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**NEW ART BOOK PROFILES THE FIRST WOMAN TO BE APPOINTED
AN OFFICIAL CANADIAN WAR ARTIST**

***Molly Lamb Bobak: Life & Work* chronicles the story of the pioneering Canadian painter**

TORONTO, ON — Artist Molly Lamb Bobak (1920–2014) went against the status quo. She was born near Vancouver into an unconventional family where her father, an early champion of Emily Carr and the Group of Seven, acquainted his daughter with art and eccentricity from a young age. Molly Lamb attended the Vancouver School of Art and studied under such Canadian greats as Jack Shadbolt, Jock Macdonald, and Frederick Varley. In 1945 she was appointed an official war artist and was sent overseas to document the aftermath of the Second World War. When she returned to Canada she continued her career as a prolific painter and book illustrator. In the new art book *Molly Lamb Bobak: Life & Work*, author Michelle Gewurtz recounts Bobak's remarkable artistic career—over 50 years long.

"Before Molly Lamb, no woman had ever held the title of official Canadian war artist," says Sara Angel, Executive Director of the Art Canada Institute. "She joined the Canadian Women's Army Corps at age 22 and, fascinated by the transience of the life around her, kept a daily journal of sketches documenting military life." Yet Bobak wanted what so many male war artists had: official accreditation. After almost two years of lobbying, she made history: the Canadian War Artists Selection Committee finally recognized her as an official war artist, and she was at the time the only woman to receive this designation.

The artist returned to Canada only to set off to Europe again within a couple of years—this time with her new husband, fellow war artist Bruno Bobak, and their two young children. There Lamb Bobak absorbed the influence of modernist masters Henri Matisse and Paul Cézanne. Eventually the family settled in New Brunswick where Bobak continued to paint well into her seventies, until failing eyesight hindered her practice.

"What struck me most as I was researching Molly Lamb Bobak's life and career were her sense of humour and her propensity toward abstraction," says Michelle Gewurtz, author of *Molly Lamb Bobak: Life & Work* and Curator at the Ottawa Art Gallery. "She was an artist who experimented in her art by constantly pushing herself to see everyday events from a new perspective."

***Molly Lamb Bobak: Life & Work* can be read on the Art Canada Institute's website and is available for PDF download on November 9, 2018.**

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ABOUT THE ART CANADA INSTITUTE

The Art Canada Institute (ACI) is a non-profit research organization based at Massey College, University of Toronto. Its Canadian Online Art Book Project—a program that in the last three years has released over 25 books, available in both French and English, free of charge—publishes on key topics in Canadian art history. Launched in 2013, ACI is the only national institution whose mandate is to promote the study of an inclusive, multi-vocal Canadian art history to as broad an audience as possible, in both English and French, within Canada and internationally.

IMAGES

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IMAGE CREDITS

1. Molly Lamb, *Canteen, Nijmegen, Holland, 1945*, oil and ink on canvas, 51.2 x 61.1 cm, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa.

2. Molly Lamb, *Gas Drill, 1944*, oil on canvas, 68.8 x 86.8 cm, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa.

3. Molly Lamb Bobak, *Private Roy, Canadian Women's Army Corps, 1946*, oil on fibreboard, 76.4 x 60.8 cm, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa.

4. Molly Lamb Bobak, *March to University*, n.d., oil on canvas, 55.5 x 75.5 cm, Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton.

5. Molly Lamb Bobak, *White Tulips*, 1956, McGill University, Montreal.

6. Molly Lamb, *W110278: The Personal War Records of Private Lamb, M.*, 1942–45, pencil and watercolour with pen and black ink on wove paper Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.