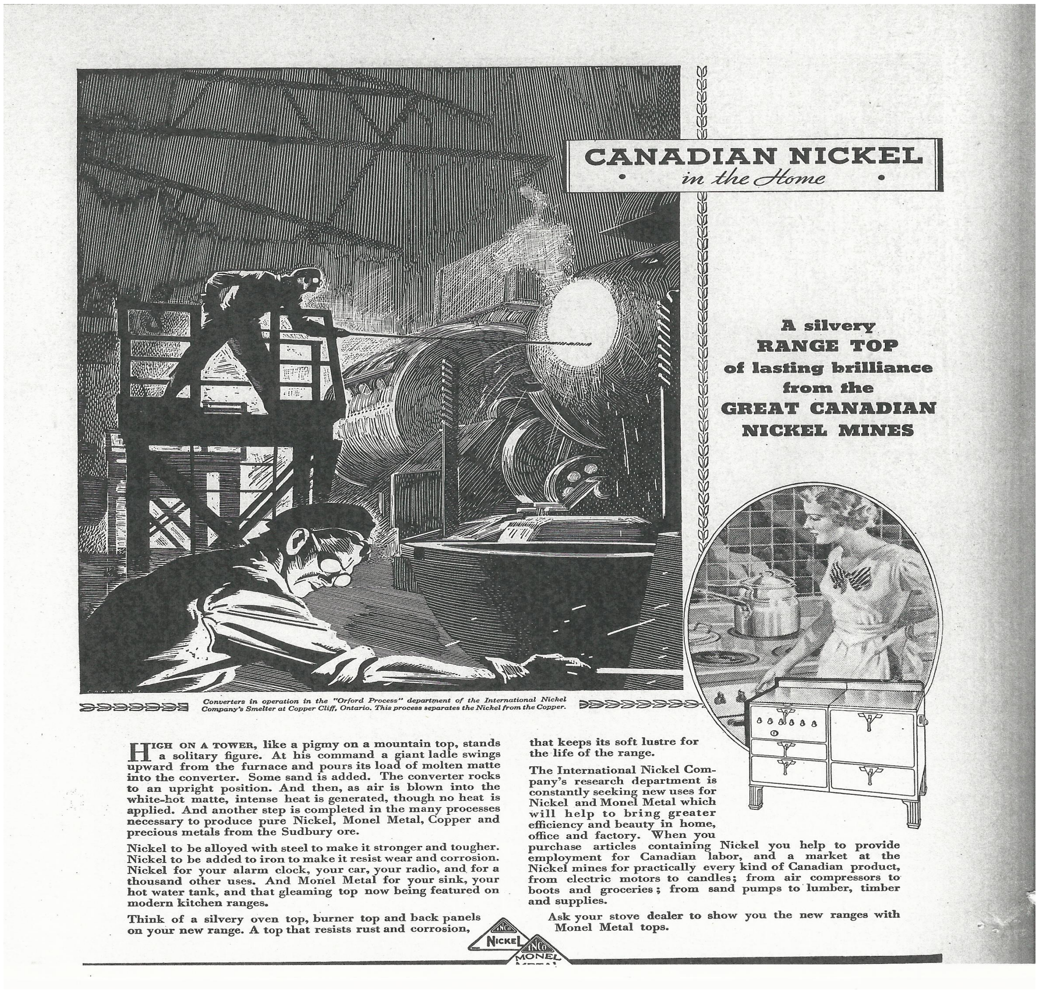


Figure 7. Ernest Cormier (architect). Façade of 1418 Pine Avenue, Montreal. 1930-31.



CANADIAN NICKEL
• *in the Home* •

**A silvery
RANGE TOP
of lasting brilliance
from the
GREAT CANADIAN
NICKEL MINES**

Converters in operation in the "Orford Process" department of the International Nickel Company's Smelter at Copper Cliff, Ontario. This process separates the Nickel from the Copper.

HIGH ON A TOWER, like a pigmy on a mountain top, stands a solitary figure. At his command a giant ladle swings upward from the furnace and pours its load of molten matte into the converter. Some sand is added. The converter rocks to an upright position. And then, as air is blown into the white-hot matte, intense heat is generated, though no heat is applied. And another step is completed in the many processes necessary to produce pure Nickel, Monel Metal, Copper and precious metals from the Sudbury ore.

Nickel to be alloyed with steel to make it stronger and tougher. Nickel to be added to iron to make it resist wear and corrosion. Nickel for your alarm clock, your car, your radio, and for a thousand other uses. And Monel Metal for your sink, your hot water tank, and that gleaming top now being featured on modern kitchen ranges.

Think of a silvery oven top, burner top and back panels on your new range. A top that resists rust and corrosion, that keeps its soft lustre for the life of the range.

The International Nickel Company's research department is constantly seeking new uses for Nickel and Monel Metal which will help to bring greater efficiency and beauty in home, office and factory. When you purchase articles containing Nickel you help to provide employment for Canadian labor, and a market at the Nickel mines for practically every kind of Canadian product, from electric motors to candles; from air compressors to boots and groceries; from sand pumps to lumber, timber and supplies.

Ask your stove dealer to show you the new ranges with Monel Metal tops.

Figure 8. Charles F. Comfort. *A Review of Institutional Advertising* which has appeared in Canadian publications from 1932 to 1946 and early 1947. The International Nickel Company of Canada, Ltd. (INCO)

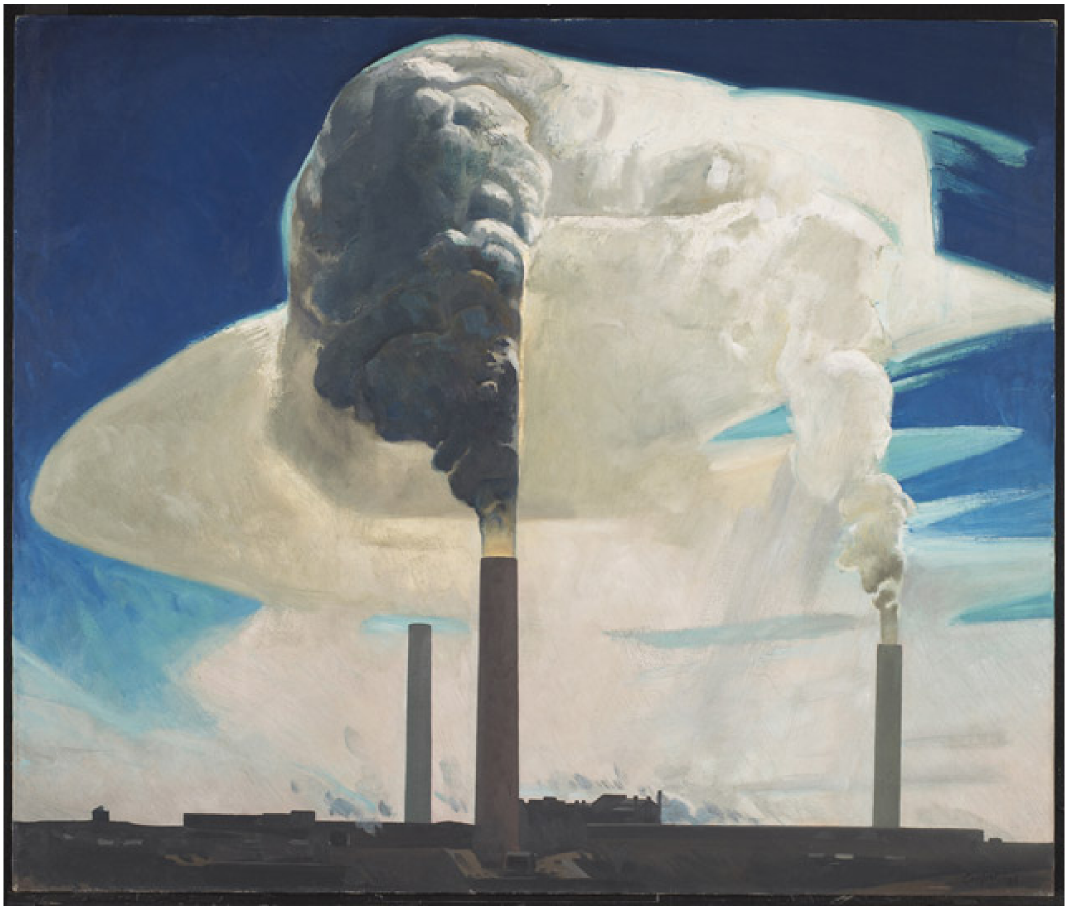


Figure 9. Charles Comfort, *Smelter Stacks, Copper Cliff,* 1936, oil on canvas 101.9 x 122.2cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

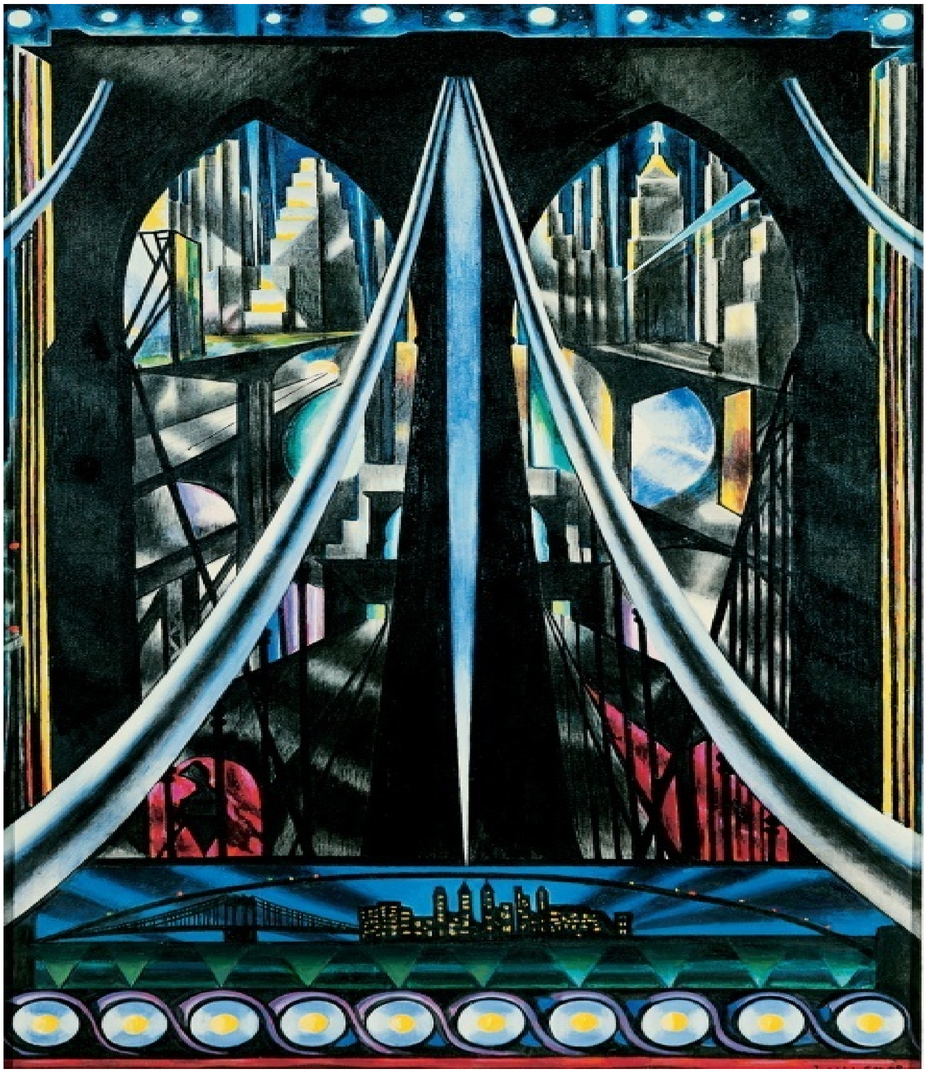


Figure 10. Joseph Stella, *Brooklyn Bridge: Variations on an Old Theme,* 1939, oil on canvas, 18.4 x 107.2 cm. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

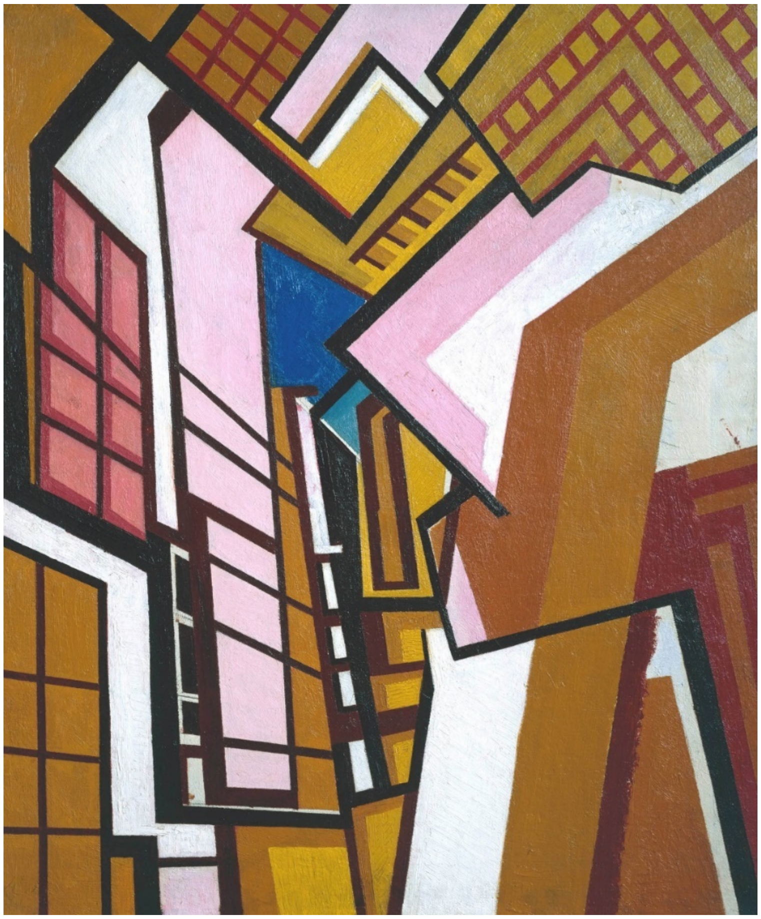


Figure 11. Wyndham Lewis, *Workshop,* c. 1914-15, oil on canvas, 765 x 610mm. Tate Britain, London.

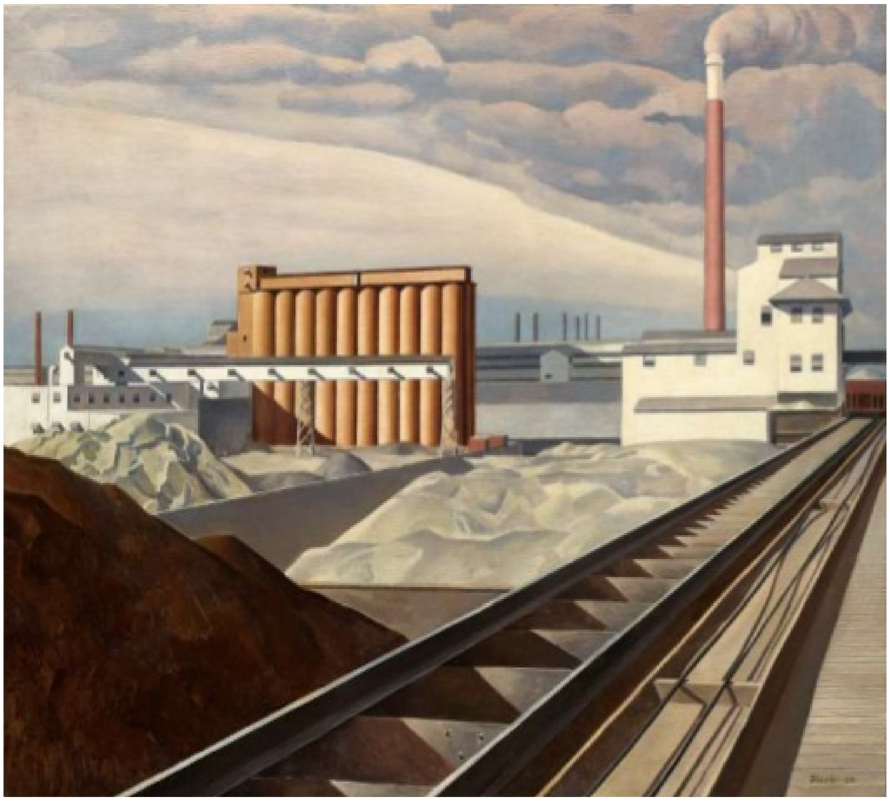


Figure 12. Charles Sheeler, Classic Landscape, 1931, oil on canvas, 63,5 x 81,9 cm.

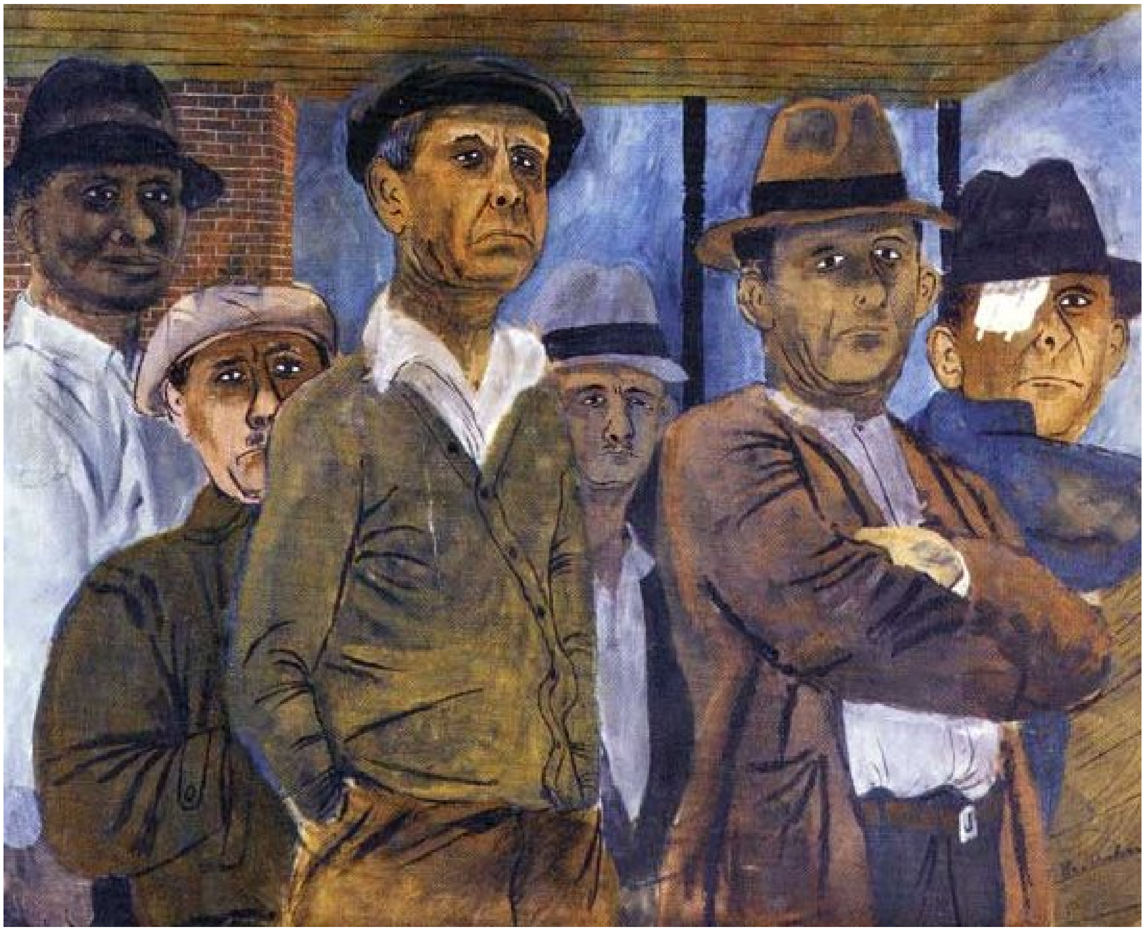
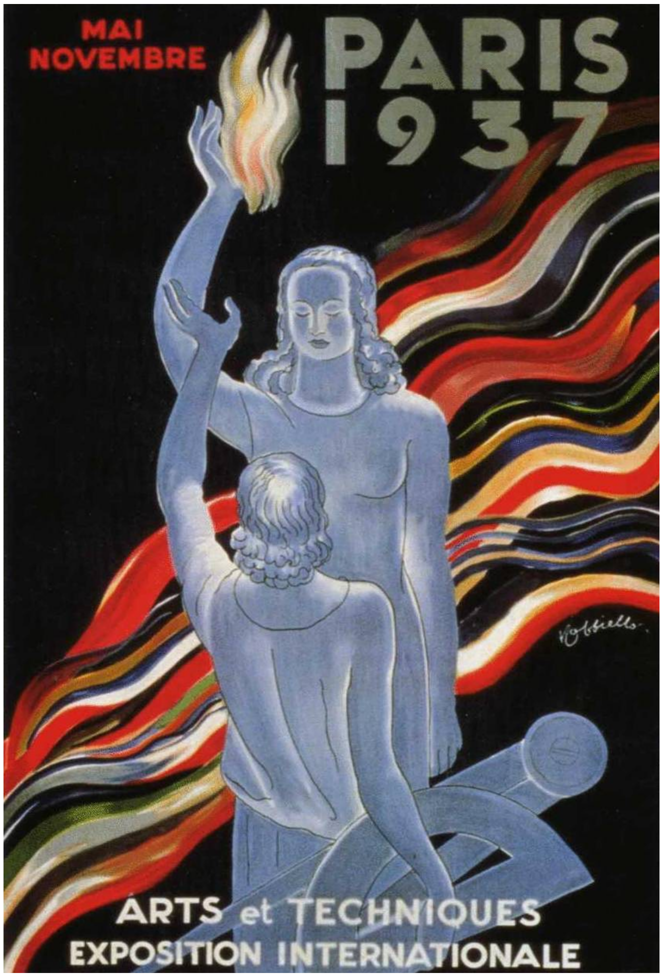


Figure 13. Ben Shahn, *Unemployed*, 1938, tempera on paper mounted on masonite, 13 1/4 x 16 5/8 inches. Private collection/Ben Shahn Gallery.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PARIS
1937
Cappiello.
ARTS et TECHNIQUES
EXPOSITION INTERNATIONALE

Figure 14. Leonetto Cappiello. Paris: Arts et Techniques Exposition Internationale, 1937. Lithograph, 118.5 x 79. Musée de l’Affiche.

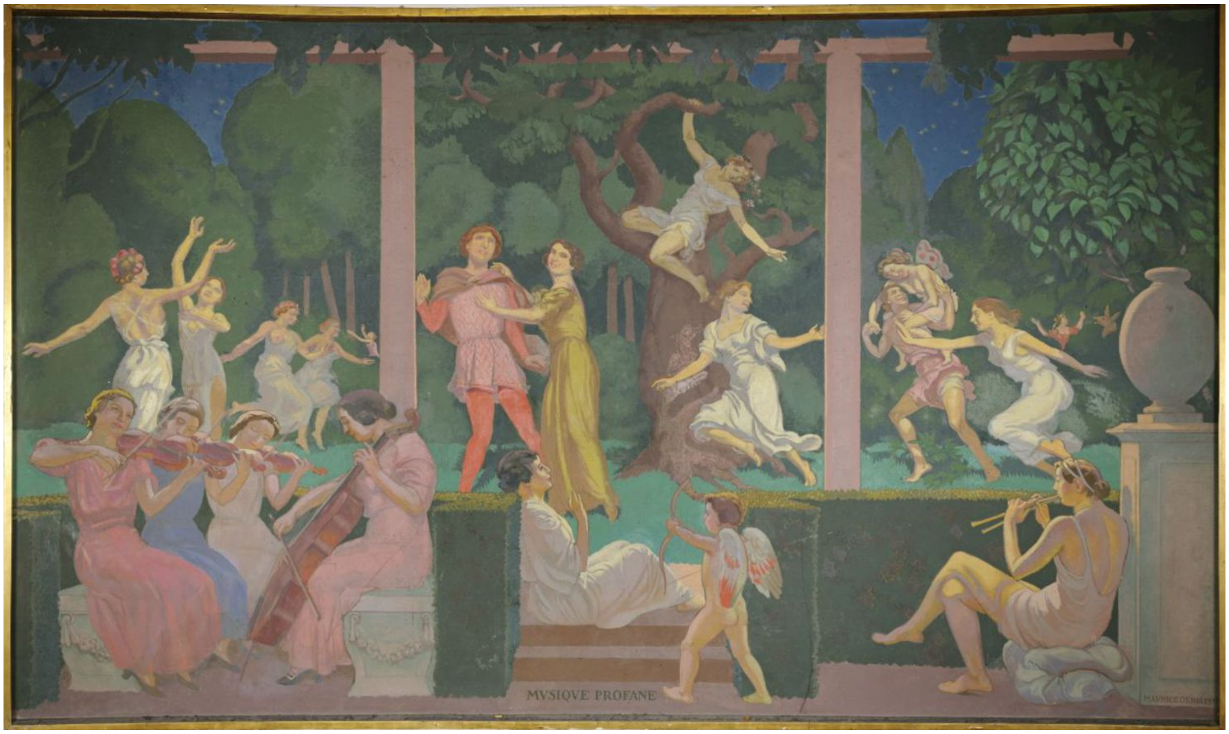
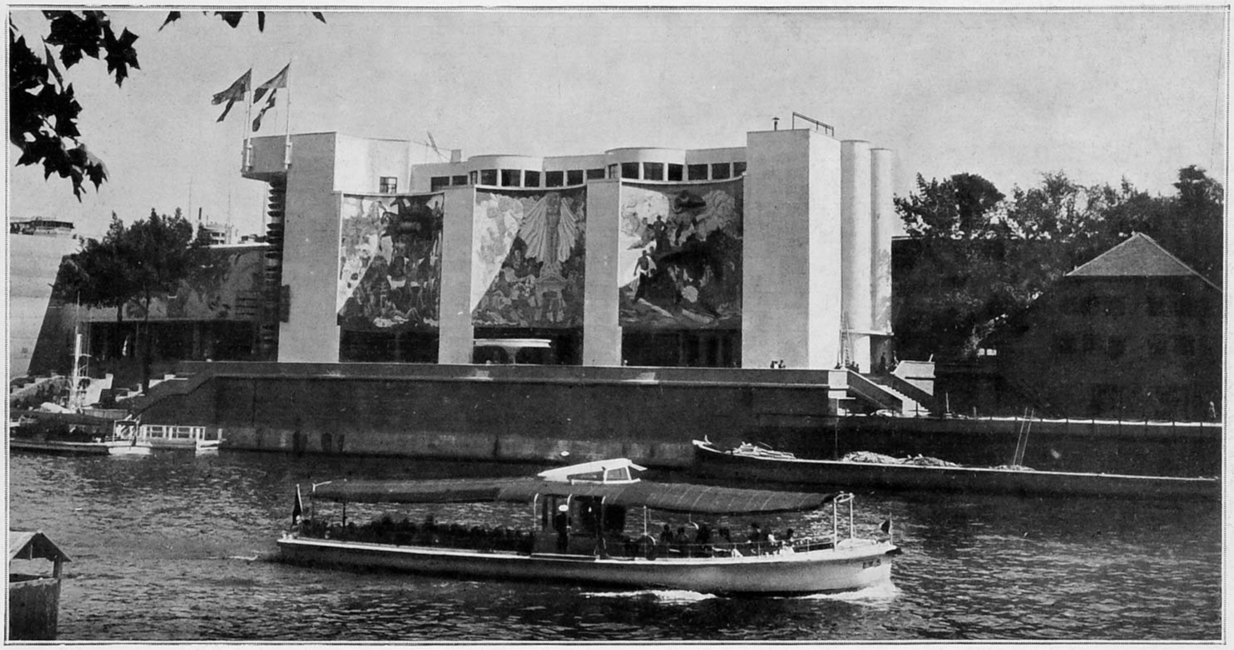


Figure 15. Maurice Denis. *La Musique Profane,* 1937, Palais de Chaillot, *Exposition internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne*, Paris, 1937.



Le pavillon du Thermalisme.

Labro, archit. — Fresques d'Yves Brayer, Tondu et Dussour. — *Photographies de Flaugergues.*

Figure 16. Le Pavilion du Thermalisme, Decorative panels by André Tondu, Louis Dussour and Yves Brayer, 1937, *Exposition internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne*, Paris, 1937.

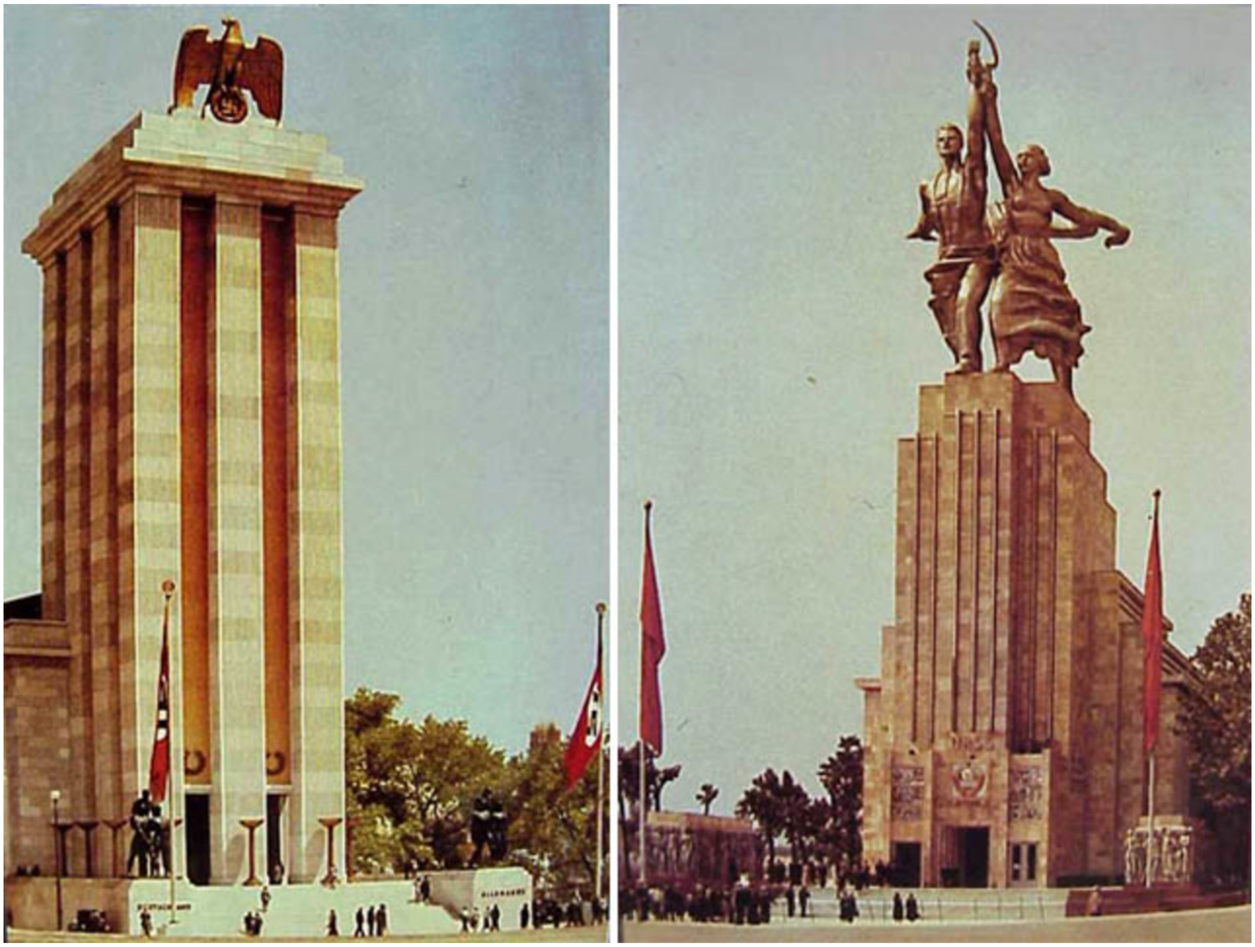


Figure 17. Left: Albert Speer (architect) and Josef Thorak (sculptor), Pavilion of Nazi Germany, 1937 / Right: Boris Iofan (architect) and Vera Mukhina (sculptor), Pavilion of the USSR *Exposition internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne*, Paris.

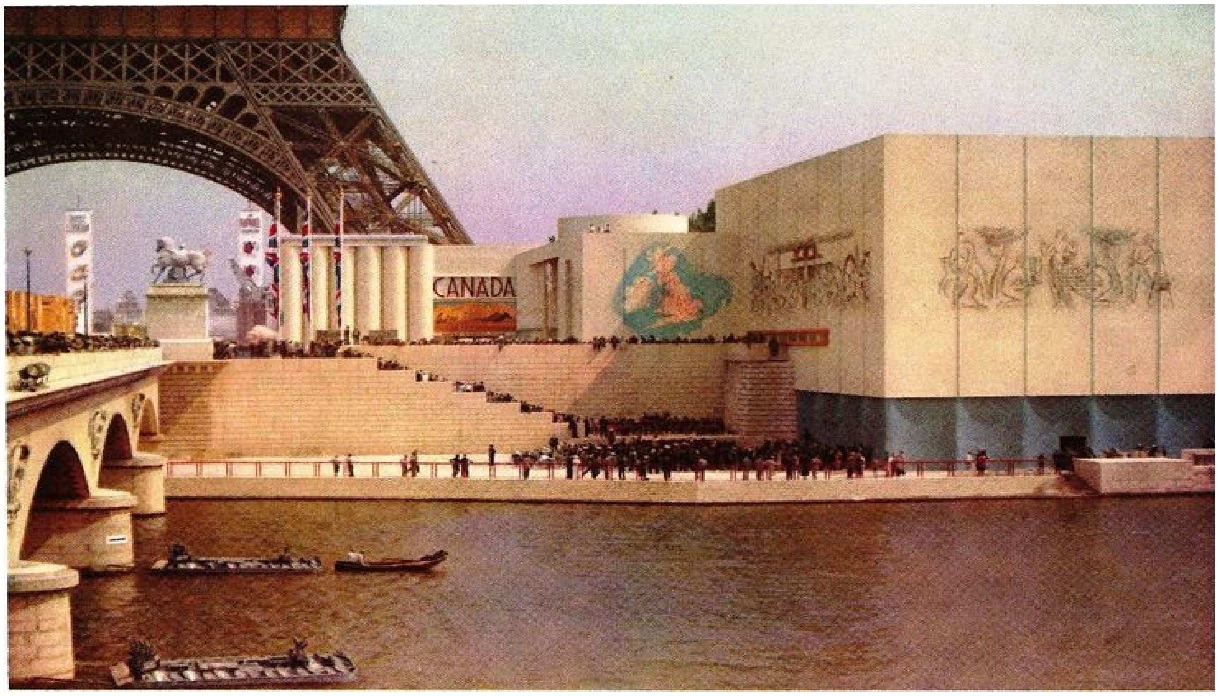


Figure 18. Canadian Government Exhibition Commission, (architects) Canadian Pavilion, *Exposition internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne,* Paris, 1937.

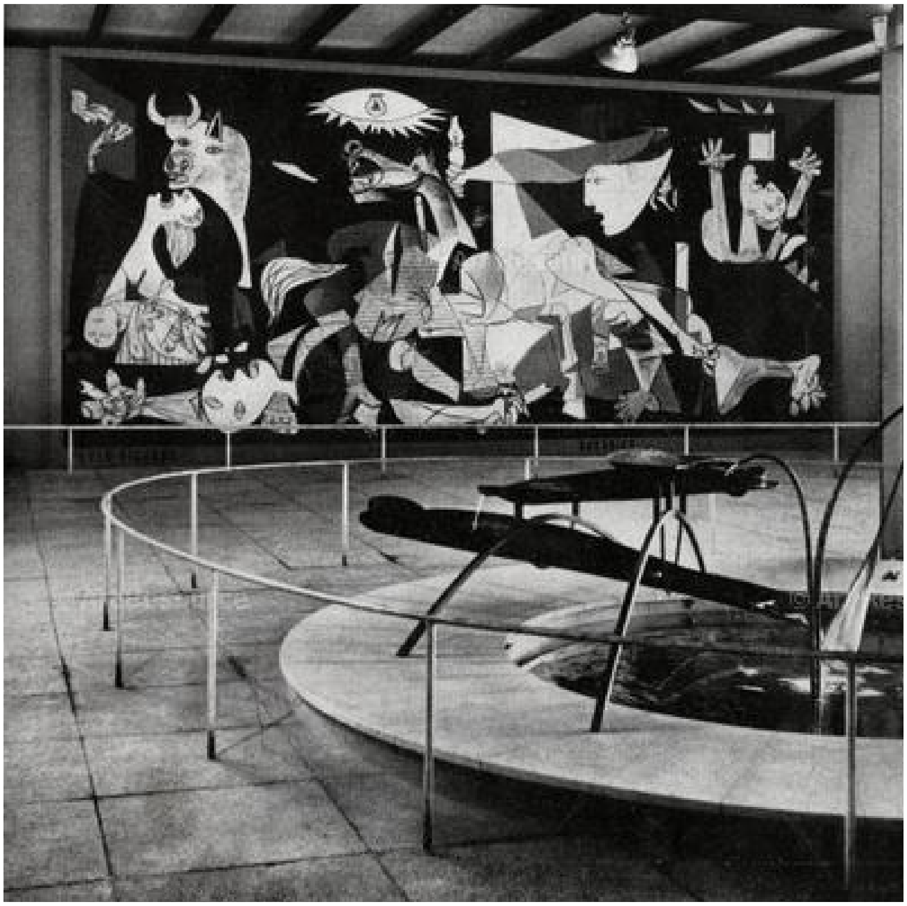


Figure 19. Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937, oil on canvas, 34.9 x 7.76 m. Pavilion of the Republic of Spain, *Exposition internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne* Paris 1937. Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid.

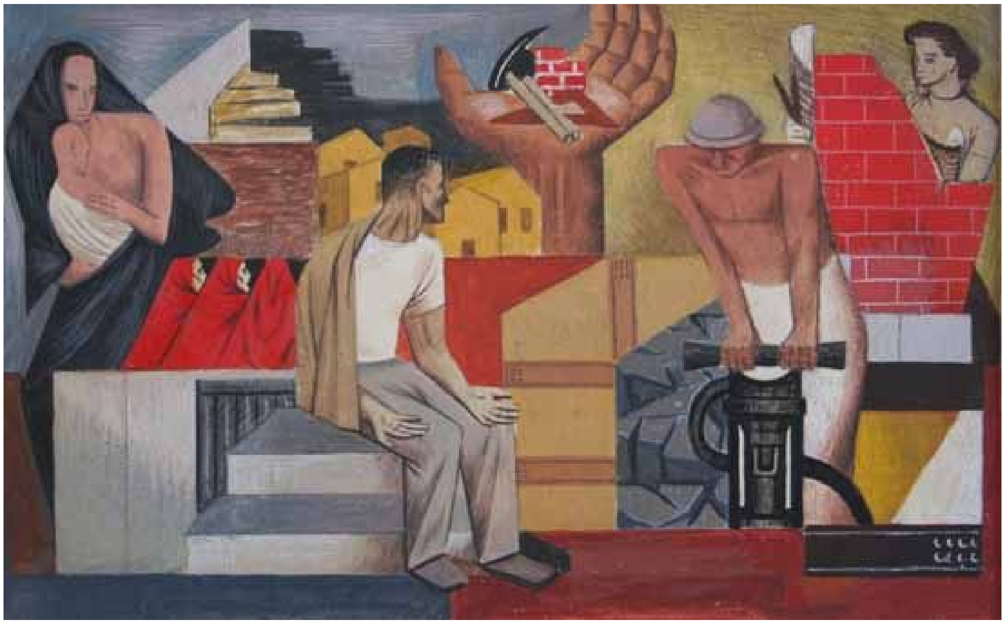


Figure 20. Seymour Fogel, *Rehabilitation of the People,* c. 1939, tempura and ink with collage on paper, Works Progress Administration Building, New York World Fair, 1939.

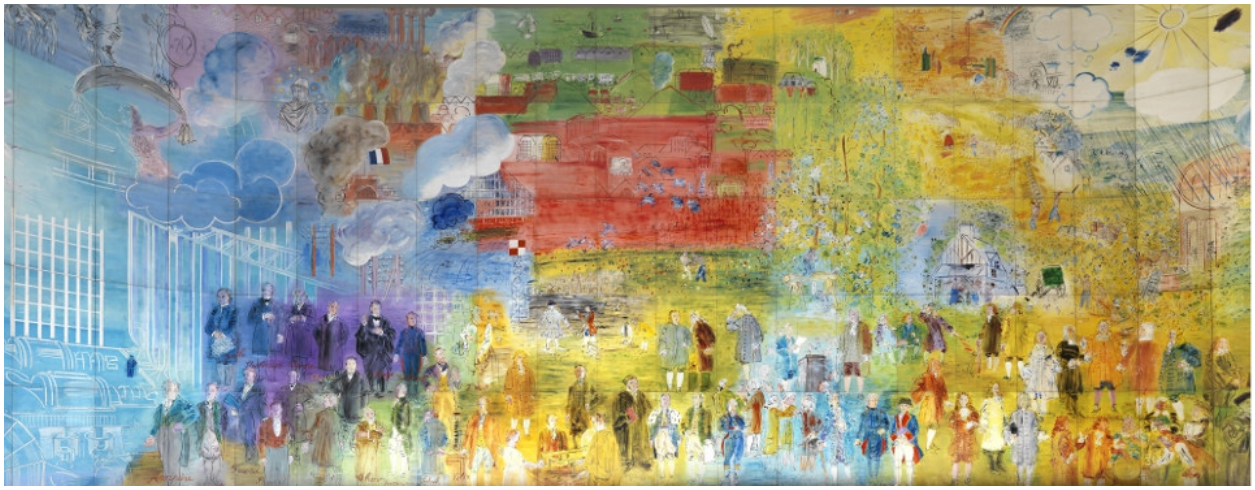


Figure 21. Raoul Dufy, La Fée électricité, 1937, 2000 x 1011 cm. *Exposition internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne*, Paris, 1937. Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.

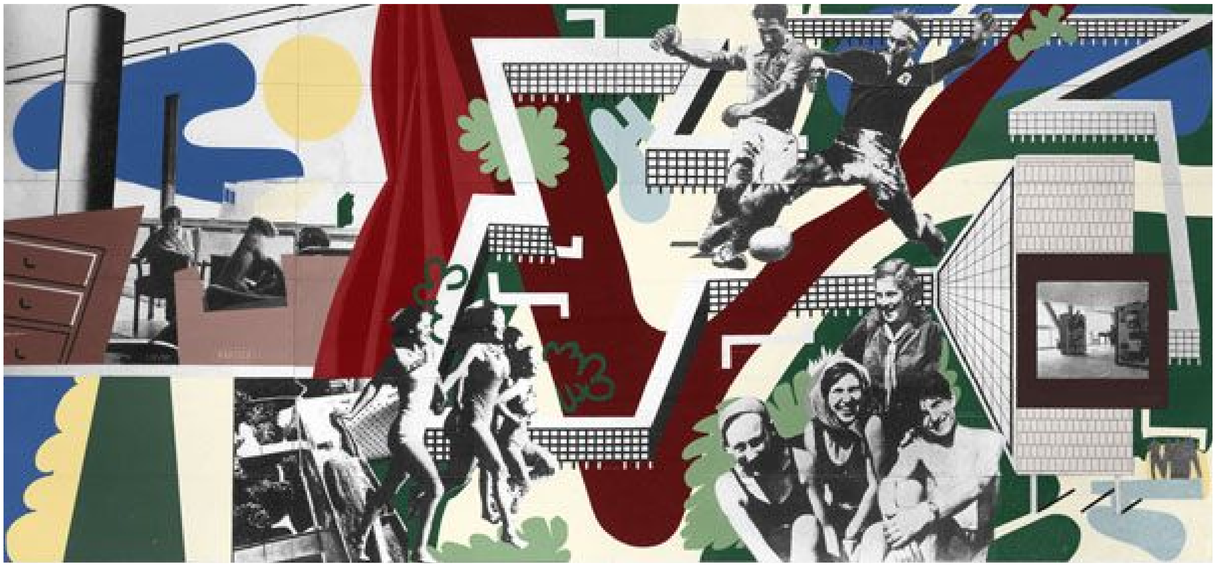


Figure 22. Le Corbusier, *Habiter,* 1937, photomural, 564 x 265cm, Pavilion des Temps Nouveaux. *Exposition internationale des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne,* Paris, 1937. Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris. FLC L2-13-105.

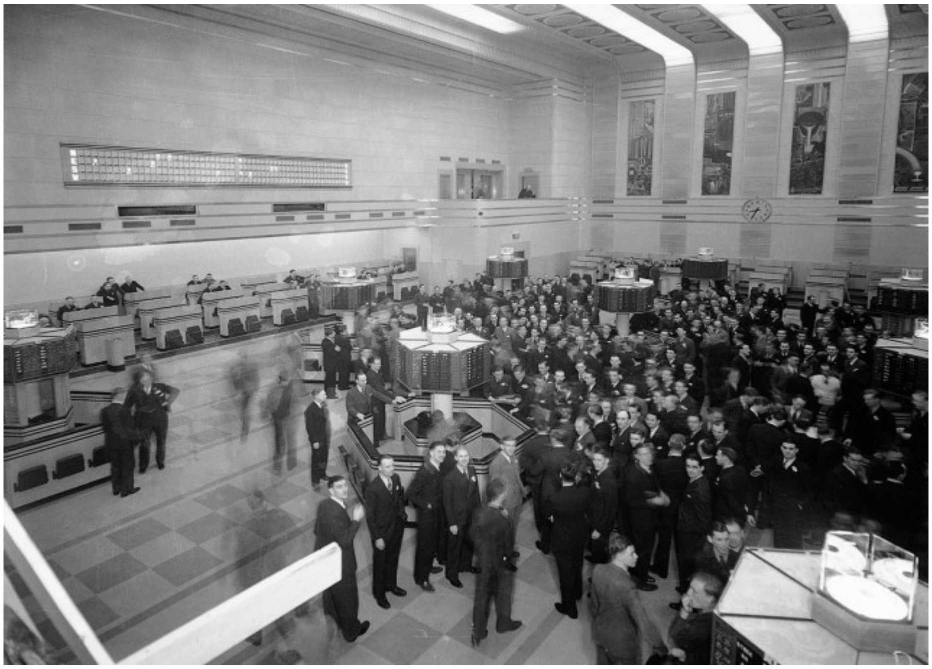


Figure 23. Official Opening, March 1937. Toronto Stock Exchange, Trading Floor, 1930s. City of Toronto Archives, Series 1057, Item 461

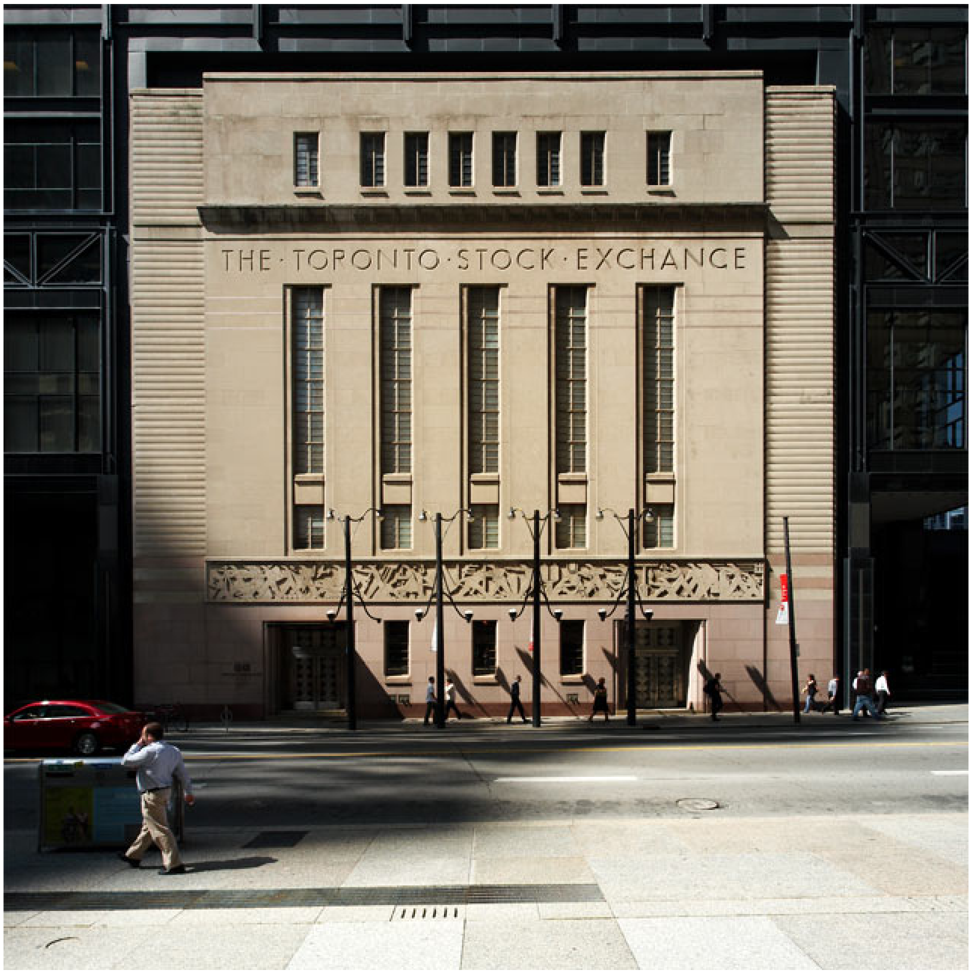

THE · TORONTO · STOCK · EXCHANGE

Figure 24. George and Moorehouse (architects), Samuel Maw (associate designer). Toronto Stock Exchange, 1937, Bay Street, Toronto.

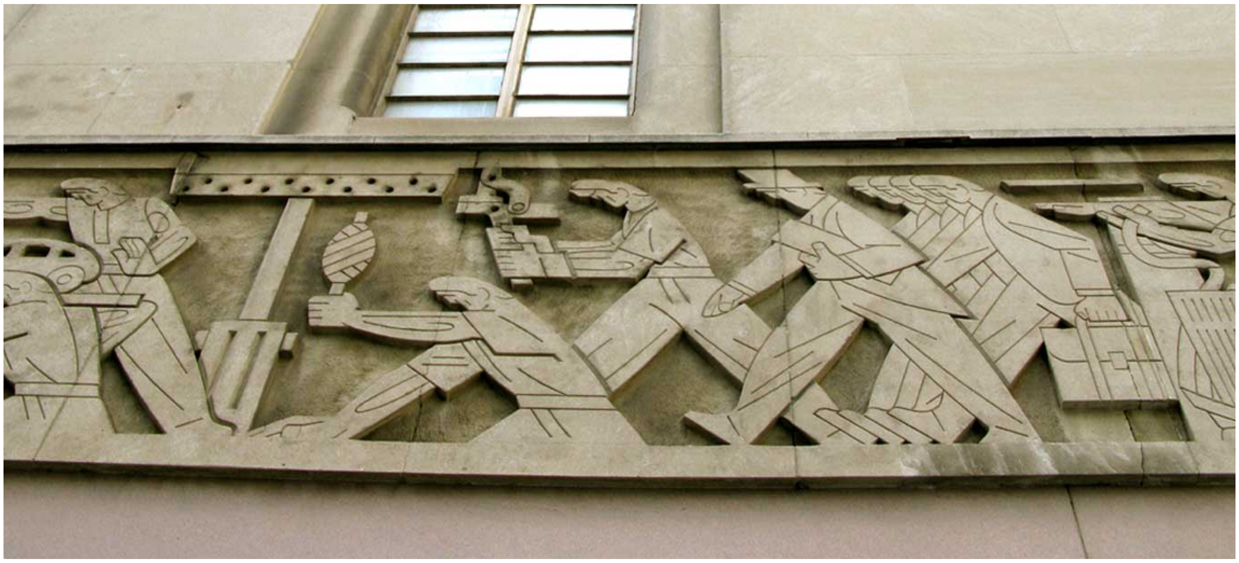


Figure 25. Charles Comfort, detail, Indiana limestone façade frieze, 1937, 22.5 m x over 1.5 m high, Toronto Stock Exchange Building (Design Exchange), Toronto.

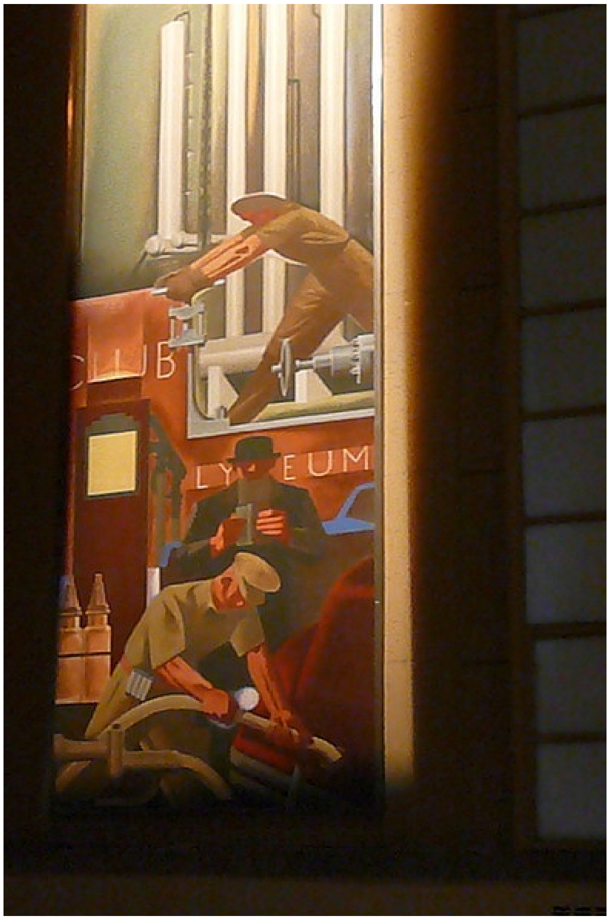


Figure 26. Charles Comfort, *Oil*, 1937, oil on canvas, 4.9 x 1.2 mm. Toronto Stock Exchange.

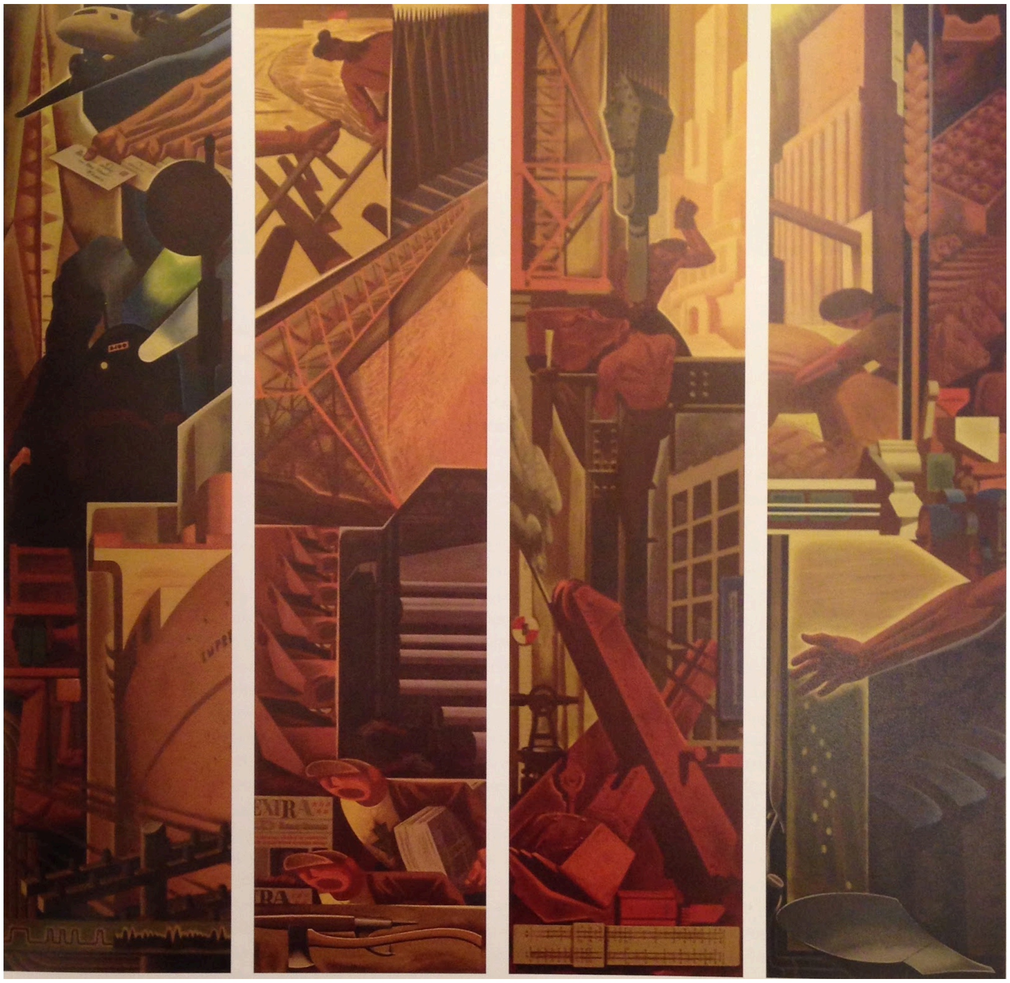


Figure 27. Charles Comfort, four of eight panels: *Transportation and Communications, Pulp and Paper, Construction and Engineering and Agriculture*, 1937, oil on canvas, 4.9 x 1.2mm. Toronto Stock Exchange, Toronto.

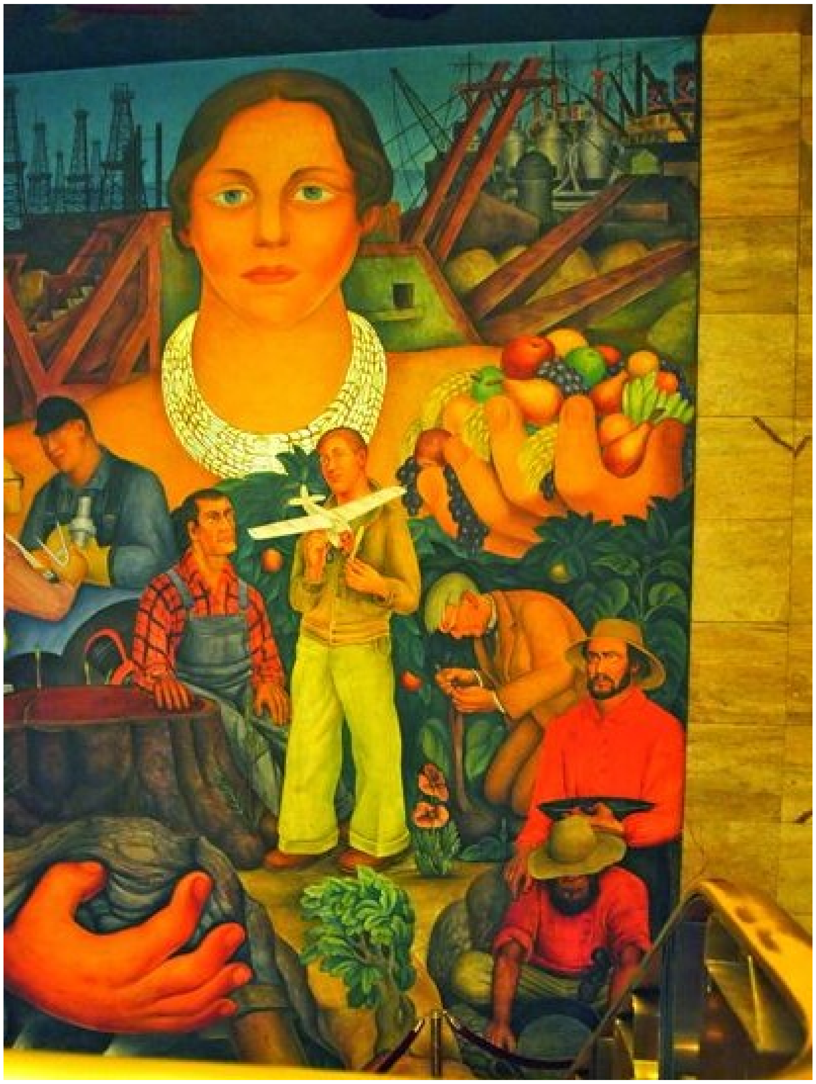


Figure 28. Diego Rivera, *The Allegory of California,* 1931, fresco, 43.82 sq. m. City Club of San Francisco*,* California, USA.

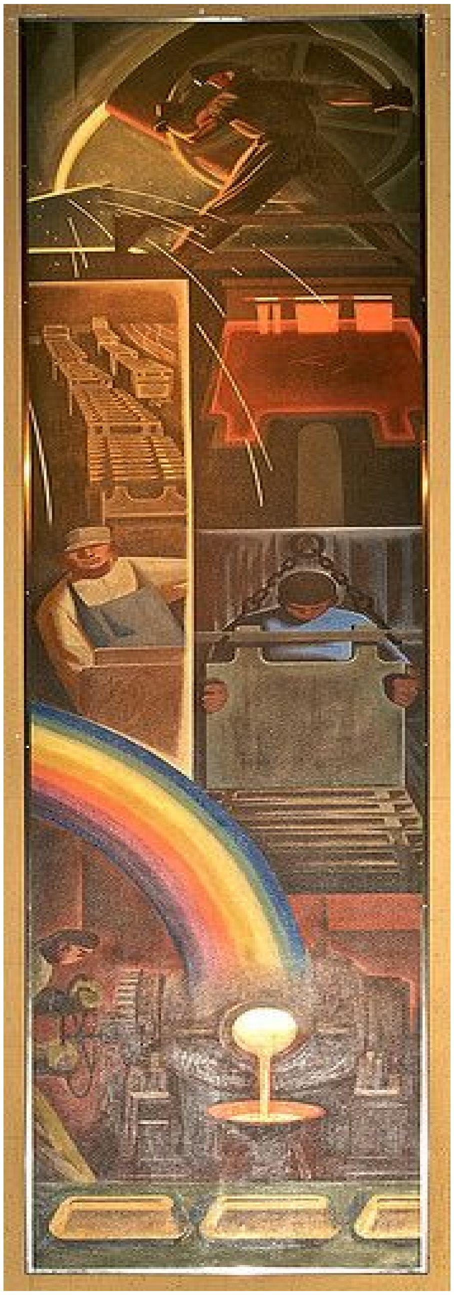


Figure 29. Charles Comfort**,** *Refining,* 1937, oil on canvas, 4.9 x 1.2 m. Toronto Stock Exchange.

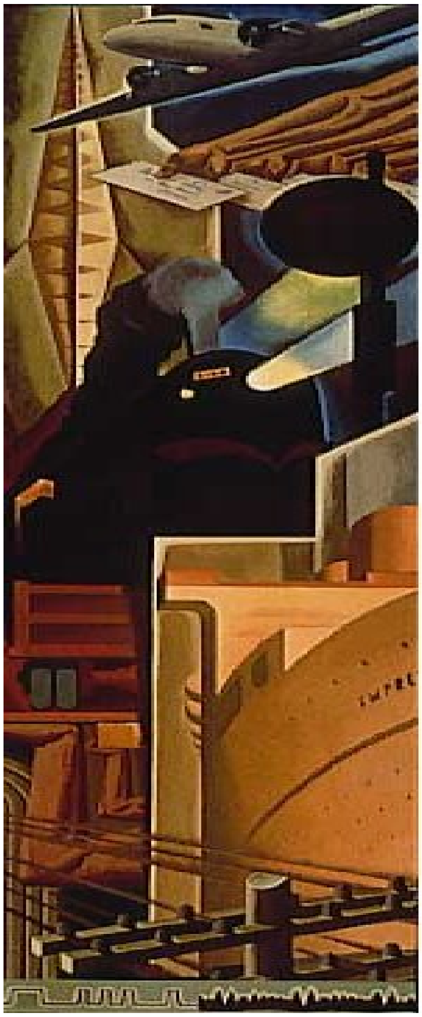


Figure 30. Charles Comfort, *Transportation and Communications* 1937, oil on canvas, 4.7 x 1.2 mm. Toronto Stock Exchange.

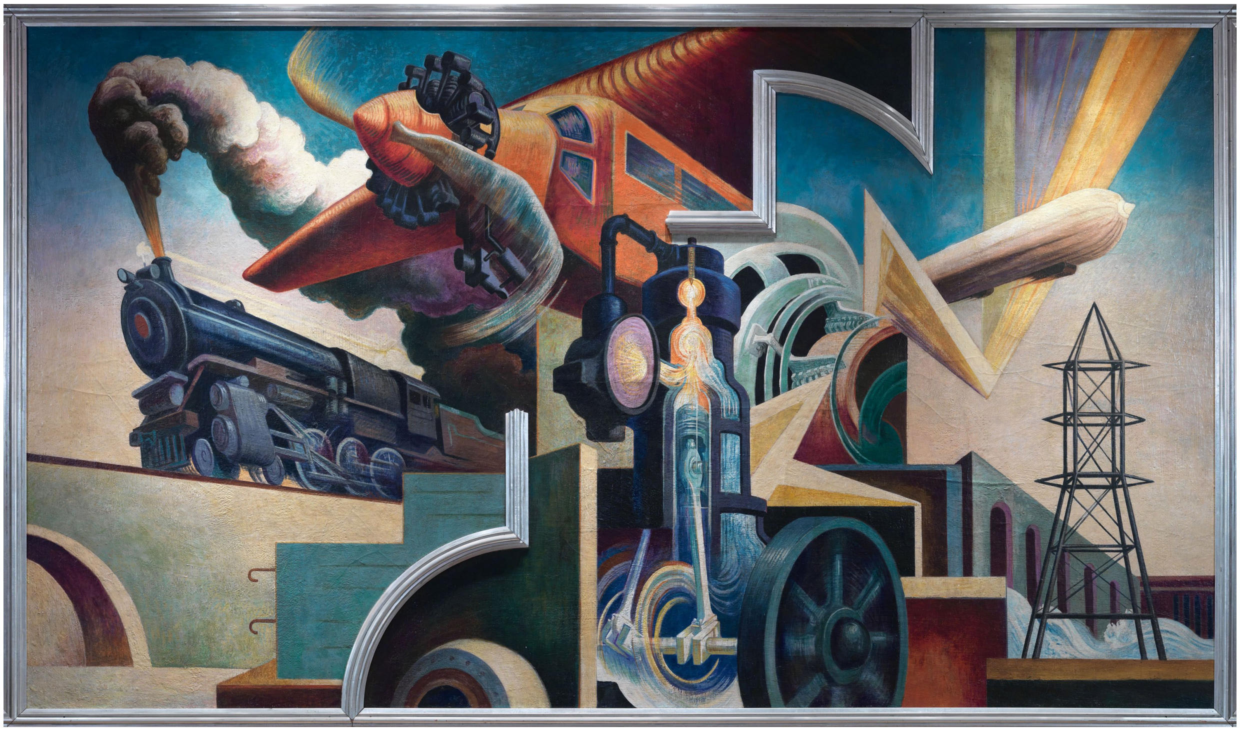


Figure 31. Thomas Hart Benton, "Instruments of Power" panel, *America Today,* 1930-31, egg tempera with oil glazing over Permalba on a gesso ground on linen mounted to wood panels, 233.7 x 406.4cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

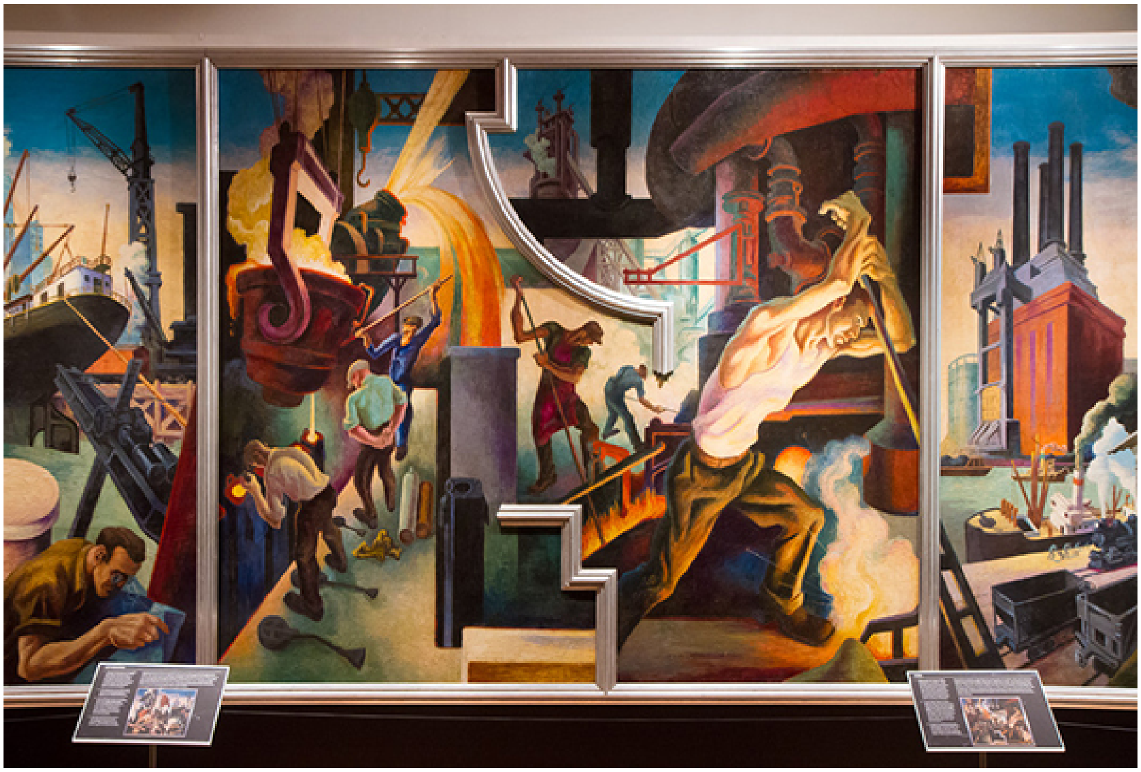


Figure 32. Thomas Hart Benton, “Steel” panel, *America Today*, 1930-31, egg tempera with oil glazing over Permalba on a gesso ground on linen mounted to wood panels, 233.7 x 297.2cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

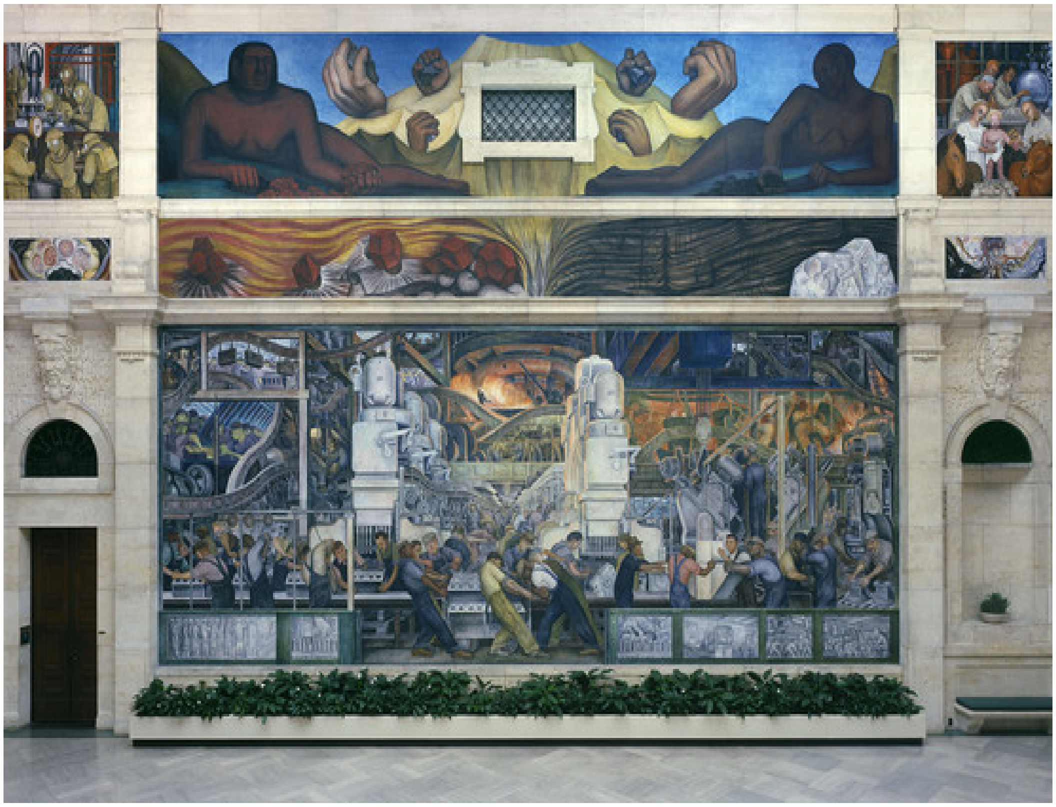


Figure 33. Diego Rivera, North Wall Section, “Clenched Fists,” *Detroit Industry Fresco Cycle*, 1932-33, 269.2 x 1371.6cm. Detroit Institute of Arts.

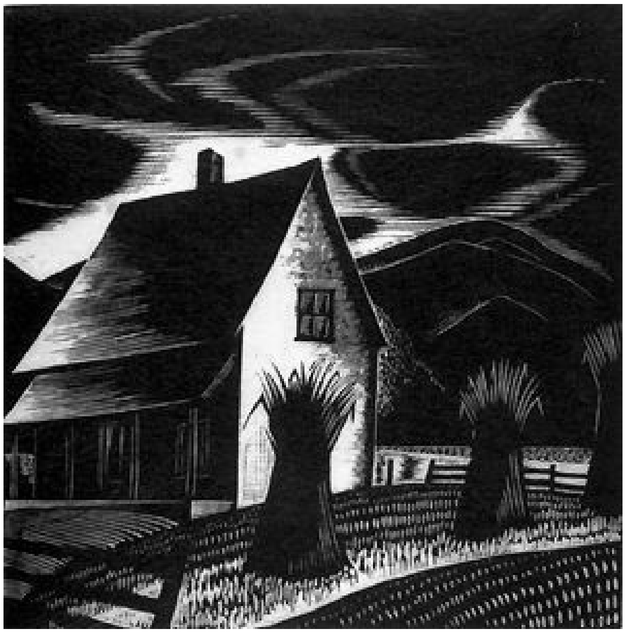


Figure 34. Carl Schaefer, *Corn Stooks*, 1933, wood engraving, 26.9 x 18.3cm. National Gallery of Canada.

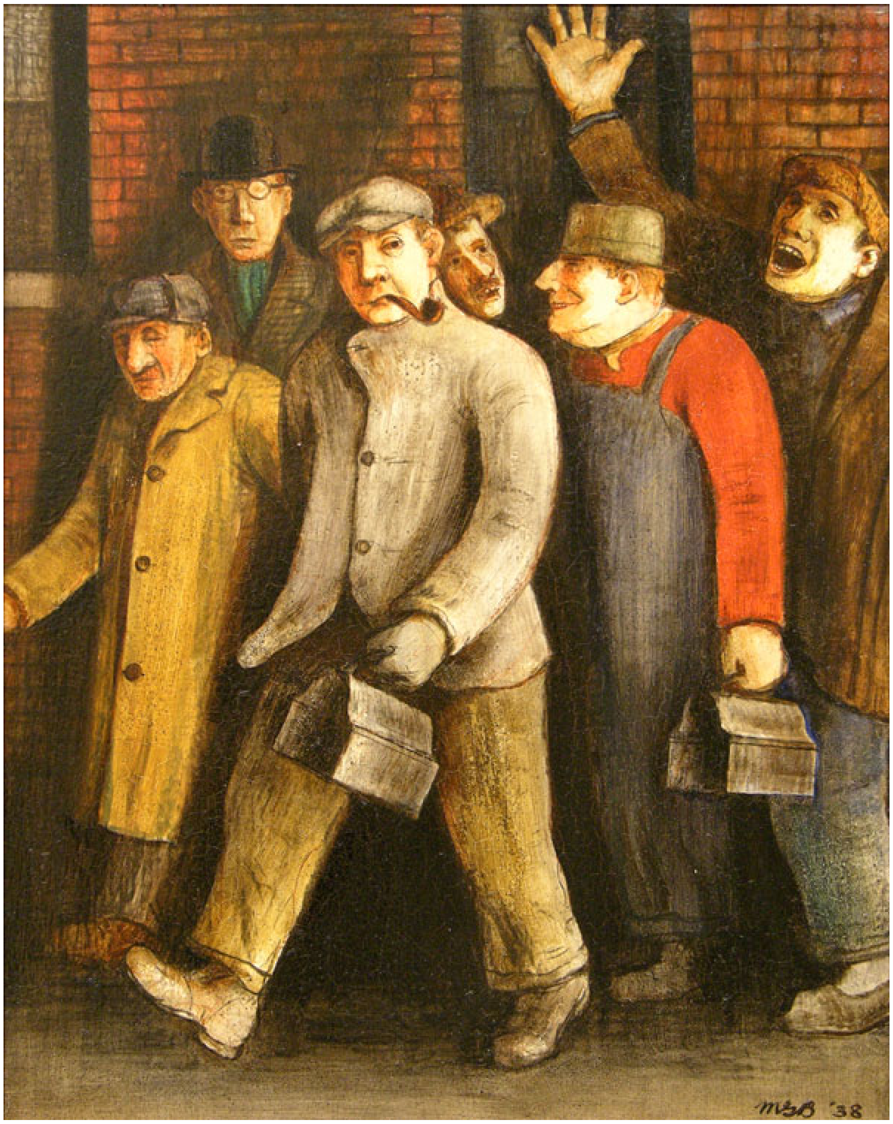


Figure 35. Miller Brittain, *Longshoremen Off Work,* 1938, oil on Masonite, 56.5 x 45.7cm. New Brunswick Museum, St. John, New Brunswick.