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Maud Lewis

Sat. Sept. 16 – Mon. Nov. 6, 2017



Oeno Gallery is pleased to present an intimate exhibition of paintings by the much loved folk artist, Maud Lewis (1903-1970). This exhibition is available Sat. Sept. 16 and continues until Mon. Nov. 6.

Maud Lewis, born as Maud Dowley in rural South Ohio, Nova Scotia in 1903, spent most of her life in poverty and constant physical pain. Maud was afflicted by juvenile arthritis that left her body and hands deformed. In 1938, Maud married Everett Lewis, a fish peddler, and spent the next three decades painting in their one room home in the village of Marshalltown.

Maud was a prolific painter of Christmas cards and small works on wood panels and boards using house and boat paint, materials at hand. These she sold from her home or to her husband's customers as he sold fish door to door. Despite poverty and advancing ill health, Maud was reported to have had a kind disposition and warmly welcomed those who visited her home.

Referred to as folk art, Maud's paintings are irrepressibly joyful and depict her surroundings with humor and affection. Created in bright, solid colours and a limited use of perspective, the paintings charm viewers with such subjects as sleighs in a winter landscape, deer grazing in the forest, yoked oxen festooned with bells, wide eyed cats beneath cherry blossoms, and more.

Maud gained celebrity following a 1965 CBC documentary and a feature in the Toronto Star about her life. This led to a commission for two paintings from Richard Nixon, the American President, for which Maud asked to be paid in advance. In her lifetime, she likely never earned more than \$15. for a painting.

Maud died in 1970 of pneumonia aggravated by years of exposure to wood smoke. She was 67.

Maud's artwork is collected by the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, which has reconstructed and installed her tiny house in the gallery as part of a permanent Maud Lewis exhibit. Her work can also be found in the Canadian Museum of Civilization. She is the subject of two biographies, *The Illuminated Life of Maud Lewis* and *Maud Lewis, The Heart on the Door*, as well as a stage play. Two documentaries about Maud have been produced by the National Film Board of Canada. In 2016, a biopic entitled *Maudie* was released starring Sally Hawkins and Ethan Hawke.

The exhibition of paintings by Maud Lewis is available at Oeno Gallery until Mon. Nov. 6, 2017.