

A scenic view of a turquoise lake in a mountain valley, surrounded by evergreen trees and rocky peaks. The text "CANADIAN LANDSCAPES" is overlaid in a white box.

# CANADIAN LANDSCAPES



**IN CANADA,  
LANDSCAPE  
PAINTINGS  
HAVE BECOME  
NATIONAL  
ICONS.**

- The Canadian identity is deeply connected to the physical land, their wilderness, and open spaces. Even though many of us live in urban and suburban environments, the people of Canada tend to think of this country as a place with trees, lakes, mountains, prairies, and large expanses of sky.
- From coast to coast, Canadians have many different types of landscapes to admire and enjoy.



## LANDSCAPE PAINTING OF EARLY PIONEERS

- Canadian landscapes were painted by early pioneers. They tried to capture the raw beauty and unique geography of the uninhabited expanses of land. However, these paintings were painted in a traditional style; it's hard to distinguish them from European landscape paintings of the time.

Northern Head of Grand Manan, Lucius Richard O'Brien (Canadian, 1832 - 1899)



## LANDSCAPE PAINTING IN THE 1900S

- Not until the early 1900s did a group of artists come together who captured the wilderness of this country in a uniquely Canadian way.
- **The Group of Seven**, also called the **Algonquin School**, was a collective of Canadian landscape painters founded in 1920 and disbanded in 1933. Known for their bold use of color and dynamic forms, they portrayed Canada's rugged northern forests as powerful, spiritual symbols of strength and independence.
- **Influenced by European style** --\_post-impressionists and Scandinavian artists\_, they developed a unique style that moved away from realistic imitation to express their emotional connection to nature.
- The original members included Franklin Carmichael, Lawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson, Franz Johnston, Arthur Lismer, J.E.H. MacDonald, and F.H. Varley. **Tom Thomson**, a key influence, passed away before the group formed. Over time, A.J. Casson, Edwin Holgate, and L.L. FitzGerald joined, broadening the group's geographic reach. **Emily Carr**, though not a member, was deeply inspired by their work.
- They challenged traditional European artistic styles, striving to create a uniquely Canadian voice in art. Their work remains a defining influence on Canadian art.

## CANADIAN LANDSCAPE ART AND IDENTITY

- Tom Thomson, the **Group of Seven**, **Emily Carr**, and others, paved the way for Canadian landscape painting to have its own unique and distinct “**Canadian style**.” They went into the raw and rugged areas in northern Ontario and Quebec and came back with paintings that vibrated with the energy of the land itself. They paved the way for Canadian landscape painting to have its own unique and distinct “Canadian style.”
- Their work, as well as the work of many Canadian artists who followed, reveals an inherent connection between the **Canadian landscape** and **identity**. So much so that Canadian landscape paintings became “**the art form**” above others and galleries would exhibit and present them as “**Canadian art**.”



Fir Tree and Sky, Emily Carr c.  
1935-1936 oil on canvas 102 x 69  
cm National Gallery of Canada





Tom Thomson, *Approaching Snowstorm*, 1915. The overwhelming, dark cloud in this sketch suggests the power of the coming storm.



Tom Thomson, *Early Snow*, 1916–17. This work is a striking wintry landscape.





Early Morning, Sphinx Mountain  
F.H. Varley (1881 - 1969)c. 1928



Algoma Hill, Lawren Harris. 1920