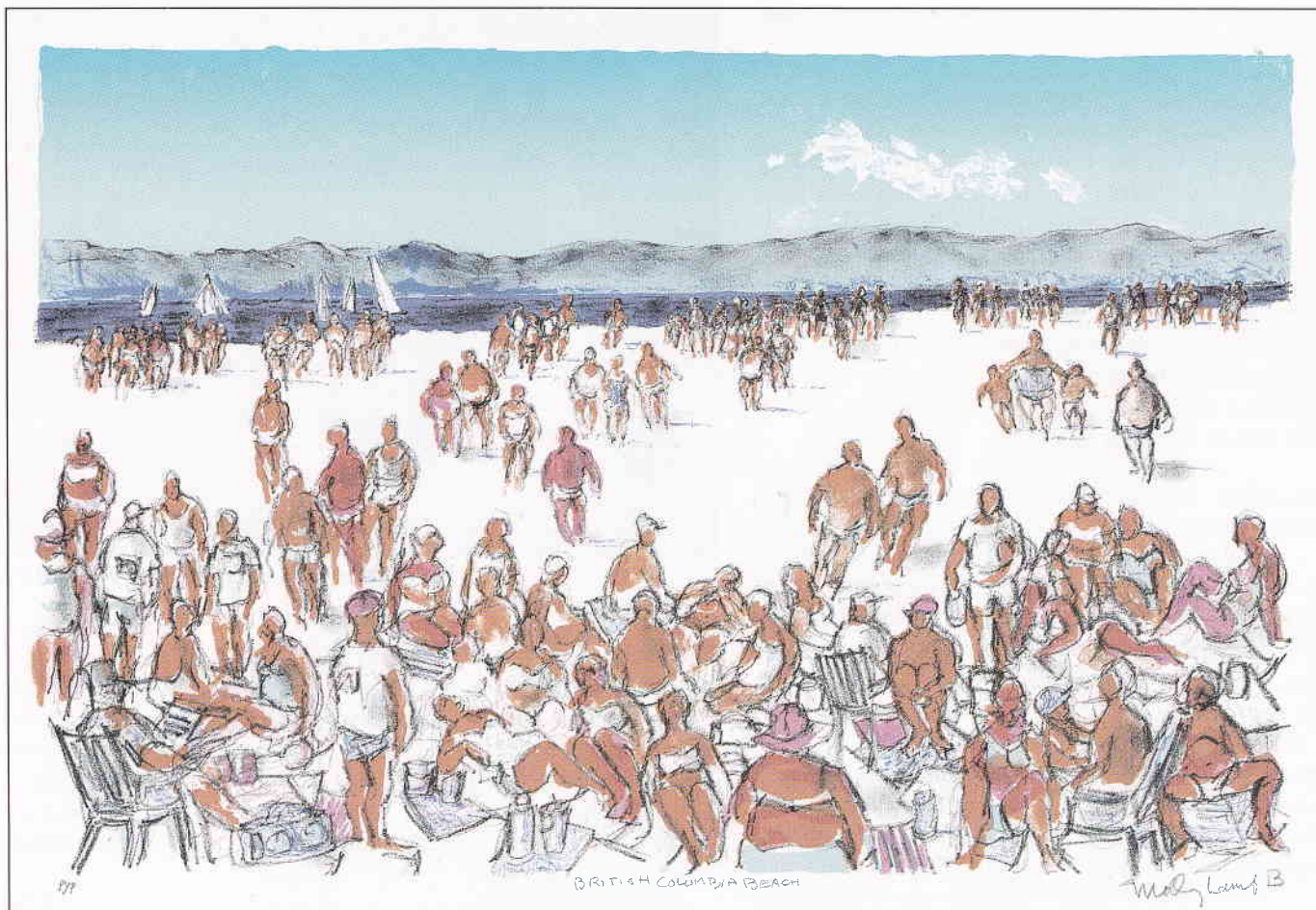


The "Artists for Kids" Trust Presents

MOLLY LAMB BOBAK



"BRITISH COLUMBIA BEACH"

5 colour lithograph, 38 cm. X 57 cm. (15" x 22.5")
printed on BFK Rives 100% rag paper
edition of 160, 16 artist's proofs
signed and numbered by the artist
issue price \$285.00 + taxes
available March, 1993

Molly Lamb Bobak

Molly Lamb Bobak is one of the most highly respected senior artists working in Canada today. Her great ability to render vitality through form in both watercolor and oil has become a stylistic trademark of her painting over the years.

Molly Lamb was born in Burnaby, British Columbia in 1922 and received much of her formal schooling in Vancouver. In 1938 her strong interest and ability in art led her to the Vancouver School of Art where she seriously pursued drawing and painting and was strongly influenced by Jack Shadbolt. Upon graduation in 1942, she joined the Canadian Women's Army Corps and became the first woman to be officially designated as a war artist in Canada. While in London, Molly Lamb met fellow war artist Bruno Bobak, developed a lifelong relationship, and following the war, they returned to Canada, were married and eventually settled in North Vancouver. In 1957 the Bobaks moved to Fredericton, New Brunswick where they have maintained active careers as artists.

Since 1945, Molly Lamb Bobak has worked both as a teacher and as an artist, sharing her enthusiasm for art with countless students and audiences across the country. As an artist, she has focussed primarily on two themes over the years: crowds of people and floral compositions. These themes have allowed her to explore the things she feels most strongly about: paint, composition and the dynamics of moving human form. She is also the author of a book containing her own watercolours entitled **"Wild Flowers of Canada"**, has illustrated two children's books **"Toes in My Nose"** and **"Merry-Go-Day"** and most recently has been featured in a book illustrating her war diary called **"Double Duty"**. Molly Lamb Bobak is a prolific painter and has exhibited internationally in England, Germany, Switzerland and Brazil. She also has had one person shows in most major cities in Canada. Her work can be found in numerous private and public collections in every region of Canada including the National Gallery in Ottawa.

The lithograph "British Columbia Beach" clearly shows Molly Lamb Bobak's wonderful ability to capture the drama of human form in the landscape. This Gulf island beach with its multitude of tanned bodies is full of movement and life. Her use of line and washes of colour do much to depict the vitality of this place.



Molly Lamb Bobak carefully transfers her drawing for "British Columbia Beach" to a lithographic stone.

The "Artists for Kids" Trust

The "Artists for Kids" Trust was established in 1990 through the generous cooperation among some of Canada's finest artists and the North Vancouver Board of School Trustees. Its mission is to build a permanent trust fund through the sale of fine art prints and to establish a permanent collection of art work by Canada's foremost artists. The "Trust" provides annual scholarships and on-going Fine Arts enrichment opportunities for elementary and secondary students in North Vancouver schools.

Canadian artists who have donated prints to the program include Bill Reid, Gordon Smith, Jack Shadbolt, Robert Bateman, Joe Fafard, Gathie Falk, Alan Wood, Betty Goodwin, Guido Molinari, David Blackwood and Molly Lamb Bobak.

To make an appointment to view Molly Lamb Bobak's print "British Columbia Beach" or if you require more information about the "Artists for Kids" Trust, please contact: Bill MacDonald, North Vancouver, B. C. Canada. V7P 2C1 Phone:

810 W. 21st, N. Vancouver BC V7P 2C1
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e-mail: bmacdonald@nvsc44.bc.ca
Internet: www.artists4kids.com

The "Artists for Kids" Trust
*is pleased to announce the publication and sale
of two outstanding new prints*

MOLLY LAMB BOBAK
"British Columbia Beach"

ALAN WOOD
"Beach Walk"

and an exhibition of

SECONDARY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM ETCHINGS

you are cordially invited to an opening reception

Thursday March 11, 1993
7:30 - 9:00 pm.

Seymour Art Gallery
4360 Gallant Avenue, North Vancouver, B.C.

Artists will be in attendance

*Prints by Bill Reid, Robert Bateman, Joe Fafard, Gathie Falk will also be available.
The exhibition continues through April 4, 1993.*

Obituaries

DEATH NOTICES: 1-800-387-9006 • FEEDBACK TO OBIT@GLOBEANDMAIL.COM

MOLLY LAMB BOBAK ARTIST, 94

Dynamic scenes focused on authenticity

First female war artist overseas documented the work, training and personal moments of the Canadian Women's Army Corps

ALLISON LAWLOR

Painter Molly Lamb Bobak, whose vibrant canvases can be found in collections throughout the country, started her career as the first Canadian woman to be sent overseas as an official war artist.

Fresh out of art school, she joined the Canadian Women's Army Corps in 1942. She longed to be sent overseas and follow in the footsteps of her family friend A.Y. Jackson, who had been a war artist during the First World War.

"I'd been in the army three years, just begging to be a war artist," Ms. Bobak told the CBC in 1993.

After V-E Day in Europe, she got her wish and was sent to London. There she met her future husband, 21-year-old Bruno Bobak, Canada's youngest war artist. The couple soon married. Ms. Bobak remained with the women's corps until 1946, documenting their training, marching and working.

"She had the ability to depict uniquely women's experiences," Laura Brandon, director of research, exhibition and interpretation at the Canadian War Museum said of Ms. Bobak, who died of esophageal cancer on March 1 at the age of 94 at the Veterans Health Unit in Fredericton.

"[Her art] was very personal," Dr. Brandon said. "It's an art about shared experiences and



"She had the ability to depict uniquely women's experiences," Laura Brandon, director of research, exhibition and interpretation at the Canadian War Museum said of Ms. Bobak, who died of esophageal cancer on March 1 at the age of 94 at the Veterans Health Unit in Fredericton.

"[Her art] was very personal," Dr. Brandon said. "It's an art about shared experiences and sharing those experiences." She added: "It is almost like conversational art."

Her painting *Gas Drill*, for example, shows a group of women trying on black gas masks. All looking in different directions, the women appear curious but not sure what to do with the masks, Dr. Brandon said. Ms. Bobak also painted backstage at army shows, depicting women getting dressed for the performances, and at a wedding feast, where she focused on the luscious food.

Throughout her life, Ms. Bobak remained supportive of Canada's war art. In 2000, on opening night of the exhibition *Canvas of War – Masterpieces from the Canadian War Museum*, which included work by both Mr. and Ms. Bobak, the couple sat eagerly in the front row.

Ms. Bobak was best known for her large, dynamic crowd scenes, such as parades and marches, which she started painting during the war. Over the years, she captured skaters on the Saint John River, athletes on the University of New Brunswick football field, various parades and processions, as well as local events in Fredericton such as the raising of the cross on the restored copper spire of Christ Church Cathedral.

"Each one of her paintings reveals something unique and personal as seen through her eyes. They are celebratory in their beauty," said Cindy Richmond, who organized a major retrospective in 1993 of her work at Regina's MacKenzie Art Gallery. "There is nothing pretentious about her work," she added. "Her authenticity is a large part of her work."

When she wasn't painting



Mary Lamb Bobak's painting *Private Roy* is an example of her 'ability to depict uniquely women's experiences' through art that focused on sharing personal moments and that bordered on being conversational. CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM/BEAVERBROOK COLLECTION OF WAR ART



worked mostly in his studio at the university, Ms. Bobak painted at home. Calling herself a rather sloppy artist in the studio, she said her husband was the opposite. Terry Graff, director at Fredericton's Beaverbrook Art Gallery, remembers visiting the Bobaks' home in 2008. When he asked them how they had influenced each other's work over the years, he realized it was the wrong question to ask. "Molly was very quick to let me know that Bruno had not influenced her work in any way, and then Bruno immediately said the exact same thing about Molly. I chuck

someone interesting. "She had a spontaneous joy in people and dogs and that translated into her paintings. Her paintings are all upbeat," Alex Bobak said.

When she wasn't working, she loved to walk. With her sketchpad, she roamed through Fredericton and along the Saint John River. In the winter, she cross-country skied. She had her favourite spots to pick blackberries, fiddleheads and wild mushrooms.

"She drew, drew, drew all the time," said Inge Pataki, owner of Fredericton's Gallery 78.

Ms. Bobak continued to paint

the war. Over the years, she captured skaters on the Saint John River, athletes on the University of New Brunswick football field, various parades and processions, as well as local events in Fredericton such as the raising of the cross on the restored copper spire of Christ Church Cathedral.

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When she wasn't painting crowd scenes, Ms. Bobak had her watercolour brush in hand to capture the random beauty of flowers. Often she painted wildflowers or blooms in her husband's garden at their Fredericton home.

"I love flowers," she told the CBC in 1993. "Poppies [are] like crowds; they move in the wind. You don't organize them. You don't settle them into something. You paint them as they are, blowing or moving or dying or coming to birth and that is how it is with my crowds. I see something and it is spontaneous and it's moving and it's about the movement of something like crowds and colour or flowers and colour."

Everything she knew about watercolours, she once said, she learned from her husband. "I think she was inspired by what he was doing in that medium and ran with it," their son, Alex Bobak, said. "It was pretty magical to watch her with a watercolour brush."

Born in 1920 on Lulu Island, in the estuary of the Fraser River outside Vancouver, Ms. Bobak lived a privileged, though unconventional childhood. Her mother, Mary Williams, initially worked as a housekeeper for her father, Harold Mortimer-Lamb. At some point, her parents decided to move in together, along with Mr. Mortimer-Lamb's wife and their

Mary Lamb Bobak's painting *Private Roy* is an example of her 'ability to depict uniquely women's experiences' through art that focused on sharing personal moments and that bordered on being conversational. CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM/BEAVERBROOK COLLECTION OF WAR ART



Ms. Bobak's painting *Gas Drill* shows a group of women trying on black gas masks during training. CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM/BEAVERBROOK COLLECTION OF WAR ART



Molly Lamb Bobak

children. Molly was born and they all seemed to live happily together as an extended family.

Mr. Mortimer-Lamb was a wealthy art critic and collector who befriended Emily Carr and members of the Group of Seven, including A.Y. Jackson, who sometimes visited the family. Her father was also a photographer and painter, and filled their home with Buddha statues, pottery and wall hangings from Asia.

Not fond of school, Ms. Bobak received encouragement from her mother to study art. She

enrolled at the Vancouver School of Art (now the Emily Carr University of Art and Design) and met artist Jack Shadbolt. He encouraged her development as an artist and remained a friend and mentor throughout her life.

After the war, the Bobaks had their son, Alex, and tried to make a living on the West Coast by painting and teaching. They later had a daughter. During those years, as she raised her children and taught painting at night school, it was hard for Ms. Bobak to make time for her own painting. But she remained committed to it and was among the first generation of Canadian women artists to earn a living from their art.

In 1960, she and her family moved to Fredericton, where Mr. Bobak became artist-in-residence at the University of New Brunswick and director of the university's art centre. They fell in love with the city and over the years contributed greatly to the visual arts scene there and throughout the province.

At their various homes in Fredericton, the Bobaks kept separate studios. While Mr. Bobak

worked mostly in his studio at the university, Ms. Bobak painted at home. Calling herself a rather sloppy artist in the studio, she said her husband was the opposite. Terry Graff, director at Fredericton's Beaverbrook Art Gallery, remembers visiting the Bobaks' home in 2008. When he asked them how they had influenced each other's work over the years, he realized it was the wrong question to ask. "Molly was very quick to let me know that Bruno had not influenced her work in any way, and then Bruno immediately said the exact same thing about Molly. I chuckled to myself and quickly changed the subject," he said.

After moving to Fredericton, Mr. Bobak settled in and didn't enjoy travelling, but Ms. Bobak continued to travel whenever asked. She never refused a teaching request, whether it was to visit an elementary school or to do a three-day painting workshop with a group of middle-aged women in British Columbia. "I think she enjoyed teaching as much as painting," Alex Bobak said.

Dr. Brandon remembers taking a painting course with Ms. Bobak on PEI more than 30 years ago. After being inspired by the artist, Dr. Brandon painted wildflowers for two days, refusing to move on to another subject.

"She was an incredible teacher," Dr. Brandon said. "She had a respect for people's engagement."

A small woman, who might be described as bird-like in appearance, Ms. Bobak wore thick glasses because of her poor eyesight, and cared little for fashionable clothes. A warm and generous person, she not only mentored aspiring artists, but charmed almost everyone she met.

"Molly was a storyteller. You could call her a raconteur," Ms. Richmond said.

She liked to take a bus from Fredericton to Montreal just on the chance that she might meet

someone interesting. "She had a spontaneous joy in people and dogs and that translated into her paintings. Her paintings are all upbeat," Alex Bobak said.

When she wasn't working, she loved to walk. With her sketchpad, she roamed through Fredericton and along the Saint John River. In the winter, she cross-country skied. She had her favourite spots to pick blackberries, fiddleheads and wild mushrooms.

"She drew, drew, drew all the time," said Inge Pataki, owner of Fredericton's Gallery 78.

Ms. Bobak continued to paint and draw every day until she was 84. Her eyesight had grown so bad that one day she simply stopped painting. Not wanting to produce a work of art she considered inferior, she never painted again. Her decision didn't seem to bother her, Alex Bobak said. She continued to visit with friends and walk. She was loved by all the kids and dogs in her neighbourhood.

For their work, Ms. Bobak and her husband were both named to the Order of Canada in 1995. In her honour, the Canadian War Museum has placed 10 of her paintings on display in the hallway leading to the exhibitions until March 31.

"She generated enthusiasm in everyone she met," Ms. Richmond said. "She was full of passion. She instilled that passion in her subjects."

Ms. Bobak leaves her son, Alex; daughter, Anny; and granddaughter, Julia. Her husband died in 2012.

Special to The Globe and Mail

To submit an I Remember: obit@globeandmail.com

Send us a memory of someone we have recently profiled on the Obituaries page. Please include I Remember in the subject field.

**MOLLY
LAMB
BOBAK**

Talk
“ of the ”
Town



4/10

Venice

Mole San B

COVER

Oslo (detail)

1960

conté wash on paper

41.8 x 54.7 cm

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery

Purchased with the financial support

of the Canada Council Joint Purchase

Award and the Vancouver Art Gallery

Women's Auxiliary

VAG 61.39

Photo: Rachel Topham, Vancouver

Art Gallery

INSIDE COVER

Venice

(Santa Maria della Salute, Grand Canal)

c. 1961

lithograph on paper, 4/10

35.0 x 45.0 cm

Courtesy of Alan and Elizabeth Bell

Photo: Blaine Campbell

MOLLY LAMB BOBAK

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Talk
of the
Town

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BURNABY ART GALLERY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My admiration for Molly Lamb Bobak and her work began when I first saw her fundraising print for Artists for Kids, *British Columbia Beach*, while researching for another exhibition. Reading her letters in the AFK archives related to the making of this print and the painting on which it was modeled, I was immediately drawn in by her letter-writing style and poignant reflection on her generation of artists. From that moment, roughly a year after her death, I resolved to conduct a more in-depth study of her life and work. Her paintings, while certainly influenced by the Canadian tradition of landscapes, are a type all their own.

I would like to give my thanks to Molly Lamb Bobak's daughter, Anny Scoones, who has kindly contributed to this catalogue, while also granting me incredible access to her mother's correspondence and other material, and whose own writings have been an invaluable insight in the preparation of this exhibition. I would also like to express my gratitude to Cindy Richmond for her expertise concerning Lamb Bobak and for her contribution to this catalogue. Gordon Smith hosted me for an interview about his dear friend in July of 2017, recounting humorous stories about the artist: his transcript, included here, contributes yet more insight about the artist and her work. Great thanks are also owed to Alan and Elizabeth Bell for their personal stories about Lamb Bobak and their generous loan to the exhibition. I am indebted to Ian Thom, who offered excellent advice in the early stages of this exhibition. I would like to thank my colleagues at the Burnaby Art Gallery, especially Ellen van Eijnsbergen, Jennifer Cane and Bob MacIntyre for their significant assistance. This exhibition and the related publication are generously supported by the City of Burnaby, the BC Arts Council and the Province of British Columbia.

On behalf of the Burnaby Art Gallery, I would also like to thank the staff at each of the lending institutions, including the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, Artists for Kids, and the Canadian War Museum, along with our private lenders. The selection of works included in this exhibition afford us a snapshot of Lamb Bobak's early career and reflect well her apparent love of cities and the people who lived in them.

Hilary Letwin

Molly Lamb Bobak : "talk of the town.

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