

as a significant increase in the value given to critique. “Our next project then is to produce the rigorous and robust scholarship that will give Black Canadian art the life it gives us,” he writes (238). The chapter does not fully discredit those before it, but it does ask for more, from institutions, curators (including the editors of this book), critics, and audiences alike. It is a very welcome addition to the volume and, paired with Forni’s earlier honesty, does well to flesh out potential models for responding to Black Canadian art with the intellectual work it deserves. Attentive to issues that are becoming increasingly common in contemporary exhibitions, the section speaks to the need to pause and resituate ourselves, lest we endlessly repeat our mistakes and reinforce the very margins we are trying to abandon.

As such, *Making History* constitutes not only a critical document but an essential guide for future museological work. Through a chorus of compelling voices, the volume contextualizes the complicated relationship between Black Canadian art and institutions, with essays that work to renew the terms upon which Black representation has been dictated. The most exciting part of the book is the sincere openness about the active, long-term work required for more intellectually engaged, laterally related, and actively counter-hegemonic curatorship, as well as ongoing care for art and for each other. As McKittrick acknowledges, it is necessary to begin “thinking about Black art as aesthetic possibility” and “consider how creative representations of Black life

offer a politic, and demand a reading practice, that is not beholden to prevailing negative descriptions of Blackness” (180). An energizing first step in this reading practice, *Making History* serves as a new beginning, and provides an important resource for arts workers looking for new models, as well as anyone looking to learn about Black Canada, its art, and the pathways it makes to the future.

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1. See [www.blackcanadiandiasporacentre.com](http://www.blackcanadiandiasporacentre.com).

2. *New-Found-Lands*, curated by Pamela Edmonds and Bushra Junaid, Eastern Edge Gallery, St. John’s, NL (September 9 – October 18, 2016); *Position As Desired: Exploring African Canadian Identity / Photographs from the Wedge Collection*, curated by Kenneth Montague, Art Gallery of Windsor, ON (February 11 – May 7, 2017); and *Practice As Ritual/Ritual As Practice*, curated by Andrea Fatona, A Space Gallery, Toronto, ON (November 24 – February 23, 2022).

3. Sara Callahan, *Art + Archive: Understanding the Archival Turn in Contemporary Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022), 1–2.

4. Winfried Siemerling, “From Site to Sound and Film: Critical Black Canadian Memory Culture and Sylvia D. Hamilton’s *The Little Black School House*,” *Studies in Canadian Literature* 44, no. 1 (2019): 30.

5. Justin A. Coles, “Black Desire: Black-centric Youthtopias as Critical Race Educational Praxis,” *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 36, no. 6 (2023): 983–84.

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Diana Nemirow

***Women at the Helm: How Jean Sutherland Boggs, Hsio-yen Shih, and Shirley L. Thomson Changed the National Gallery of Canada***

Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2021

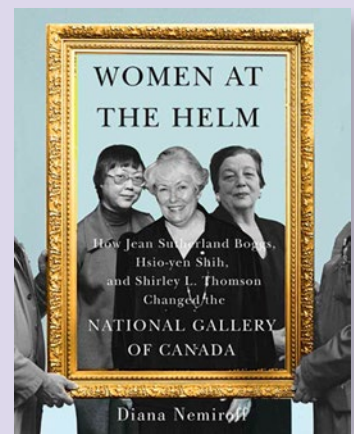
552 pp., 85 illus.

\$44.95 (paper) ISBN 9780228008736

Anne Dymond

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After initiating significant shifts towards more diverse representation, the Director of the National Gallery of Canada (NGC) resigned before the end of her term, significant questions arose about the length of time taken to appoint a new director lead to questions about the Board, there were public enquiries into the problematic governing legislation of the national museums, and national polemics erupted over the display of controversial art: the 1970s and 80s were volatile at the NGC.



That these issues could as easily describe the last few years at the NGC indicates just how topical *Women at the Helm* is. Diana Nemirow, a curator at the Gallery for more than twenty years before becoming Director of the Carleton University Art Gallery, has gifted us with essential reading for anyone interested in how large museums actually work. Her focus on the Gallery’s three female directors from 1966 through 1997 explores why the NGC was such a notable exception to the general exclusion of women from the top rungs of power in the art museum