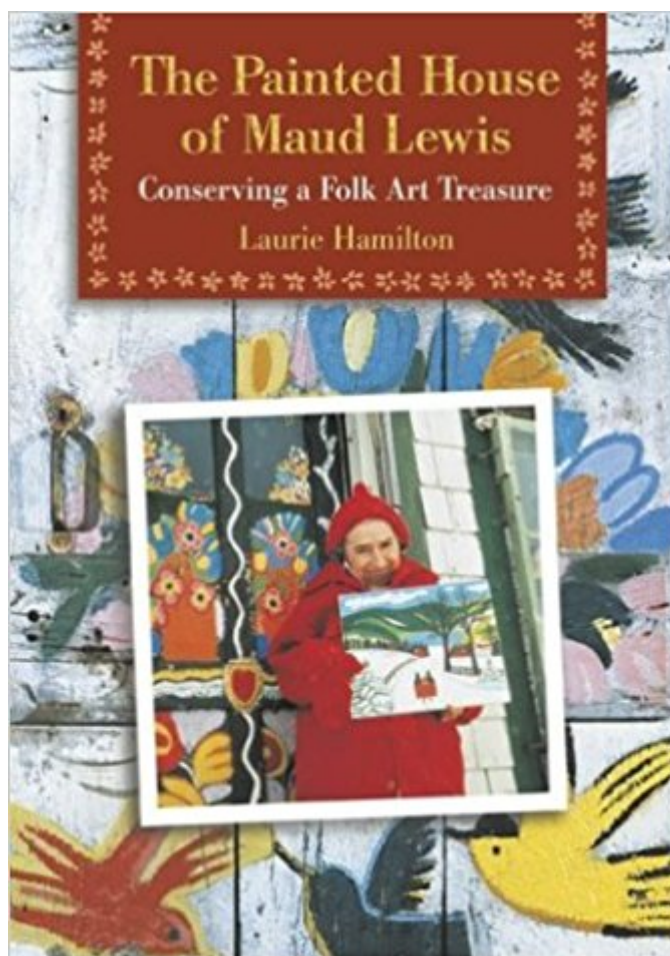


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The Painted House Of Maud Lewis: Conserving A Folk Art Treasure



Synopsis

For many years, Maud Lewis was one of Nova Scotia's best-loved folk painters. In the 1990s she was embraced by the rest of the country when the landmark exhibition of her work *The Illuminated Life of Maud Lewis* travelled across Canada. By the time the tour was over, half a million people had become acquainted with her delightful work. Between 1938, when she married Everett Lewis, until her death in 1970, Maud Lewis lived in a tiny one-room house near Digby, Nova Scotia. Over the years, she painted the doors inside and out, the windowpanes, the walls and cupboards, the wallpaper, the little staircase to the sleeping loft, the woodstove, the breadbox, the dustpan, almost everything her hand touched. Her house was a joy to behold, and it became a magnet for tourists as well as a focal point in her village. In 1979, after Everett Lewis died, the Maud Lewis Painted House Society worked diligently to raise funds to acquire, preserve, and display the house as part of the cultural heritage of the area as well as a memorial to their beloved artist. In 1984, the house and its contents were purchased by the Province of Nova Scotia for the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. In *The Painted House of Maud Lewis*, Laurie Hamilton, the conservator at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, shows how all the different parts of the house – the building itself, the painted household items, even the wallpaper – were catalogued, conserved, and prepared for exhibition. The preliminary stages of conservation treatment began in 1996 in a most unusual location: the Sunnyside Mall in Bedford, just outside Halifax, where conservators worked in full view of the public. The conservators used established techniques and invented new ones to complete their unique project and documented every stage of the restoration photographically. The book also features more than sixty-five colour photos including several taken by noted photographer Bob Brooks in 1965 for the *Star Weekly*. Today, anyone can visit the tiny house that has become a folk art phenomenon. The restoration story spans two decades, but the story of the Painted House continues as each new visitor to the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia finds delight and inspiration in Maud Lewis's joyous vision.

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[View larger](#) **The Painted House of Maud Lewis: Conserving a Folk Art Treasure** by Laurie Hamilton Maud Lewis has long been one of the world's best-loved folk painters. In the 1990s, her work *The Illuminated Life of Maud Lewis* travelled across Canada, and by the time the tour was over, half a million people had become acquainted with her delightful work. Since then, her reputation as an artist has only grown, and in April 2017, Mongrel Media released *Maudie*, a film adaptation of the folk artist's life starring Academy Award nominees Sally Hawkins (*Happy-Go-Lucky*, *Blue Jasmine*) and Ethan Hawke. Between 1938, when she married Everett Lewis, until her death in 1970, Maud Lewis lived in a tiny one-room house near Digby, Nova Scotia. Over the years, she painted the doors inside and out, the windowpanes, the walls and cupboards, the wallpaper, the little staircase to the sleeping loft, the woodstove, the breadbox, the dustpan, almost everything her hand touched. Her house was a joy to behold, and it became a magnet for tourists as well as a focal point in her village. In 1979, after Everett Lewis died, the Maud Lewis Painted House Society worked diligently to raise funds to acquire, preserve, and display the house as part of the cultural heritage of the area as well as a memorial to their beloved artist. In 1984, the house and its contents were purchased by the Province of Nova Scotia for the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. In *The Painted House of Maud Lewis*, Laurie Hamilton, the conservator at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, shows how all the different parts of the house — the building itself, the painted household items, even the wallpaper — were catalogued, conserved, and prepared for exhibition. The preliminary stages of conservation treatment began in 1996 in a most unusual location: the Sunnyside Mall in Bedford, just outside Halifax, where conservators worked in full view of the public. The conservators used established techniques and invented new ones to complete their unique project and documented every stage of the restoration photographically. The book also features more than sixty-five colour photos including several taken by noted photographer

Bob Brooks in 1965 for the Star Weekly. Today, anyone can visit the tiny house that has become a folk art phenomenon. The restoration story spans two decades, but the story of the Painted House continues as each new visitor to the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia finds delight and inspiration in Maud Lewis's joyous vision. Panoramic image of the interior of the Maud Lewis house copyright by the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia

Why You'll Love This Book

The Painted House of Maud Lewis offers a detailed account of the project to save one of the world's most beloved folk artist's most joyful and intimate works, and is a must-have for anyone interested in art and history. If you enjoy challenging restoration projects and believe in the celebration of art, or if you loved the 2017 film Maudie, then this book is for you.

Reviews

- Hamilton never met Maud Lewis. "But I always felt her presence, how awestruck she would have been that so much effort was going into saving her house."
- Hamilton's book, *The Painted House of Maud Lewis*, details each painstaking restorative step.
- Toronto Star: "This great little book describes the rescue and restoration of folk artist Maud Lewis's truest work of art: her home. It is Ms Lewis's work in the house that illustrates her unspoiled vision: the extraordinary work executed before the forced labour of commercial pieces took over. Descriptions of the technical processes and applications are successfully balanced by excellent colour photographs."
- New Brunswick Reader: "65+ colour photos Fully documented art restoration techniques Pinterest-worthy ideas for art enthusiasts An inside look at the famous Maud Lewis house A great companion to the 2017 film Maudie"

Copyright 2001 by the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia One of Maud Lewis's typical paintings of a black cat. Collection of Pat and Bob Burstall. (Laurie Hamilton)

Copyright 2001 by the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia The painting on linoleum after treatment. (Jennifer McLaughlin)

Copyright 2001 by the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia A typical example of a later work by the artist using a commercially derived subject that she would repeat many times. (G.N. Hilfiker)

Copyright 2001 by the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Bottom right interior pane of the window, showing the pristine condition of the painted tulips. (Laurie Hamilton)

About the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia

With locations in downtown Halifax and Yarmouth, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia is the largest art museum in Atlantic Canada. Since 1908, the Gallery has been a gateway for the visual arts in Atlantic Canada by engaging people with art. It is committed to this mission as an agency of the Province of Nova Scotia and one of the premier arts institutions in Canada. The Gallery is also responsible for acquiring, preserving and exhibiting works of art, and for

providing education in the visual arts. The Gallery's Permanent Collection currently holds over 17,000 works. The final, fully restored painted house of Maud Lewis is on permanent display in Halifax. Copyright 2001 by Art Gallery of Nova Scotia Maud Lewis standing in front of the famous painted house. About Goose Lane Editions Goose Lane Editions is Canada's oldest independent publisher. For more than 60 years, Goose Lane has specialized in publishing literary fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction on subjects such as art, history, politics, biography, travel, nature, popular culture, and the big ideas of our time Goose Lane Editions is based in Fredericton, New Brunswick, and often collaborates with museums and galleries to help showcase outstanding talent in the arts.

"This great little book describes the rescue and restoration of folk artist Maud Lewis's truest work of art: her home ... It is Ms Lewis's work in the house that illustrates her unspoiled vision: the extraordinary work executed before the forced labour of commercial pieces took over ... descriptions of the technical processes and applications are successfully balanced by excellent colour photographs." (New Brunswick Reader 2013-01-15)

Rescuing the tiny house of Canada's most beloved folk artist. Maud Lewis painted the whole interior of her tiny one-room house – not just the walls, but the doors inside and out, the windowpanes, the breadboxes, the little staircase to the sleeping loft, the woodstove . . . almost everything her hand touched. Her home was a joy to behold. Fourteen years after Maud's death, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia acquired the Painted House, famous by then but badly deteriorated. Conservators faced unique challenges as they stabilized and restored this valuable artefact. In 1998, they installed it intact in the custom-designed Scotiabank Maud Lewis Gallery, complete with furnishings, painting materials, and everything else that made up Maud Lewis's diminutive dwelling.

A little gem of a book concerning a gem of a woman.

charming book, I just love Maud Lewis and her wonderful artwork! She is truly a woman to inspire all of us to be creative. She has inspired me to paint the inside and outside of my home to delight myself and others. I can't wait to start this spring!

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