

The essays included in *Careers for Women*, the second thematic section of the collection, span a wide timeframe from the late nineteenth century to the second half of the twentieth century. Although varied in historical focus, each of the five essays broadly addresses different strategies implemented by working women in an effort to negotiate the professional terrain as a conventionally masculine realm. These techniques include referencing conventionally feminine spheres, such as the domestic space or working in handicrafts, or building alternative visual vocabularies. Additionally, many of the essays question the relationship of women cultural practitioners to the conditions of modernism, highlighting the contradictions of a period defined by its commitment to artistic freedom through the restrictions or limits placed on women's involvement.

While the previous two sections discuss the possibilities and limitations of women's participation by those who, to different extents, negotiated their inclusion (and, alternatively, limited their exclusion) within professional art environments, the essays in the third and final thematic section highlight particular groups and contributions that have been denied access to the professional art world. In *The Limits of Professionalism*, the four essays illuminate the limitations of the framework of professionalism specifically, but also art historical frameworks generally, in rewriting Canadian history as an inclusive narrative. As Huneault and Anderson explain in the preface to the collection, "the adoption of a discourse of professionalism by art historians effectively marginalizes certain women, certain kinds of contributions, and certain spheres of practice" (p. xxiii). Interweaving discussions of race and labour, these essays most fully express the complexities of art historical interventions through the lens of professionalization, because of the historically unequal access to professional institutions and practices for different women in Canada.

Taken together, the essays in this collection provide a powerful and convincing entry-point into a much needed conversation about the history of women's cultural production and the values of art practice in Canada. Already, this conversation has been continuing, most recently at the second conference organized by CWAHI in May 2012. This book would be a powerful addition to teaching and researching not just women's history in Canada, but history in Canada more broadly, by highlighting what has been marginalized or rendered invisible in dominant narratives.

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MACDONALD, Charlotte – *Strong, Beautiful and Modern: National Fitness in Britain, New Zealand, Australia and Canada, 1935-1960*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2011. Pp. 240.

*Strong, Beautiful and Modern* is an ambitious and stimulating account of programmes of national fitness which emerged in the United Kingdom and her former settler colonies of Australia, New Zealand and Canada in the late 1930s and 1940s. Although the state had previously been involved in efforts to encourage physical exercise and health among children through the establishment of parks and playgrounds and physical education in

schools, Charlotte Macdonald argues that the measures which began with Britain's Physical Training and Recreation Act of 1937 were the first occasion in these societies where the state had promoted adult fitness.

Macdonald begins with the wider context. The most obvious was the challenge posed by the highly organised efforts of totalitarian states, especially Nazi Germany and made visible in the 1936 Berlin Olympics. But Macdonald is careful to show that the factors were more complex and politically diverse than this. There was pressure coming from labour unions wanting shorter working hours who argued for the human importance of leisure. And there was the fascinating outpouring of ideas about the value of physical health as the source of inner vitality which was a response to the modern world of cities and industrial uniformity. For women especially, movements such as the Women's League for Health and Beauty established the idea that spiritual health and beauty no less followed from physical fitness.

The next four chapters document in considerable detail the development and fate of state efforts in Britain, New Zealand, Australia and Canada. What emerges is that while each was affected by the broader context and each was inspired by others' efforts, the particular stories were distinct. The UK's Physical Training and Recreation Act of 1937 established the principles of the movement – that the state would try to encourage people to take up physical exercise through publicity campaigns and the funding of recreational facilities. But the limits of the funding and the strong British commitment to voluntarism condemned the initiative which faded by the outbreak of war. In New Zealand the impulse came from a welfarist Labour government which in promoting the workers' weekend was keen that the workers use their time constructively. The state took its involvement seriously with the creation of a Physical Welfare Branch. But this expansion of the state awoke suspicions from conservative forces and when the National party came to power in 1949 the scheme was closed soon after. In Australia the movement was bound up with fears that urbanisation was undermining the 'bush legend', the outback lifestyle that was thought so central to national identity. After state action in the late 1930s a federal law was passed in 1941 as part of wartime anxieties. Macdonald suggests that the Australian movement lasted longest and was the most effective. Canada came last (with a law in 1943, again with war as a focus) but it was killed by the politics of the Cold War in the early 1950s.

The last chapter of the book pulls together some broader generalisations about the movement as a whole. With its even-handed treatment of the four national stories one might have expected that the study would have presented itself as a piece of comparative history, in which the case study could throw up some generalisations about the distinct cultures of each polity. There are hints of this – the way the Canadian experience is shaped by its exposure to American professional sport and its Anglo-Francophone division, the Australian fascination with the bush, the interest of New Zealand policy-makers in extending the programme to the Māori community, and the British sensitivity about amateurism and individual choice. But Macdonald prefers to explain the different histories by particular circumstances than broader cultural differences, and her interest is rather in emphasising the common character of 'the British World'. Obviously the common culture of the Empire is important and was vividly expressed in these years by the Empire Games in Hamilton Ontario in 1930 and Sydney in 1938. But to establish how

far these patterns in the four countries were ‘British World’ patterns, would also require a bit more exploration of similar movements in these years in the non-British world. One thinks most obviously of the United States and continental Europe. I would like to have seen at least briefly some attention paid to these if only to pin-point what was ‘British’ about these four countries’ experiences. After all the factors that brought them into being – international sporting competition, the challenge of urban-industrial society, the concern about ‘fitness’ in all its meanings – were widespread in the 1930s. So exactly how did this play out in the United States, Germany, or Scandinavia?

In turning away from these high-level, but necessarily crude generalisations, this book highlights some of the ambivalences and subtleties of the fitness movement. Let’s list some of them. There was the constant discomfort, present in all four about the state being involved in a pursuit which was seen as having strong voluntarist traditions and institutions. The negative example of Nazi Germany was ever present. Second there was the ambivalent political meaning of these movements – were they the measures of a reforming and benevolent welfare state or were they measures of social conservatives concerned to impose physical strength and discipline on a soft urban population? Third there was ambivalence towards modernity itself – at one level the many fine photos in this book of massed physical movement echo the mass production of industrial society, but at another level they represent a revolt against the structures of the industrial world. Finally there was the uncertainty as to whether this movement was about the physical health of the whole community or about the desire to produce high-performing athletes who could bring honour and glory to the nation. Ultimately it was the uncertainties expressed in these debates which meant that most of these programmes had short lives and inadequate funds. None of the societies could really commit themselves to the movement over the long-term – although as Macdonald points out they did create precedents which took off later, especially in the funding of high performance sport. It is the exploration of these ambivalences which is the real strength of this book and gives it a value much greater than might at first be suspected. It makes *Strong, Beautiful and Modern* of interest to anyone studying the relations of the state and physical exercise or sport.

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*Te Ara: the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*

MARSDEN, Lorna R. – *Canadian Women & the Struggle for Equality. The road to Gender Equality Since 1867*, Don Mills, Oxford University Press, 2012, 292 p.

La progressive institutionnalisation de l’idée d’égalité entre les sexes dans les lois canadiennes depuis 1867 est le principal objet de cette synthèse historique, signée par Lorna Marsden, ancienne rectrice et vice-chancelière des universités York et Wilfrid Laurier, récemment revenue à son premier métier de professeure de sociologie à l’Université York, à Toronto.

Destinée en premier lieu aux étudiants et aux étudiantes de sociologie, cette synthèse ne prétend pas offrir de nouvelles données, ni proposer une nouvelle théorie sur le changement social. L’auteure revisite plutôt, à la lumière des travaux récents, une théorie