Marylin J. McKay’s *Picturing the Land: Narrating Territories in Canadian Landscape Art, 1500–1950* is an insightful examination of how Canadians have portrayed their territory. McKay’s threefold approach explores the relationship between society, art and the land, arguing that contemporary methods of landscape representation and Western cultural motifs in addition to conventional conceptions of territory influenced how artists, cartographers and amateur painters depicted Canadian scenes. Her approach firmly embeds this art within its social and historical context, inextricably linking anglophone Canadian and francophone Canadian understandings of their territories with how they creatively portrayed them. Reproduced maps, paintings, photographs and engravings offer readers a comprehensive survey of art that represented Canadian land, but McKay’s additional use of contemporary art criticism, literature and even mythology successfully places these images within the broader Canadian and, at times, European art scenes.

McKay begins her work by stating that *Picturing the Land* is meant to be a “social history of art” (3), and to this end she is very much successful, largely due to the framework in which she analyzes landscape images. While she takes a roughly chronological approach, she also carefully explains how perspectives of land as territory changed over time, categorizing them under five separate ideologies that influenced artistic renderings of landscape: Nomadic, Arcadian, Edenic, sedentary and universal. McKay argues that these conceptions of territory not only helped characterize how the land was portrayed, but also that these understandings partially dictated the function of the artwork itself. This proves to be an effective way of analyzing and discussing Canadian art between 1500 and 1950 because it highlights the extent to which landscape art reflected social conventions while simultaneously showcasing an array of changing attitudes toward Canadian landscape itself.

From here, McKay moves through Canadian landscape art history, although she organizes her book by subject. Experiences with a new land, agricultural scenes, woodland images, the Group of Seven and a variety of social uses of art as a means of claiming space are all discussed individually, but because McKay consistently shows the relationship between landscape art and understandings of territory, these two concepts work together to show an evolving awareness of the cultural importance of these spaces. Helpful here is her insistence on addressing francophone and anglophone works separately, adding a crucial cultural dimension to her analysis. Believing that failing to distinguish between francophone and anglophone art is a “form of assimilation” (8), McKay devotes an equal amount of time to both groups, accounting for why shared spaces were pictured differently or noting instances of similarity. Her even-handed approach is key, as treating francophone and anglophone art as unique interpretations of the same territory supports her central argument while also emphasizing the fluidity of the land’s meaning. Consequently, a more complete depiction of Canada’s past art emerges and adds insight into different cultural understandings of space and territory.

McKay includes enough historical detail to contextualize the art she discusses, and she provides an equal measure of artistic analysis. In so doing, she produces a balanced and extremely valuable overview of Canadian landscape art and its surrounding historical context. This balance of social and art history renders this book useful for historians who would like a clearer understanding of the social significance of Canadian landscape art and of the pertinent historical context. This book should almost certainly be recommended for those working in both disciplines of art and history, especially if they are relatively new to either field, since McKay offers a fairly comprehensive account of the historiography and
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Review of

Hanson, Marin F. and Patricia Cox Crews. 2009. American Quilts in the Modern Age, 1870–1940. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.


From Log Cabin quilts to Colonial Revival quilts to quilts created from patterns and kits, American Quilts in the Modern Age, 1870–1940 is truly a quilt reference of grand proportions—both in its physical heft and the quantity of information found between its covers—whose fascinating and highly visual text will be a boon to quilt historians, folklorists and textile and museum specialists alike.

This work delves much deeper than most quilt histories, for its main focus is an impressive collection of quilts held at the International Quilt Study Center & Museum at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. The editors, Marin F. Hanson