



Yousuf Karsh The Ford Motor Company of Canada Gift to the AGW





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(above) Terry Trush, Maurice Lehoux, Ed Thurman, Mr. Lajeunesse, Final Assembly, Painting Booth, Plant No. 4
 (previous) Gow Crapper Putting Trim Cord on Rear Window, Trim Line No. 1, Plant No. 4

Director's Foreword

This exhibition continues the Art Gallery of Windsor's ongoing work to explore the diversity and richness of its art collection. As part of an ongoing series of changing collection exhibitions commencing in 2012, this project builds on such projects as *Female Self Representation and the Public Trust: Mary Wrinch and the AGW Collection*; *Joyce Wieland and Catherine Reynolds: Two Women's Views on the War of 1812*; *John Scott / MEAN MACHINES*; *A River that Separates? Imaging the Detroit River, 1804–2001*; *The Walter Carsen Gift: A Memorial Exhibition from the AGW Collection*; *David Blackwood: The Ron and Ginetta Barbaro Gift to the AGW* and *Other Electricities: Works from the AGW Collection*. To investigate a collection through an examination of themes, subjects, donor histories, acquisition histories, theoretical collecting paradigms and solo artist projects among other strategies is to play a vital role in generating multiple object meanings and enable viewers to value objects differently across time and place.

This exhibition, co-curated by Catharine Mastin and Cassandra Getty, features a selection of works gifted to the AGW in 2013 by Ford Motor Company of Canada, drawn from the 39-work donation of photographs by internationally-renowned Canadian photographer Yousuf Karsh. This exhibition is a selection from this gift, focussing on the artist's sizeable "exhibition prints" (those large format works developed from his original negatives) and those images through which we can see the artist's full working process, which included the production of small press prints and larger images for public display. The collection is an important body of work realized from the artist's 1951 commission with Ford Motor Company at the Windsor, Ontario plant where he interpreted the daily life of workers in the foundry, on the assembly lines, and in labs and training programs.

The donation marks the culmination of a longstanding relationship between the AGW and Ford which developed over the past two decades and which began during the course of research for an exhibition guest curated by Rosemary Donegan for the AGW, the project *Ford City/Windsor* (1994). Interest in the collection continued thanks to the scholarship of former AGW Curator of Historical Art and the Collections, Cassandra Getty. Her research led to the AGW developing a major national touring exhibition and book between 2004 and 2010 — the project *Yousuf Karsh: Industrial Images*. Getty emphasized the artist's contribution to 20th century portrait photography and the significance of this body of work to Windsor's labour history; these important viewing contexts are again offered to the present exhibition. Her work provides a foundation for further study and we thank her for her expertise and permission to include her writings here.

The Karsh collection offers rich potential in its capacity to speak to histories of photography, portraiture, an artist's economic means of livelihood, and the gendered history of the waged labour, among other topics. Additionally, it makes

an important aesthetic contribution to the Gallery's historical collections of black-and-white and mid-century photography. Thanks are extended to the donor for choosing the AGW as home for this fine collection where it will be among contemporary photographers works such as Edward Burtynsky, Raphael Goldchain, Larry Towell, Barrie Jones, Evergon, Stan Douglas, Iain Baxter& and Ian Wallace, among others. After a five-year moratorium on collections development during a challenging time of organizational change and restructuring, the AGW welcomes re-engagement in this important core function with the acquisition of this stimulating collection.

The AGW shows and publishes on this collection for the first second time, on this occasion to recognize this important gift. We are grateful to Ford of Canada for their initial interest in this artist and for their philanthropic interests in supporting the growth of the Gallery's collection. I thank them and my co-curator for all of their dedication and expertise. Thanks are also extended to the Gallery's ongoing funders and stakeholders including the Ontario Arts Council, The Canada Council for the Arts and the City of Windsor. I would also like to thank Carl S. Cohen for his named space gift of 2008 where this exhibition is presented: Mr. Cohen's gift at the time provided important resources at a challenging time in the Gallery's history.

Catharine Mastin, PhD
AGW Director

Robert Trinder Photographed with Comparator (Training Program)





Orel Meunier, Plant No. 2, Crankshaft Department

Acknowledgements from the Estate of Yousuf Karsh

During his 60-year career, Yousuf Karsh had 15,312 sittings and left us not only a unique artistic legacy but also an historical one. He is best known for his iconic portraits of the great figures and humanitarians of the 20th century, including writers, painters, sculptors, architects, musicians, politicians, diplomats, physicians, performing artists and royalty. Albert Einstein, Pablo Picasso, Glenn Gould, Ernest Hemingway, Lester Pearson, Queen Elizabeth II, Nelson Mandela, Andy Warhol, Margaret Atwood, John F. Kennedy and Pierre Trudeau were among his best-known subjects. And yet, he left us much more.

During the early part of his career he made lasting images of some of the giants who guided us to victory in World War II — Churchill, Eisenhower and de Gaulle. In the early 1950's, however, he looked in a different direction.

He saw a great nobility in the faces of the working men and women who were attempting to rebuild the world after so much destruction. He traveled across Canada for almost 18 months for *Maclean's* magazine, recording images of places and people who were part of this effort, and he accepted a challenging and personally rewarding assignment for Ford of Canada.

He only spent two weeks at the Windsor factory, but the photographs from that short period tell a compelling story of dedication, craftsmanship and accomplishment. They remain among the most important work of his career and, thanks to the generosity and foresight of Ford of Canada, are now part of the Art Gallery of Windsor's permanent collection. We are grateful to Ford of Canada for preserving this historic and important collection, and for giving it such a perfect home.

Jerry Fielder

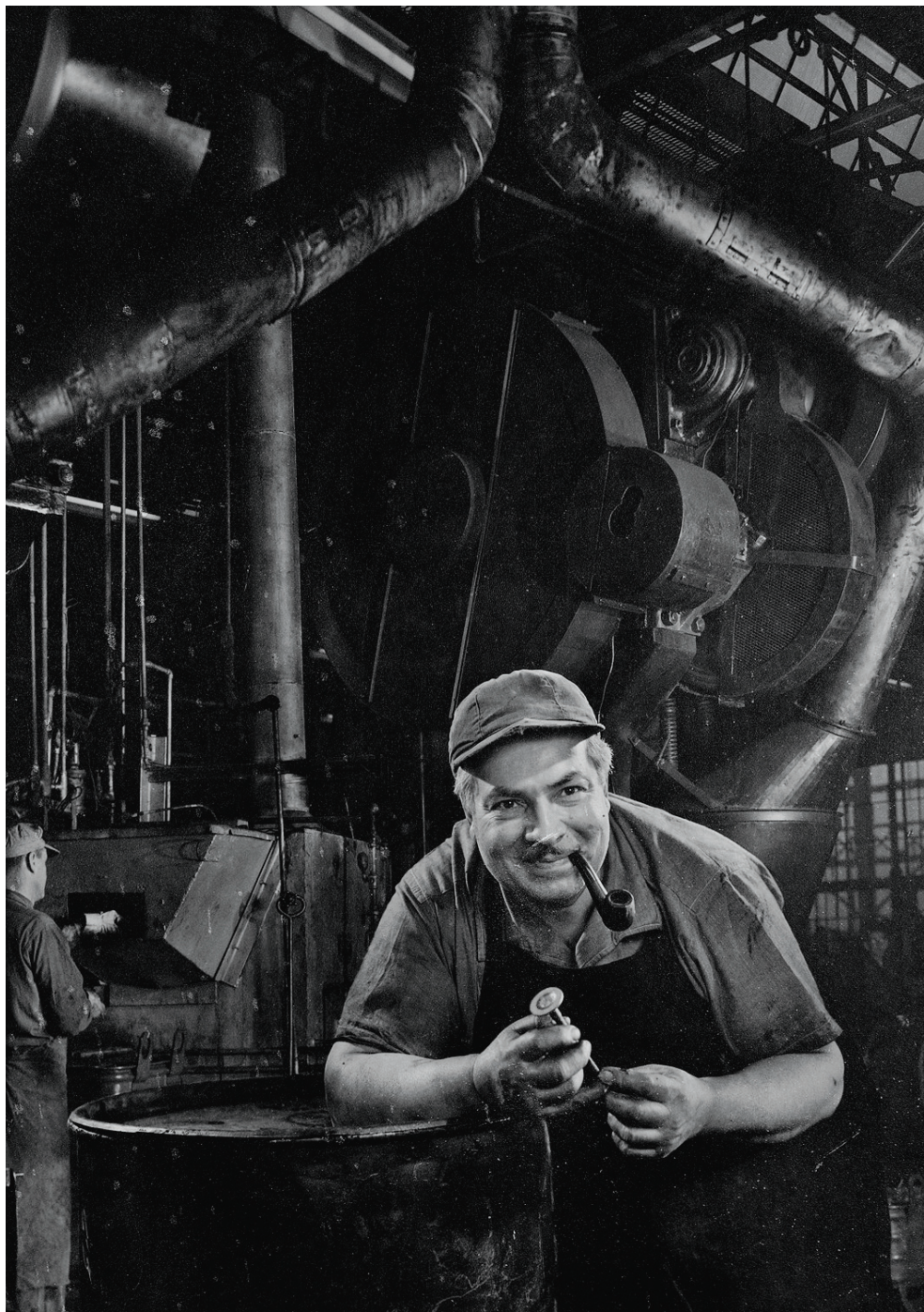
Director and Curator, Estate of Yousuf Karsh

After my marriage to Yousuf Karsh in 1962, one of the earliest pleasures I had was going over some of his photographs with him. I was rather surprised to find that among the kings, presidents, popes and luminaries of the 20th century, was a box marked Ford of Canada. These photographs were a revelation to me. I was not prepared for the dignity and sense of self portrayed in the workers, which only confirmed what I already knew about my husband. To photograph these workers, he did meticulous research into their lives. What he found about their backgrounds — about their hopes and dreams — reminded him of his own experience coming to Canada as a young, penniless, Armenian boy finding his way in his adopted country.

As a medical journalist, I was especially struck by a photograph showing two workers engaged in intense conversation; it reminded me of two physicians in consultation about a sick patient. The Ford workers my husband photographed shared with him a love of Canada, a love of hard work, and pride in the execution of it.

I know my husband would be so pleased that they are now, through the generosity of Ford of Canada, to become part of the AGW's permanent collection.

Estrellita Karsh



Yousuf Karsh and the 1951 Ford Commission

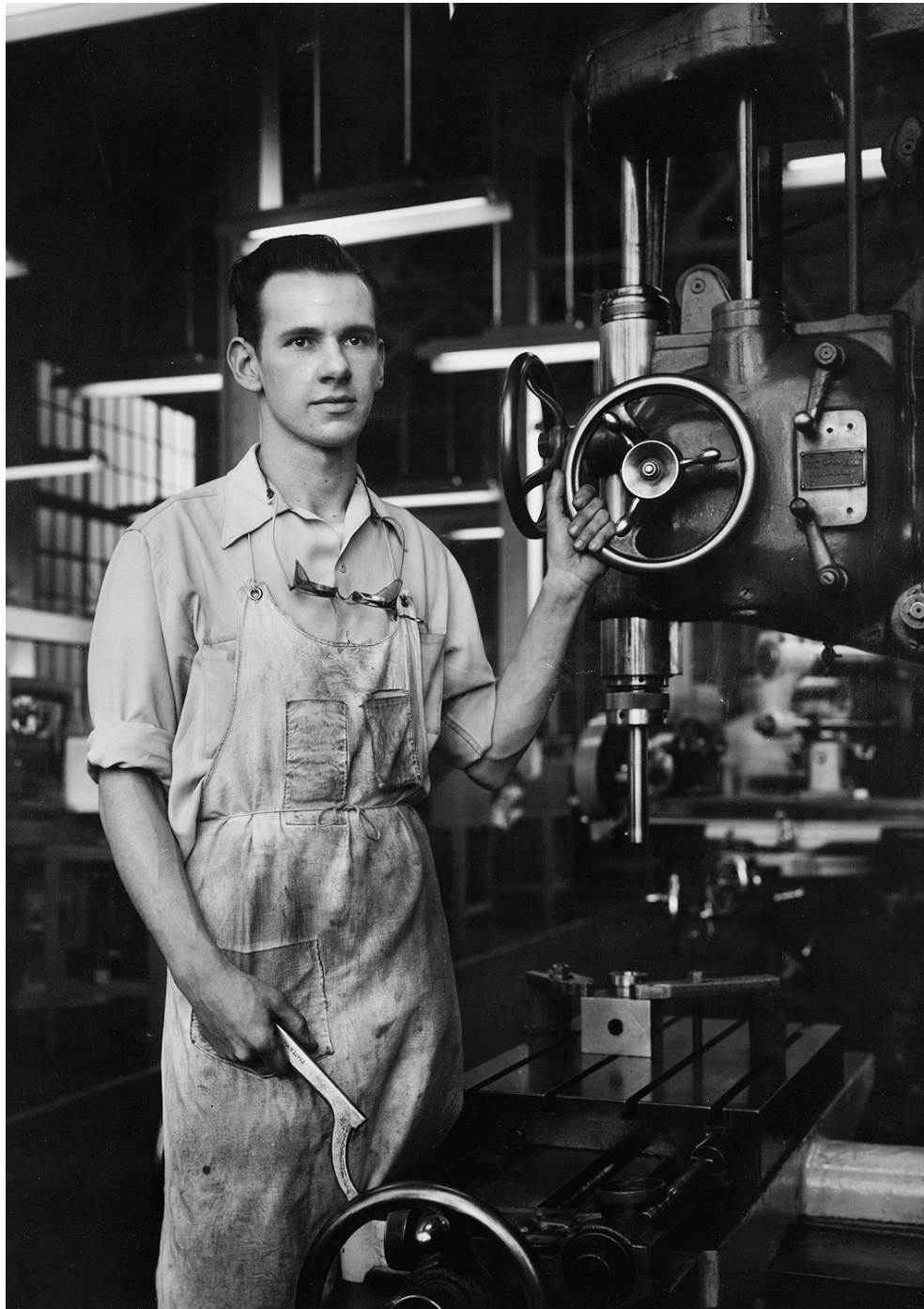
Cassandra Getty

In February 1951, the internationally-renowned, Ottawa-based photographer Yousuf Karsh arrived in Windsor, Ontario to photograph the men working on the assembly line, in the foundry, lab, and at the trade school of the Ford Motor Company of Canada. Commissioned by Ford, Karsh spent two frenetic weeks in Windsor, making a series of portraits that were eventually shown in two of the company's annual reports, and in a 1950s exhibition that travelled across the country.

The industrial projects of Yousuf Karsh have been a little-studied yet surprisingly substantial aspect of his career. When examined alongside his similar projects, including assignments at Atlas Steels in Welland, Ontario, Sharon Steel Limited in Sharon, Pennsylvania, and a variety of other commercial images, these portraits demonstrate the Modernist idea of the “worker-as-hero.” The portraits of the Ford works are technically and aesthetically as dramatic as Karsh's better-known images of statesmen and celebrities. The tone of the portraits reflects the larger social, political, and cultural themes of the post-World War Two years in North America, as well as Karsh's personal philosophy about the role of art.

These works make an important contribution to Canadian art and social history. When combined with a number of Karsh's Ford works previously acquired by the AGW, this collection creates a significant document of the 1951 project. It is a resource for learning about life in Canada during the 1950s, with a focus on the city of Windsor, industry, and the significance of the artist, as Karsh was Canada's most famous photographer of the 20th century. The artist's experience working with private business is also important evidence of the professional choices and options open to artists before the emergence of public art funding and grants to support the development of contemporary art.

In November of 1950, Ford of Canada's Director of Public Relations approached Karsh with the idea of producing a series of photographs featuring men from the Windsor plant. Executives were aware of the success the artist had experienced at Atlas Steel the year before, where his images of workers graced calendars, ads and exhibition walls. Three months later, Karsh, accompanied by his first wife, Solange, and his technical assistant, set up shop in Ford's own darkroom facilities to create a suite of portraits symbolizing the wholesome nature of the workers, and by extension, of Ford products. Karsh toured the Ford facilities, seeking out interesting portrait subjects and dramatic backdrops. He agreed to produce one set of large, exhibition-ready prints, glossy prints for the company's publicity purposes, shots for office use, and presentation prints for the sitters.



Karsh eventually produced thirty-one portraits of Ford workers, documenting various processes in automobile manufacture, and exemplifying different “types” or demographics of male workers. Sitters included young students and jolly seniors, families long associated with the auto industry (and the larger history of Windsor) and newer waves of immigrants. The presentation images were given to the sitters; the exhibition prints decorated the office walls. Over the years, a few of the other images were given away to employees upon retirement. In the late 1990s Ford had the exhibition prints conserved and re-framed.

Together, the Ford of Canada portraits, developed in different formats and sizes for use in different contexts, reveal a close association with regional history. They document the Windsor auto sector towards the end of the “golden era” of North American manufacturing. The photos were used in promotions, accompanied by excerpts from interviews conducted with the sitters. These visual and textual materials offer intriguing comments on notions of labour and a sense of belonging in a “blue-collar” community. The portraits represent an area of Canada that historically has had closer ties with Detroit than with Canadian neighbors such as Toronto. Representations of this sensibility diverge from the relatively non-urban, if not nature-based concepts of artistic and social identity.

The collection retains the 1951 commission in its fullest composition, including the artist’s working process using press, proof and exhibition-ready prints. In the past decade the AGW has also acquired two of the presentation portraits given to the sitters in 1951. These images, of William Hagen, and of Omer Myers with Anton Buzas, had been treasured by the workers’ families for decades. They are now maintained for the benefit of the community as a document of its past.

As a collection, the Karsh portraits can be studied to understand manual photography in mid-century North America. Today, while there are still some artists working in traditional “analogue” processes, most work is digital. Contemporary practitioners can examine the prints for clues about the secret chemical recipes Karsh used to develop his imagery. They unfortunately cannot access the now-discontinued range of products Karsh and his colleagues had at their disposal, such as his favourite textured papers. These had a “tooth” that resembled velvet and in some cases, the roughness of sharkskin, these deepened the tones of black-and-white photography.

Karsh relied on photographic processes such as shading or scrapping his large negatives, and “sandwiching” two (or sometimes many more) negatives together prior to printing. By adding more layers of visual information, formal aspects could be strengthened, and elements of interest, such as flying sparks, could be condensed or exaggerated. The resulting Ford images are theatrical in Karsh’s typical way, both in the centralized poses of the sitters, and Baroque use of light and shade.

The artist chose different processes to make the different kinds of prints. Researchers can examine the works to study ferrotyping and other techniques that are now rare. To clarify, the proof prints were of lower quality than exhibition-ready photographs. Often these are produced with less artistic intervention than other kinds of photographs, as they are used



Ralph Mather, *Final Motor Assembly, Plant No. 4*

more for reference (whether for content or the checking of tones, etc.) than for public display. The press prints were designed to accommodate photo reproduction. Across the different types of prints, slight variations in tone are visible.

These acquisitions also tell the story of image technology created to meet promotional needs. Over the years Ford reproduced the images in a range of publications, participating in advertising techniques of the 1950s (called *The New Look*) which pushed photography as a main component of design. The content also reflects corporate messages communicated via artwork, and overarching socio-political concerns. The portraits of proud labourers emphasize the postwar ideas of social and technological progress, and a sense of working together as a united team. They also reflect Karsh's obsession with heroism and positivity in his portraiture, a goal driven in part by his experience of the Armenian genocide. He saw Canada as a land of opportunity and freedom, and sought to visually communicate this to his audiences.

This acquisition recognizes Karsh's contribution to 20th century Western art, and, because of his associations with *Life*, *Time*, *Maclean's* and other journals, to the larger artistic, social history of the West. A decade after his death, he remains one of the best-known artists in Canada. He arguably enjoyed greater recognition outside Canada, however, than within. Indeed, in a late 20th century American ranking of "Who's Who," Karsh was the only Canadian and the only photographer noted. He had photographed over half of the people on the list. The industrial series adds an interesting facet to Karsh's career, adding nuance and greater context to his depictions of Winston Churchill, Ernest Hemingway, and many other luminaries.

1. Ferrotyping is a finishing treatment applied to glossy photographic paper to bring out its reflective properties. Newly developed, still-wet photographic prints and enlargements that have been made on glossy paper are squeegeed onto a polished metal plate called a ferrotyping plate. When these are later peeled off the plate, they retain a highly reflective gloss.

Cassandra Getty is Curator of Art at Museum London in London, Ontario. She holds a Master's degree in the History of Art from the University of Victoria, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Windsor. Formerly she was the Curator of Historical Art and Collections Manager at the Art Gallery of Windsor, where she curated the touring exhibitions *Yousuf Karsh: Industrial Images* for the AGW, and *Kathleen Munn and Lowrie Warrener: The Logic of Nature, the Romance of Space*. Recent projects include *Myfanwy MacLeod, or There and Back Again* (with Grant Arnold), *L.O. Today*, and *Kim Adams: One For the Road* (with Melanie Townsend).



Some Observations on Karsh, Photography and Gender

Catharine Mastin

“Photographs alter and enlarge our notions of what is worth looking at and what we have a right to observe. They are a grammar and, even more importantly, an ethics of seeing.”

Susan Sontag, “In Plato’s Cave,” *On Photography*, 1973

“Whatever it grants to vision and whatever its manner, a photograph is always invisible: it is not it that we see.”

Roland Barthes, “The Photograph Unclassifiable,” *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, 1980

Susan Sontag has argued that the process of looking at photographs requires an “ethics of seeing,” that is an awareness of the camera’s role in appropriating subjects, interpretation, representing identity, as memento mori, and in providing forms of evidence in legal and news contexts, for example. Roland Barthes has argued that the photographic process involves continuous oscillation between “the observed subject and the subject seeing,” and thus he questions what precisely is made visible by the photograph. The astute thoughts of these two philosophers on the role of the photograph and the photographer are relevant to understanding photographs and, by extension, Karsh’s work. What are the ethics of seeing that he and his commissioner stood for? What do we identify to be the observed subject in these photographs? How is the photographer seeing the subject?

Cassandra Getty has taken note of Karsh’s attention to the theme of “worker as hero” and indeed his photographs actively stage processes of visibility and invisibility with respect to gender representation. While Karsh’s visible subject was male, his invisible subject was women and their absence from his repertoire in this 1951 project was no accident. It was in response to the commissioner’s invitation that Karsh would write, “I am more than happy to be commissioned to make a photographic study of the men who make Ford cars.” (3 February 1951) The historic context for why Karsh would be asked to photograph men at work in a major corporate factory had deep roots in the social history of postwar Canada and the 1951 commission correspondingly offers considerable insight on the gendered landscape of industrial waged work.

The Trade School (Discussion Period, with Head of School Mr. Moncrieff)

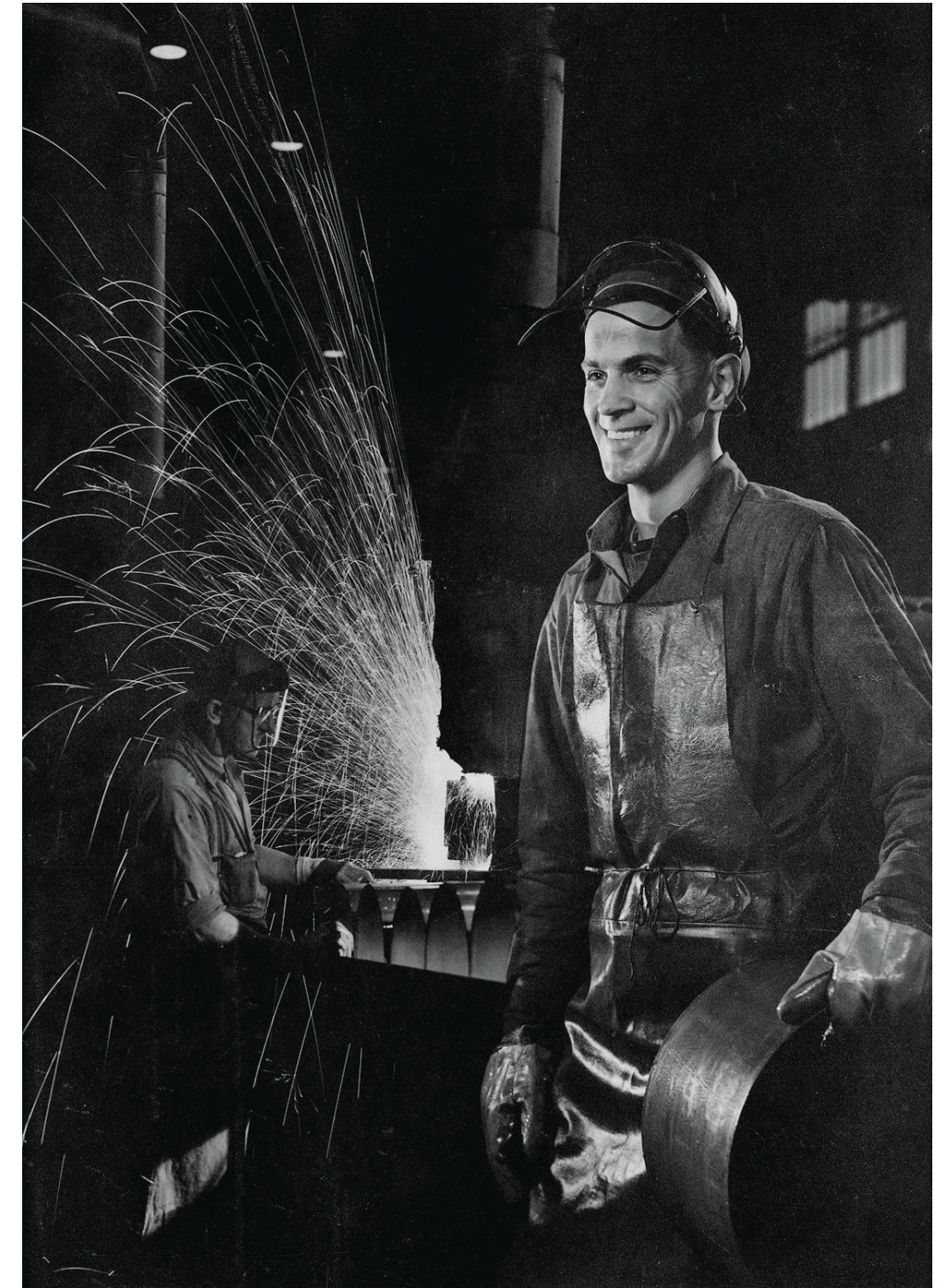
Historian Jennifer Stephen explains of this junction between wartime and postwar that Canada's welfare state had throughout staged a massive mobilization and demobilization of women into and out of the waged work force:

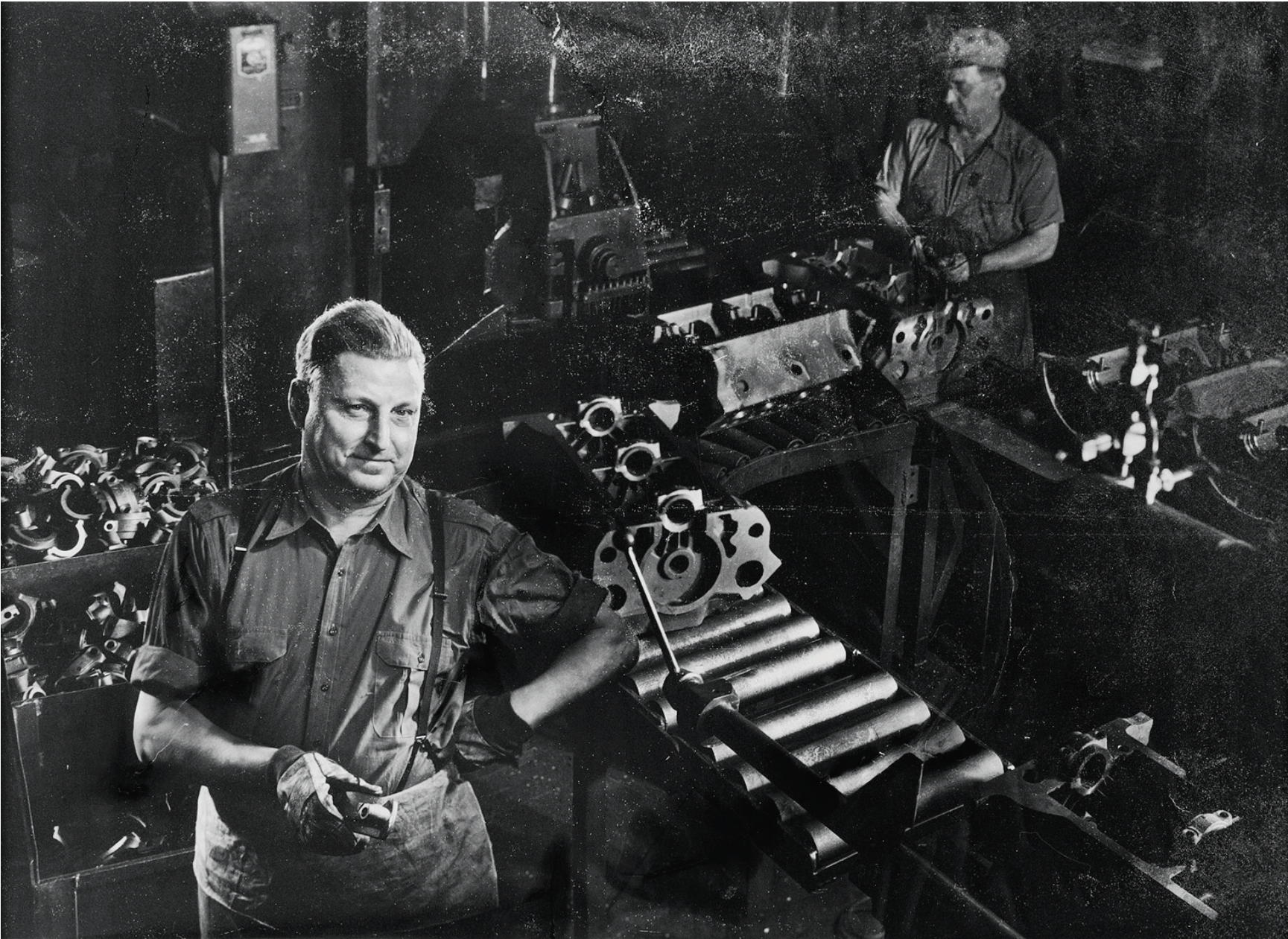
The answer to Canada's 'manpower crisis' [during wartime] lay in its 'womanpower' ... [but] the recruitment drive was short-lived and the term 'womanpower' disappeared from use entirely by war's end....Canada's 'womanpower' was expected to disappear, apparently back into the household, at war's end. (*Pick One Intelligent Girl: Employability, Domesticity and the Gendering of Canada's Welfare State, 1939–1945*, 2007, 4)

Karsh was hardly in a position to contest the scripts of his patron given the conditions of the 1951 commission. His images played an important part in the postwar effort to demobilize women from waged labour and reinstall breadwinner-homemaker ideology wherein men's and women's social roles were divided between public and private life. In his role as "subject seeing," Karsh shows the "the observed subject" to be the male factory worker. But, to accept what is visible in his work — the male worker — at face value is to sidestep an important statement about the shifting gender territories of waged labour in postwar Canada. Karsh's skill in realizing aesthetically subtle and pleasing tonalities through his black and white works further supported the idealization of the male worker in the images. However, the beauty of this technology and its deployment to depict the "worker as hero," is a reminder to return to the question of the "ethics of seeing" offered by this collection. The muscular and sensual representation of Gow Crapper in the back seat applying trim, for example, installs the subject to glorious form while also suggestively alluding to the back seat as a site of sexual play, at drive-in theatres for example.

The "subject observed" through this technology and depiction of the "worker as hero" is a reminder to return to the question of the "ethics of seeing" offered by this collection, to remind us that, as Barthes suggested, it is not often "it" (the photograph as object) that we are seeing. Indeed these works ask us to see how gender played out in the workforce in postwar Windsor. In welcoming this collection home to its city of production, we are only beginning now to appreciate the multiple meanings generated by these compelling images.

Catharine Mastin, PhD
AGW Director





Ed Pfeiffer, Plant No. 2 Cylinder Block Dept. 20

Selected Major Sittings

- 1933 Duncan Campbell Scott
Prime Minister Robert Borden (Canada)
Lord Duncannon
Ottawa Little Theatre
- 1934 Lady Saunders
Ottawa Little Theatre
- 1935 Sir Francis Floud
Lord and Lady Bessborough (Governor General)
Ottawa Little Theatre
- 1936 Ruth Draper
Lady Elgin
John Garo
Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King (Canada)
Madge MacBeth
- 1936 Grey Owl (Archibald Belaney)
President Franklin D. Roosevelt
Ottawa Little Theatre
- 1940 H.R.H. Princess Alice (England)
Marian Anderson
Air Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham
H.R.H. Princess Juliana of the Netherlands
Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King (Canada)
Sir Shuldham Redfern
- 1941 Sir Winston Churchill
Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King (Canada)
Stephen Leacock
Gen. John J. Pershing
Paul Robeson
- 1942 H.R.H. Prince Berhardt (Netherlands)
H.R.H. Princess Juliana (Netherlands)
Prime Minister W. L. Mackenzie King (Canada)
- 1943 Lord Beaverbrook
President Eduard Benes (Czechoslovakia)
Sir Ernest Bevin
- 1950 Atlas Steel Company
Dr. Alfred Blalock
Dr. Ralph Bunch (Nobel Peace Prize)
Sir Oliver Franks
Jascha Heifetz
Prime Minister Liquat Ali Khan (Pakistan)
General George C. Marshall (later Secretary of State-U.S.)
W. Somerset Maugham
Dr. Robert Millikan
Mayor Yukio Ozaki (Tokyo)
Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein
George Szell

- 1951 General Omar Bradley
Ford of Canada
Leo Durocher
H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth, Prince Philip, Prince Charles,
Princess Anne
Josh Logan
James Michener
S.I. Newhouse
- 1956 Marcel Archard
Jean-Pierre Aumont
Samuel Barber
Yul Brynner
Dr. Ralph Bunch (Nobel Peace Prize)
Georges Candalis
Aaron Copland
Robertson Davies
Cecil B. DeMille
Walt Disney
Anita Ekberg
Malcolm Forbes
Indira Gandhi (later Prime Minister of India)
Princess Grace of Monaco
U.N. General Secretary Dag Hammerskjold
Julie Harris
Audrey Hepburn
Charlton Heston
Dr. Jonas Salk
Dr. Charles F. Kettering
- 1960 Thomas Church
Robertson Davies
Marshall Field
Sir Edmund Hillary
Alfred Hitchcock
Senator Lyndon Johnson
Danny Kaye
President John F. Kennedy
Henry Cabot Lodge
Mary Martin
Emile Norman
Sir Robert Watson-Watt
- 1961 Walter Alvarez
Noel Coward
- 1962 Claudia Cardinale
Averill Harriman
Robert F. Kennedy
Martin Luther King
Walter Lippmann

Additional biographical information and a list of major subjects by year can be found at **www.karsh.org**.

Bibliography

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Getty, Cassandra and Jerry Fielder, *Yousuf Karsh: Industrial Images*. Windsor: Art Gallery of Windsor, 2007.

Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977.

Stephen, Jennifer. *Pick One Intelligent Girl: Employability, Domesticity and the Gendering of Canada’s Welfare State, 1939–1945*, Toronto, Buffalo and London, University of Toronto Press, 2007.

Yousuf Karsh, official website **www.karsh.org**

List of Works

Exhibition Prints

Reese Davis and William Hendra, Plant No. 2, Pattern Makers, 1951; silver halide emulsion on fibre-based paper; 75.2 x 100.6 cm

Benoit Dupuis, Wheel Rim Welding, Plant No. 2, 1951; silver halide emulsion on fibre-based paper; 86.0 x 61.0 cm

Edward Lyons, Third Year Student at Gigbora Machine, Trade School, 1951; silver halide emulsion on fibre-based paper; 100.6 x 75.2 cm

Robert Trinder, Photographed with Comparator (Training Program), 1951; silver halide emulsion on fibre-based paper; 100.6 x 0.0 x 75.2 cm

Terry Trush, Maurice Lehoux, Ed Thurman, Mr. Lajeunesse Final Assembly, Painting Booth, Plant No. 4, 1951; silver halide emulsion on fibre-based paper; 75.2 x 100.6 cm

Orel Meunier, Plant No. 2, Crankshaft Department, 1951; silver halide emulsion on fibre-based paper; 75.2 x 100.6 cm

Emric (Jimmy) Saska, Set-Up Man, Plant No. 2, Valve Det. 39, 1951; silver halide emulsion on fibre-based paper; 100.6 x 75.2 cm

Ed Pfeiffer, Plant No. 2 Cylinder Block Dept. 20, 1951; silver halide emulsion on fibre-based paper; 75.2 x 100.6 cm

Ralph Mather, Final Motor Assembly, Plant No. 4, 1951; silver halide emulsion on fibre-based paper; 75.2 x 100.6 cm

Yousuf Karsh, not dated; silver halide emulsion on fibre-based paper; 100.6 x 75.2 cm

The Trade School (Discussion Period, with Head of School Mr. Moncrieff), 1951; silver halide emulsion on fibre-based paper; 100.6 x 75.2 cm

Proof Prints

Robert Trinder, Photographed with Comparator (Training Program), 1951; gelatin silver print; 50.5 x 40.1 cm

Gow Crapper, Putting Trim Cord on Rear Window, Trim Line No. 1, Plant No. 4, 1951; gelatin silver print; 39.0 x 49.0 cm;

Gift of Estrellita Karsh on behalf of Yousuf Karsh, 2004

Press Prints

Robert Trinder, Photographed with Comparator (Training Program), 1951; gelatin silver print; 25.4 x 20.5 cm

Gow Crapper, Putting Trim Cord on Rear Window, Trim Line No. 1, Plant No. 4, 1951; gelatin silver print; 20.5 x 25.4 cm

Yousuf Karsh, 1951; gelatin silver print; 25.4 x 20.5 cm

All works gifted to the AGW by Ford of Canada, 2013, unless otherwise noted.

Yousuf Karsh:

The Ford Motor Company of Canada Gift to the AGW

January 25 – April 6, 2014

Curators Cassandra Getty, Catharine Mastin

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Front cover *Reese Davis and William Hendra, Plant No.2, Pattern Makers*

Back cover *Yousuf Karsh*

AGW
Art Gallery of Windsor

401 Riverside Drive West
Windsor, Ontario N9A 7J1 Canada

Phone 519-977-0013 **Fax** 519-977-0776

www.agw.ca



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