

## Van Horne Painting “.007” Has Its First Public Appearance In Almost A Century



Sir William Cornelius Van Horne “.007”, oil on canvas, circa 1897, on loan to the Van Horne Estate on Ministers Island by Exporail, the Canadian Railway Museum.

Ministers Island New Brunswick, July 10, 2024

### **Painting “.007” Headlines A Major Exhibition of Sir William Van Horne Art Now Showing On New Brunswick’s Historic Ministers Island Thru To September 30**

The year 1897 marked Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee, the start of the Klondike Gold Rush, and the publication of a short story titled “.007” by famed writer Rudyard Kipling. The book, whose protagonist was a steam engine called .007, caught the attention of Canadian business icon Sir William Cornelius Van Horne, who rose to fame by leading the completion of Canada’s first transcontinental railroad in 1885. Van Horne saw an opportunity to boost European tourism to Canada by inviting Kipling to take a cross-country rail tour of the country. Upon Kipling’s return to Montreal, Van Horne presented him with a large (5 ½ feet x 3 ¾ feet) oil on canvass titled “.007” which illustrated the final scene from Kipling’s story. With the exception of a brief public appearance in 1933 “.007” remained in Van Horne’s Montreal mansion until 1973 when the historic house was demolished, its contents dispersed, and “.007” crated and stored. After almost a century the painting has surfaced for viewing as part of a major new art exhibition that just opened on Ministers Island, Van Horne’s former summer home and now a National Historic Site of Canada located just off the coast of St Andrews, New Brunswick.

The exhibit, titled “From the Last Spike to Art Connoisseur: A Journey with Sir William Cornelius Van Horne”, is having its World Premiere on Ministers Island thru to September 30. The exhibit takes guests on a journey to better understand Van Horne thru his art, a deeply important part of Sir William Cornelius’s life. At a young age he started to draw with a slate pebble that he found in a stream. His interest continued to flourish such that, prior to World War I, Van Horne was both a prolific painter and collector who owned one of the largest private art collections in North America. The heart of the exhibit are thoughtfully curated banners that relate the paintings on display to Van Horne’s varied life pursuits as business leader, scientist, innovator, and family man. Those banners, and many of the paintings, are on loan from the Montreal-based museum Exporail, the Canadian Railway Museum who created this travelling exhibition with the participation of the Government of Canada. Beyond “.007”, other original artifacts from Exporail’s collection include Van Horne’s painting “Foothills of the Rockies”, two of Van Horne’s easels from his Montreal residence, and George Horne-Russell’s painting “Portrait of Lord Strathcona”. Also on display are ten Van Horne original paintings owned by the Province of New Brunswick including “Rocky Banks”, “Basilica in Cuba”, “Sunburst over Ministers Island”, “Moonlight on the Sea”, and “The Lily Pond”. The exhibit is on display in the main floor Studio of Van Horne’s Island home where many of his original paintings were created. This bringing together of Van Horne’s story, his art, and the summer home where much of his life was lived is a meaningful enhancement for visitors of the exhibit and the home where it is now displayed.

Response to the exhibit has been enthusiastic. Bernie Riordon, the former CEO of New Brunswick’s famed Beaverbrook Art Gallery, commented that “The exhibit of Van Horne’s paintings on Ministers Island is fabulous. It’s innovative and educational and a must-see for lovers of Canadian art and history.” John Kershaw, Chair of the charitable body Van Horne Estate on Ministers Island which manages the Island on behalf of its owner, the Province of New Brunswick, recalls the strength of support from local residents to get the exhibit to Ministers Island. “Last December we held a Gala to raise funds to pay for the rental and transport of this amazing exhibit. Our local residents were terrific. In one evening, we had the monies we needed.” That enthusiasm has been shared by the public with Island attendance up 40% during the week following the exhibit’s recent opening.

Admittance to the exhibit is included in the cost of an Island Day Pass which ranges from \$16 for students and seniors to \$18 for adults. Beyond the exhibit visitors can tour the historic Estate buildings, hike the 20 km of picturesque Island trails, and drive across the ocean floor at low tide, currently the only way to reach Ministers Island. Due to the tides Island open hours vary daily. Open hours and ticket purchases are available online at the Island’s website: [ministersisland.net](http://ministersisland.net).

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