

Hart House Unveils a New Portrait of Dr. Louise Cowin

Hart House is proud to announce the unveiling of a portrait of Dr. Louise Cowin, the tenth Warden of Hart House, who served in that role from 2007 to 2011. Dr. Cowan's portrait will hang in the Great Hall of Hart House along with those of her predecessors dating back to 1919. Canadian artist Kent Monkman was chosen as the official portrait painter, and through a process of consultation with Dr. Cowin and Barbara Fischer, Director/Curator of the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, chose to reinterpret the well-known painting by British artist Frances Anne Hopkins, *Shooting the Rapids* from 1879, which now resides in the collection of Library and Archives Canada.

Hopkins (1838-1919), one of the best-known female artists to work in Canada in the 19th century, was married to the Chief Factor at the Hundson's Bay Company, and lived in Canada from 1858 to 1870. Although it was exceptional for a woman of her time, on at least two occasions Hopkins accompanied her husband on tours of the fur trading posts under his jurisdiction, travelling by canoe and steam boat to the Canadian interior. Her celebrated canoe paintings, such as *Shooting the Rapids* (1879), were based on drawings and watercolours done during such trips. Through the insertion of herself and her husband – paddle-less and clad in English costumes – these paintings carry imperial narratives that speak volumes of the class and racial relations within the canoe.

Artist Kent Monkman's paintings often mine Canadian and American landscape traditions as a way to critically reframe ideas of indigeneity and queer sexuality. Monkman has created site specific performances at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, The Royal Ontario Museum, and at Compton Verney, which are made into Super 8 films that he calls "Colonial Art Space Interventions." Monkman has exhibited widely within Canada and internationally, including *"We come in peace..." Histories of the Americas* at the Musee d'art contemporain de Montreal and *The American West* at Compton Verney in Warwickshire, England. His work is well represented in numerous private and public collections including the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario, and the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.