



# EMILY CARR

Life & Work

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## Contents

03

**Biography**

13

**Key Works**

37

**Significance & Critical Issues**

47

**Style & Technique**

59

**Where to See**

64

**Notes**

68

**Glossary**

78

**Sources & Resources**

86

**About The Author**

87

**Copyright & Credits**





# BIOGRAPHY

**Emily Carr (1871–1945) was one of the first artists of national significance to emerge from the West Coast. Along with the Group of Seven, she became a leading figure in Canadian modern art in the twentieth century. She spent the greater part of her life living and working in Victoria, where she struggled to receive critical acceptance.**



### EARLY YEARS

Emily Carr was born on December 13, 1871, in Victoria, B.C. She was the second youngest in a family of nine children, with four older sisters and four brothers, only one of whom, Dick, lived to adulthood. Her father, Richard Carr, was born in Crayford, Kent, England, and had travelled in Europe, the Americas, and the Caribbean in search of a place where his entrepreneurial ventures could flourish.

Richard returned to England briefly with his wife, Emily Saunders, to enjoy the wealth he had accumulated as a merchant in California, before moving permanently to Victoria in 1863.

The city was an expatriate British settlement, home to the Songhees First Nation and a significant population of Chinese workers and merchants. About her father Carr writes,



LEFT: Studio portrait of Carr and her sisters. *Clockwise from left:* Lizzie, Edith, Clara, Emily, and Alice. Photograph by Skene Lowe, c. 1895. RIGHT: Studio portrait of Carr's parents, Emily Carr (née Saunders) and Richard Carr, c. 1876.



The Carr family residence, with Richard, Emily (Saunders) Carr, and children assembled on the front porch, c. 1869. Richard Carr had the family home built on Government Street in Victoria in 1864.



As far back as I can remember[,] Father's place was all made and in order. The house was large and well-built, of California redwood, the garden prim and carefully tended. Everything about it was extremely English. It was as though Father had buried a tremendous homesickness in this new soil and it had rooted and sprung up English. There were hawthorn hedges, primrose banks and cow pastures with shrubberies.... Just one of Father's fields was left Canadian. It was a piece of land which he bought later when Canada had made Father and Mother love her, and at the end of fifty years, we still called that piece of ground "the new field."<sup>1</sup>

Richard Carr was a key influence on the young Emily: while proud of his English heritage, according to her, he desired a "Canadian education" for his family.<sup>2</sup> He sent his daughters to public schools rather than the private finishing schools that were regarded as the proper education for young middle-class Victorian girls. His gift to Emily on her eleventh birthday was *The Boy's Own Book of Natural History*, and he encouraged her independence and spirit. At the same time his authoritarianism and sternness led to her early sense of alienation and rebellion—a self-identification she never abandoned and one she depicted regularly in the books and journals she produced throughout her life.

### STUDY IN CALIFORNIA AND ENGLAND

Carr's mother, to whom she was very close, died of tuberculosis when Carr was fourteen. When her father passed away two years later, the family was left in the care of the eldest daughter, Edith. Unable to tolerate her sister's strictness, Carr persuaded her guardian, James Lawson, to allow her to study art at the California School of Design, in San Francisco, beginning in 1890. After three years she was forced to return to Victoria because of dwindling family resources. She began teaching art classes in her studio, and once she had sufficient savings, she embarked in 1899 on her second study sojourn, at the Westminster School of Art in London, England. Disappointed with its conservative instruction and the squalid conditions in London, she left the school after two years.

In 1901 Carr went to Paris for twelve days, where she visited the Louvre several times as well as private galleries. In the spring of that year she might have seen works by Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, and Fauve artists, including Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), Claude Monet (1840-1926), Camille Pissarro (1830-1903), and Henri Matisse (1869-1954), among others. This short trip convinced her that Paris was a greater centre for art than London.<sup>3</sup>

Later that same year she went to St. Ives, an artists' colony and fishing village in Cornwall, recommended to her by a classmate in London. There she joined the Porthmeor Studios, under the tutelage of Julius Olsson (1864-1942) and his assistant Algernon Talmage. Carr left St. Ives after eight months and attended Meadows Studio at Bushey, Hertfordshire, where she studied under John Whiteley.

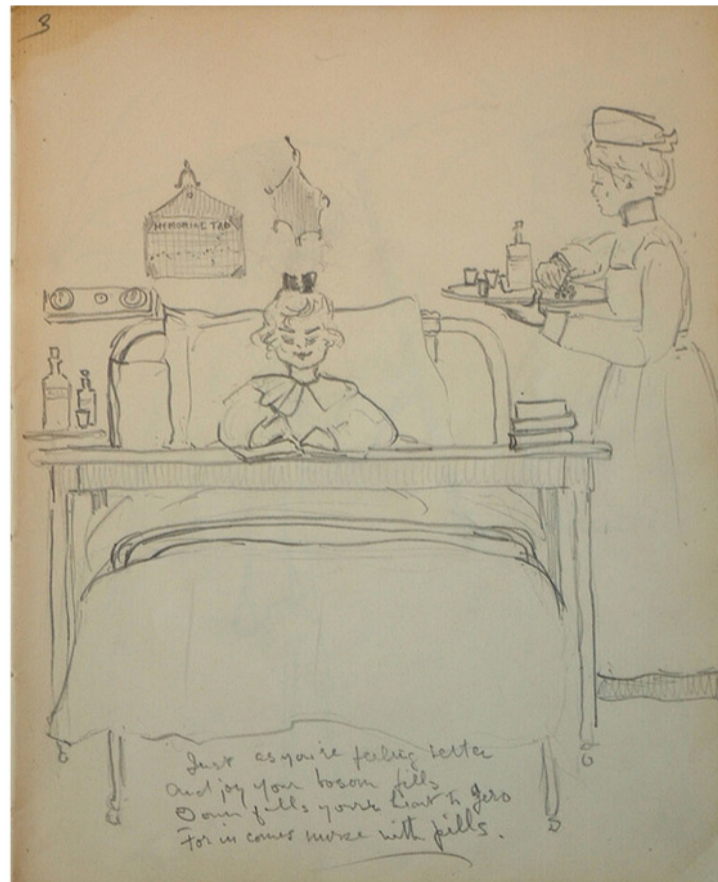


Carr on horseback during a visit to the Cariboo Regional District, British Columbia, c. 1909.

Back in London Carr suffered from continued illness and a growing sense of displacement. One of her sisters was summoned from Canada after Carr did not respond to the ministrations of her wealthy Belgravia friends. In 1903 she was hospitalized at the East Anglian Sanatorium, where she stayed for the next eighteen months, diagnosed with hysteria. Her highly regimented treatment at the clinic, designed for TB patients, made it impossible for her to paint, though she did create a series of drawings, later published as *Pause: A Sketch Book*, documenting her stay there. After her release she made a brief sketching trip to Bushey before returning home to Canada in 1904.



Students painting from life at the art school in St. Ives in the early 1900s. Carr is on the left with her back to the camera, wearing a hat and an apron.



LEFT: Emily Carr, *Sketchbook for Pause; Rest*, page 9, 1903, graphite and ink on paper, 20.7 x 16.5 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. RIGHT: Emily Carr, *Sketchbook for Pause; Rest*, page 3, 1903, graphite and ink on paper, 20.7 x 16.5 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.



Carr returned to the West Coast by way of Toronto and the Cariboo region of B.C. and began teaching in Vancouver. She was discouraged by what she perceived as her failure in London. At first her pupils were society women at the Vancouver Studio Club and School of Art, and she became frustrated by their lack of artistic commitment. She then opened her own art school for children, which was highly successful.

In 1907 she and her sister Alice took a sightseeing trip to Alaska. Carr chronicled their adventures extensively in her notebook and in sketches, documenting everything they experienced, from extreme seasickness to visits to Sitka's totem poles. The trip was to have a profound influence on Carr, who began to imagine a new project, one that would occupy the next five years of her life: documenting the Aboriginal village sites in British Columbia.



LEFT: Louis Shotridge, *Sitka + Surroundings—Totem Poles in Forest*, c. 1918. The Tlingit and Haida poles were displaced from their original sites and moved to Sitka to create a tourist attraction. RIGHT: This illustration from Carr's *Alaska Journal*, 1907, shows the artist, her sister Alice, and a tall man whom Carr referred to as "La Totem" looking upward at a totem pole in Sitka. It is likely Carr's first depiction of a totem pole.

### FRANCE, 1910–11

In 1910 Carr once again travelled abroad for study, this time to Paris. She stayed for fifteen months, and the technical and stylistic training she experienced in France changed her work irrevocably. As in England she quickly tired of the large city. "I could not stand the airlessness of the life rooms for long," she writes later, "the doctors stating, as they had done in London[,] that 'there was something about these big cities that these Canadians from their big spaces couldn't stand, it was like putting a pine tree in a pot.'"<sup>4</sup> She retreated to a spa in Sweden for several months, returning to study with Harry Phelan Gibb (1870–1948) in Cr cy-en-Brie, east of Paris, and in Brittany. When Carr studied with Gibb, he was painting in the Fauvist style.



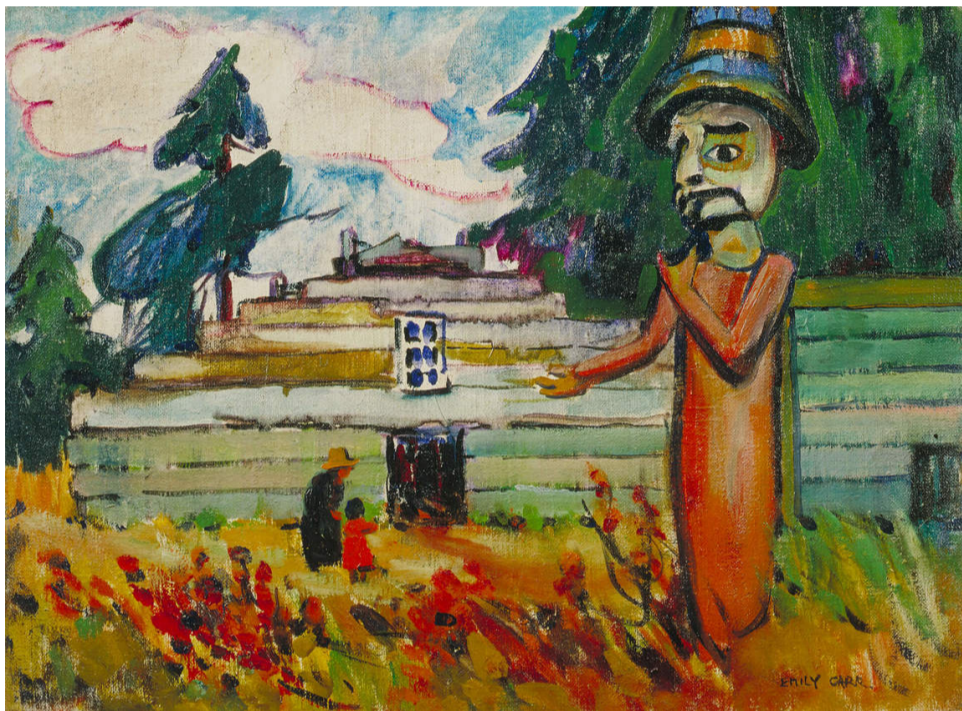
LEFT: Emily Carr, *Breton Farm Yard*, c. 1911, oil on paperboard, 32.3 x 40.8 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. RIGHT: John Duncan Fergusson, *People and Sails at Royan*, 1910, oil on board, 27.5 x 34.5 cm, Fergusson Gallery, Perth & Kinross Council, Scotland.

Despite these interruptions her work flourished. The French paintings—including *Brittany, France* and *Breton Farm Yard*, both c. 1911—reflect a new boldness, and in 1911 two of her paintings were accepted for exhibition at the Salon d'Automne in Paris. Her fellow Canadian James Wilson Morrice (1865–1924) and her teacher John Duncan Fergusson (1874–1961) were also represented there, along with Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947), Matisse, Francis Picabia (1879–1953), Georges Rouault (1871–1958), and Édouard Vuillard (1868–1940), among others. When Carr returned home in 1912 she organized an exhibition in her studio of seventy watercolours and oils from the French sojourn—she was the first to introduce Fauvism to Vancouver.

### EARLY FIRST NATIONS WORK AND HIATUS, 1912–27

On her return Carr initiated her documentation project with renewed vigour, embarking on the most extensive excursion she had ever taken in British Columbia. She travelled to the islands of the Northwest Coast, including Haida Gwaii, as well as to the Upper Skeena River,<sup>5</sup>

Whenever I could afford it I went up North, among the Indians and the woods, and forgot all about everything in the joy of those lonely, wonderful places. I decided to try and make as good a representative collection of those old villages and wonderful totem poles as I could, for the love of the people and the love of the places and the love of the art; whether anybody liked them or not.... I painted them to please myself in my own way, but I also stuck rigidly to the facts because I knew I was painting history.<sup>6</sup>



Emily Carr, *Potlatch Figure (Mimquimlees)*, 1912, oil on canvas, 46 x 60.3 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

In 1913 she organized an exhibition of two hundred works from this period at the Dominion Hall in Vancouver. It was her most ambitious project, and one that represented the culmination of five years of work—it was also the largest solo exhibition mounted by an artist in Vancouver at that time.

At Dominion Hall she delivered a talk, "Lecture on Totems," in which she described—within the colonial perspective of the day—her understanding of indigenous cultures, declaring finally, "I glory in our wonderful west and I hope to leave behind me some of the relics of its first primitive greatness. These things should be to us Canadians what the ancient Briton's relics are to the English. Only a few more years and they will be gone forever into silent nothingness and I would gather my collection together before they are forever past."<sup>7</sup>



In contrast to her lecture, her work from this period shows a living culture: peopled villages alongside longhouses and totems. The communities she depicts were as much a part of her vision as the cultural objects she found there. Carr tackled her project energetically and wrote to the minister of education in British Columbia to request his support, stating, "The object of my work is to get the totem poles in their own original settings. The Indians do not make them now and they will soon be a thing of the past. I consider them real Art treasures of a passing race."<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, the reviews of her exhibition were mixed, and when she offered the paintings to the new provincial museum they were refused—their daring modern execution was thought not to accurately represent the totem poles and villages she had so assiduously been recording.



Carr with her pets, in the garden of her home on Simcoe Street in Victoria, 1918. Carr ran a boarding house from 1913 through the 1920s, recording her experiences as a landlady in her book *The House of All Sorts* (1944).

Carr was deeply discouraged by the failure of her modern work to find support or patrons in British Columbia, and for the next thirteen years she did little painting. She spent her time running a boarding house on Simcoe Street in Victoria known as the "House of All Sorts" (later the title for her book about this period), where she raised chickens and rabbits and, later, Old English sheepdogs. Friends and family suggested she abandon the new form of painting she had learned in France, but, as she writes, "I had tasted the joy of a bigger way. It would have been impossible had I wanted to, which I did not."<sup>9</sup>



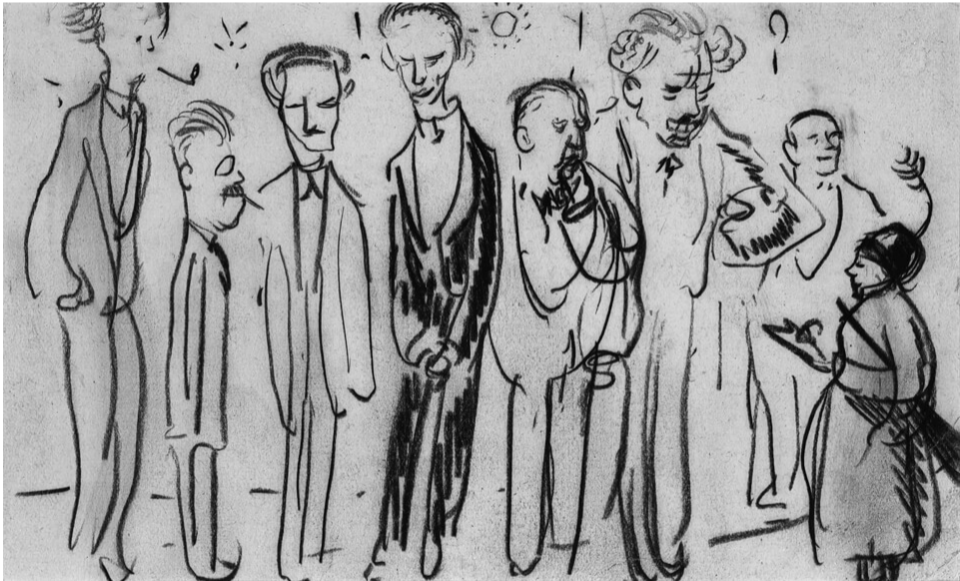
At home in Victoria she produced hooked rugs and later pottery on which she incorporated First Nations iconography for the tourist trade, but she ultimately felt that this was a form of exploitation of Native motifs. With the exception of her early art studies in San Francisco, London, and Paris, Carr had been isolated, in collegial terms, on the West Coast of Canada among conservative relatives, middle-class society, and primarily academic painters. Her creative and intellectual inspirations were unconventional, as seen in her espousal of European modernism and her fascination with First Nations cultures, and her extensive journeys to indigenous villages throughout the southern interior and coastal areas of British Columbia. From the late 1920s she also sought enlightenment from First Nations culture, extensive journeys to indigenous villages throughout the southern interior and coastal areas of British Columbia, Hindu priests, expatriate Chinese artists, and humanist philosophers and writers whose mysticism helped her to navigate her responses to nature—Walt Whitman, Henry David Thoreau, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, in particular. But from 1913 until 1924, when she began a fruitful association with Seattle artists, particularly Mark Tobey (1890–1976), she had felt her artistic career was a failure.



Emily Carr, *Bell*, c. 1927, fired red clay with paint and metal wire, 11 x 8.5 cm diameter, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Carr signed this bell, and much of her pottery of this period, “Klee Wyck”—a name given to her by members of the Nuuchah-nulth First Nation, meaning “Laughing One.”

### SUCCESS AND RECOGNITION, 1927–45

Perhaps because of her ongoing sense of professional and personal isolation and rejection, Carr chose her associations carefully. She writes, “That is one thing about people I put in my garden down in my heart. I have noticed that I do not remember their outside appearance, but their inside looks only. I forget their features. I think that is my test whether they belong to the garden, because it is a garden for souls, not for outsiders.”<sup>10</sup>



Arthur Lismer, *Emily Carr and the Group of Seven*, c. 1927, conté on paper, 9.6 x 15.8 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. Left to right: J.E.H. MacDonald, Frederick Varley, Franklin Carmichael, Arthur Lismer, A.Y. Jackson, Lawren Harris, Franz Johnston, and Emily Carr.

Carr’s national recognition came only in 1927, when she was in her fifties. Eric Brown, the director of the National Gallery of Canada, visited her and invited her to join the Group of Seven in a major show he was organizing in Ottawa, *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern*. Her work had been recommended to him by Marius Barbeau, the ethnologist at the National Museum of Canada and co-curator of the show.



Twenty-six of her oil paintings— including *Tanoo, Q.C.I.*, 1913—as well as pottery and hooked rugs, were selected for exhibition. Brown also recommended a book, *A Canadian Art Movement: The Story of the Group of Seven* by Frederick Housser, which introduced her to the work of the artists. As she travelled to Ottawa, Carr stopped in Vancouver to meet F.H. Varley (1881-1969) and in Toronto where, over several days, she met with Lawren Harris (1885-1970), Arthur Lismer (1885-1969), A.Y. Jackson (1882-1974), and J.E.H. MacDonald (1873-1932), all members of the Group of Seven, who welcomed her into their studios. At the conclusion of the visit Harris told her, “You are one of us.”<sup>11</sup>

His words were particularly important to Carr, who had so little positive critical or collegial response to her art until this point. Harris would quickly become an important mentor to Carr. Of all the group’s work, Harris’s touched her the most: “Always, something in it speaks to me, something in his big tranquil spaces filled with light and serenity. I feel as though I could get right into them, the spirit of me not the body. There is a holiness about them, something you can’t describe but just feel.”<sup>12</sup> The trip was transformational; Carr met many of the central figures working within modernism in Anglo Canada, the new affiliations ending her long professional estrangement. That event marked a turning point in her career: thereafter she entered a mature period in which she produced the work that would gain her national and international recognition—such as *Zunoqua of the Cat Village*, 1931—and greater respect in British Columbia, though the modernity inherent in her paintings continued to make them unpopular in Victoria during her lifetime.

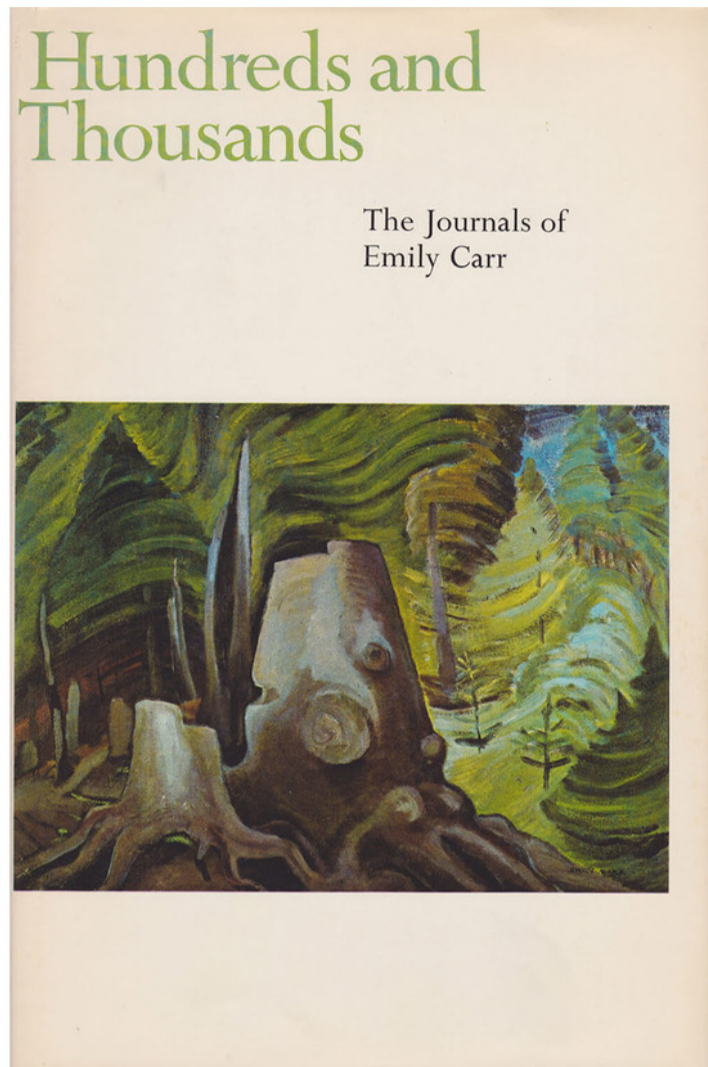
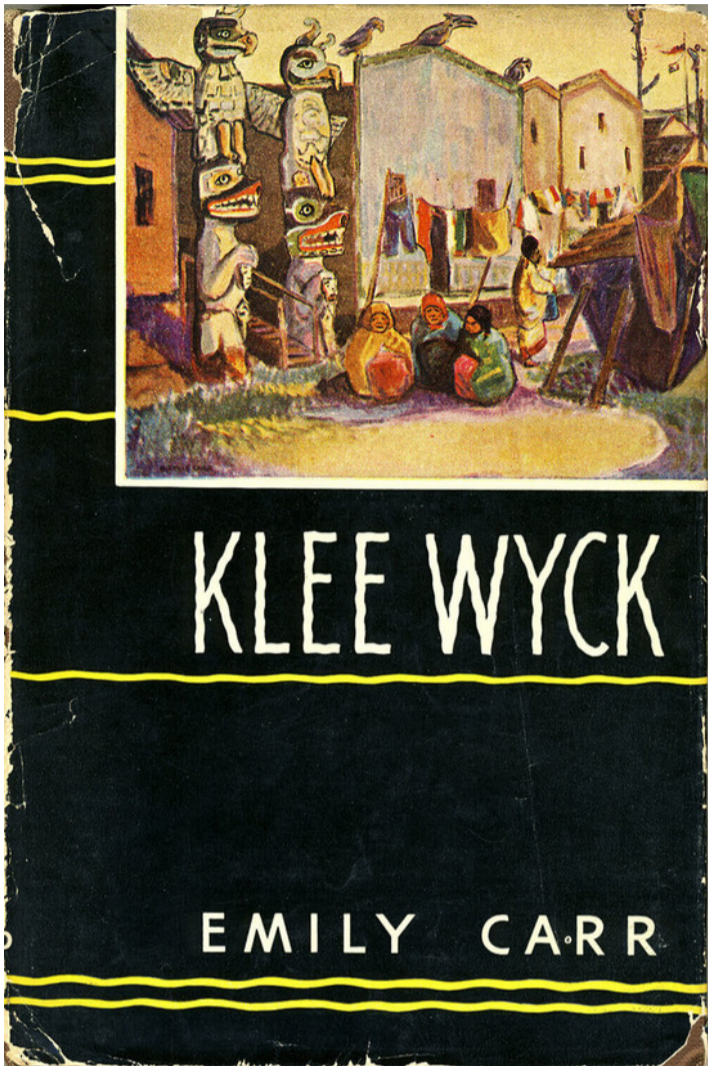
Carr was invited to exhibit with the Group of Seven in 1930 and in 1931, and after they disbanded she joined the Canadian Group of Painters. These connections, and especially her friendship with Lawren Harris, were a continuing stimulus, as was a 1930 trip to New York, where she was introduced to Georgia O’Keeffe (1887-1986). The young B.C. painter Jack Shadbolt (1909-1998) and a Chinese artist in Victoria, Lee Nam, were fruitful local contacts. Although she would remain in Victoria and at a distance, these connections sustained her for the rest of her career. The inclusion of her work in group exhibitions at the Tate Gallery in London in 1938 and at the New York World’s Fair in 1939, however, marked her entry onto the national and international stage.

## WRITING LIFE

After 1937, when Carr’s health made painting difficult for her, she turned mainly to writing, producing a series of books. The stories she wrote reflected on her life and times and brought her praise and recognition. In 1941 she won a Governor General’s Literary Award for her first book, *Klee Wyck*, a collection of twenty-one stories about her travels to coastal villages. Other story collections published during this time explored her childhood (*The Book of Small*, 1942) and her years running a boarding house in Victoria (*House of All Sorts*, 1944).



Emily Carr, *Zunoqua of the Cat Village*, 1931, oil on canvas, 112.2 x 70.1 cm, Vancouver Art Gallery. Carr describes the encounter in her book *Klee Wyck*: “There we were—D’Sonoqua, the cats and I—the woman who only a few moments ago had forced herself to come behind the houses in trembling fear of the ‘wild woman of the woods’—wild in the sense that forest-creatures are wild—shy, untouchable.”



LEFT: The first edition of *Klee Wyck*, published in 1941, features Carr's *Indian Village, Alert Bay*, 1912, 63.5 x 81.3 cm, Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton. RIGHT: The first edition of *Hundreds and Thousands*, published posthumously in 1966, features Carr's *Stumps*, 1936, 50.8 x 68.6 cm, private collection.

Carr suffered a severe heart attack in 1937; she died in Victoria in 1945. Just before her death Carr learned that the University of British Columbia had decided to award her an Honorary Doctor of Letters. Seven years later she represented Canada posthumously in its first participation at the Venice Biennale, along with David Milne (1882-1953), Alfred Pellan (1906-1988), and Goodridge Roberts (1904-1974). Ira Dilworth, a friend and the executor of her estate, continued to publish her writings: first her autobiography, *Growing Pains*, in 1946, and, in 1953, two further volumes: *The Heart of a Peacock*, a book of recollections and fictional stories that he organized from the papers left to him; and *Pause: A Sketch Book*. Carr's personal journals, *Hundreds and Thousands*, documenting her later professional and artistic development, travels, and friendships, were published in 1966.



Harold Mortimer-Lamb, *Emily Carr in Her Studio*, 1939, Vancouver Art Gallery.





# KEY WORKS

Emily Carr was a prolific artist. The visionary character of her art and her stylistic explorations and experimentation with different media can be seen in the following key works. They have been selected to represent the range of Carr's innovations as well as the ambition of her work.



## TOTEM WALK AT SITKA 1907



Emily Carr, *Totem Walk at Sitka*, 1907  
Watercolour on paper, 38.5 x 38.5 cm  
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria

*Totem Walk at Sitka* shows the level of Carr's artistic ability after her early conservative training in San Francisco and London, England. Made during the voyage to Alaska that she took with her sister Alice (a trip she chronicled extensively in her notebook and in sketches), this is an important but awkward painting. She was conflicted at the time: collecting "curios" made by Aboriginal people while simultaneously grappling with the conceptual and stylistic

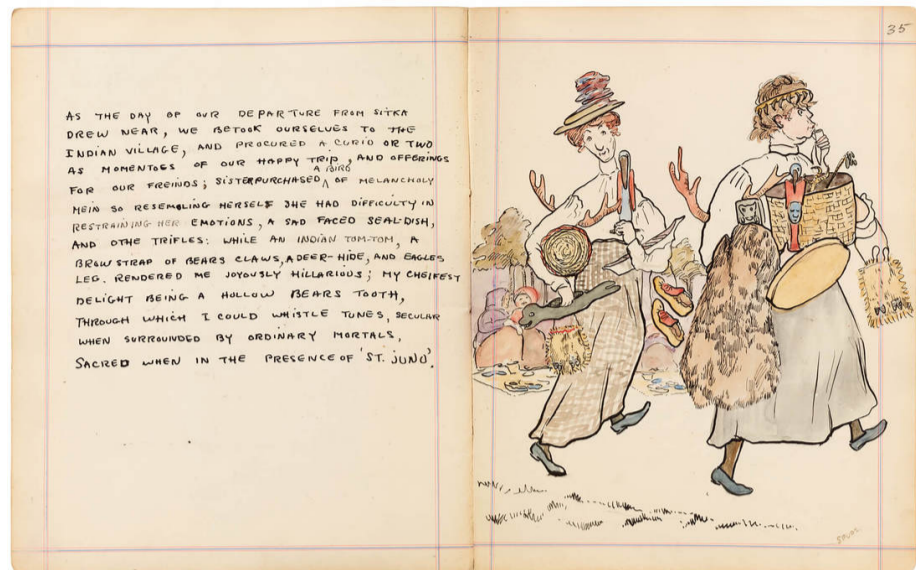


achievements of their culture.

From 1907 to 1910 Carr embarked on a series of paintings that reveal her ethnographic framing of Aboriginal subjects. In these works she documents villages and their inhabitants; she depicts totem poles, structures, and people, focusing, on occasion, on individuals. Executed primarily in watercolour, *Totem Walk at Sitka* reveals the traditional naturalistic techniques of composition, style, and colouration that she learned in art school. She records a group of Tlingit and Haida poles that had been

displaced from their traditional sites and erected within a newly constructed park after their display at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. As she later noted in her autobiography, she found totem poles "not easy to draw. Some of them are very high, they are elaborately carved, deep symbolical carving, as much or more attention paid to the attributes of the creature as to its form. The Indian used distortion, sometimes to fill spaces but mostly for more powerful expressing than would have been possible had he depicted actualities—gaining strength, weight, power by accentuation."

*Totem Walk at Sitka* marks an epiphany and a turning point for Carr: it was at Sitka, on the encouragement of an American artist, speculated to be Theodore J. Richardson (1855-1914), that she decided to pursue her project of documenting the totem poles and Aboriginal villages in the province. She wrote, "The Indian people and their Art touched me deeply.... By the time I reached home my mind was made up. I was going to picture totem poles in their own village settings, as complete a collection of them as I could."



Emily Carr, *Alaska Journal*, page 35, 1907, private collection: "As the day of our departure from Sitka drew near, we betook ourselves to the Indian village, and procured a curio or two as mementos of our happy trip, and offerings for our friends."

## BEACON HILL PARK 1909



Emily Carr, *Beacon Hill Park*, 1909  
Watercolour on paper, 35.2 x 51.9 cm  
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria

*Beacon Hill Park*, executed a year before Carr's travels to France, would have appealed to middle-class Victorians: in keeping with the nineteenth-century English pictorial tradition, the balanced composition employs touches of aerial perspective and a neutral palette. The Carr family home, where Emily was born, bordered on the park—one of the most beautiful in Victoria. As Carr later wrote in *The Book of Small* (1942), Beacon Hill Park was

a beautiful piece of wild land given to the people of Victoria by Sir James Douglas. The Hill itself was grassy, with here and there little thickets of oak scrub and clumps of broom. Beyond the Hill the land was heavily wooded. When you climbed to the top of Beacon Hill and looked around you knew that the school geography was right after all and that the world really was round. Beacon Hill seemed to be the whole top of it and from all sides the land ran away from you and the edges were lost. To the west lay the purple hills of Sooke; to the south were the Straits of Juan de Fuca, rimmed by the snowy Olympic mountains, whose peaks were always playing in and out among the clouds till you could not tell which was peak and which sky. On



the east there were more sea and islands. The town was on the north, with purple Cedar Hill and green Mount Tolmie standing behind it. Our winds came from the Olympics in summer and from the icy north in the winter.

From this genteel pastoral scene, no one could have anticipated the radical qualities that would characterize Carr's mature style of the 1930s. The conservative nature of *Beacon Hill Park* stands in marked contrast to the paintings she would later become known for, like *Sunshine and Tumult*, 1938-39, and makes clear the extent of her progress toward an unprecedented visual language for painters of the West Coast. In the decades that followed *Beacon Hill Park*, Carr shifted her choice of subject and the composition, treatment, and palette of her work, creating the image system we now associate with Canada's West Coast.



Emily Carr, *Sunshine and Tumult*, 1938-39, oil on paper, 87 x 57.1 cm, Art Gallery of Hamilton.



## AUTUMN IN FRANCE 1911



Emily Carr, *Autumn in France*, 1911  
Oil on paperboard, 49 x 65.9 cm  
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Painted in Brittany, *Autumn in France* is a confident, dramatic depiction of the French landscape, reflecting a remarkable leap forward in Carr's accomplishment. No longer worrying over fine details, she uses bold brush strokes, which reflect the influence of Post-Impressionism, to suggest an overall movement. She creates a cohesive structure while at the same time capturing the rhythms and major transitions within the broad expanse of the French landscape. "I tramped the country-side, sketch sack on shoulder," she writes of her time in France. "The fields were lovely, lying like a spread of gay patchwork against red-gold wheat, cool, pale oats, red-purple of new-turned soil, green, green grass, and orderly, well trimmed trees."<sup>1</sup> Carr's explorations in the countryside led her to understand how she should depict the unity, vibrancy, and structure of the landscape and be less concerned with naturalistic rendering. Under the tutelage of Harry Phelan Gibb (1870-1948), a British expatriate living in Paris, she became more confident: "Those others don't know what they



Emily Carr, *French Knitter (La Bretonne)*, 1911, oil on canvas, 55.2 x 45.7 cm, private collection.





are after," he said, but "you do."<sup>2</sup>

While outside Paris, Carr worked *en plein air*, in the fields or woods and sometimes in the homes of cottagers, from morning until dark, creating images of rural life in Brittany, such as *French Knitter (La Bretonne)*, 1911. Although Gibb advised her to rest, he admired her tenacity. When she destroyed works that she felt were not adequate, he told her, "That's why I like teaching you! You'll risk ruining your best in order to find something better." And when she complained about the artistic isolation awaiting her back in Canada, he replied, "So much the better! Your silent Indian will teach you more than all the art jargon."<sup>3</sup>



## TANOO, Q.C.I. 1913



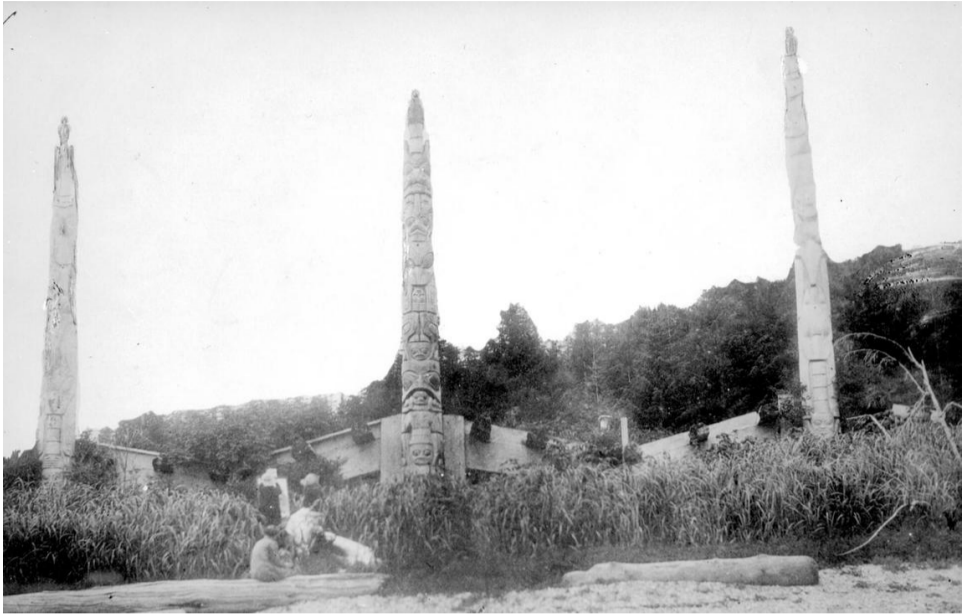
Emily Carr, *Tanoo, Q.C.I.*, 1913  
Oil on canvas, 110.5 x 170.8 cm  
British Columbia Archives Collection, Royal B.C. Museum, Victoria

Carr's return to Canada from France in 1912 marked a renewal of her project to document First Nations villages in British Columbia. Painted in 1913, *Tanoo, Q.C.I.* is an ambitious work that exhibits the strength of her European training. She uses sweeping modulations to create a moving, vibrant landscape, from the beach to the totem poles to the dark forest and sky. The flat outlines Carr learned in France assist her in creating a faithful, if rough, rendering of each figure carved into the poles.

In 1912 Carr had set out on a sketching trip to the Queen Charlotte Islands (Haida Gwaii), a journey she made at the height of the protests by First Nations challenging the encroachment of new settlers on Aboriginal land and the economic and cultural impact these settlers would have on their way of life. In 1910 the Gitksan chief Gamlakyeltqu of Gitanyow told a government representative:



We cannot get a living on the reserves, they are too small. We do not want reserves. We are not so foolish. We know the land belongs to us and we will hold it till we die. Our hunting grounds are our bank. The white men take gold out of our creeks. It is hard on us that we cannot do anything on our land after we have reserves. The Gov[ernment] takes the key of our bank. The bear come down to the river in the fall, and we do not want fences to keep them away as we trap them there.<sup>1</sup>



Carr on the beach at Tanoo, 1912. Carr used photographs of her journey to the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1912 and *plein air* sketches as source material for paintings like *Tanoo, Q.C.I.*, completed in her studio in 1913.

Carr's paintings from this time, informed by her contact with Post-Impressionism, employ bold shapes, rhythm, animated brushwork, and colour to structure her compositions, which depict populated villages with intact totem poles. For example, in *War Canoes (Alert Bay)*,<sup>2</sup> 1912, also from this period, two intricately painted and carved vessels stowed above the tideline dominate the Kwakwaka'wakw village. Children play on the shore, and in the distance houses stand side by side, with crest poles in front of them. The brushwork is energetic and loose, the forms as quickly rendered as in the lively paintings she made in the villages in Brittany.

*Tanoo, Indian War Canoe*, and her painting *Totem Poles, Kitseukla*, 1912, were included with works by the Group of Seven in the 1927 *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern* at the National Gallery of Canada. *Totem Poles, Kitseukla* documents a Gitksan village scene with intact poles situated in close proximity to a series of houses and a few figures in the background. In contrast, *Tanoo, Q.C.I.* shows no inhabitants, a historically accurate depiction reflecting the aftermath of the smallpox epidemics that devastated all except two Haida villages.



Emily Carr, *Totem Poles, Kitseukla*, 1912, oil on canvas, 126.8 x 98.4 cm, Vancouver Art Gallery.



## CHURCH IN YUQUOT VILLAGE 1929



Emily Carr, *Church in Yuquot Village*, 1929  
Oil on canvas, 108.6 x 68.9 cm  
Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto



In *Church in Yuquot Village*, one of Carr's most important works, a dense wall of forest engulfs the church, which Carr depicts in vivid white, a stark contrast to the dark forest. Against this backdrop the church is miniaturized, signifying both the incursion and the vulnerability of the new beliefs introduced by the settler population. The small church, built by the local Nuu-chah-nulth tribe of the Yuquot community, symbolized for Carr their hybrid assimilation of Christianity, which she regarded as a sympathetic version of a faith she shared. In a manner reminiscent of time-lapse photography, the small cross at the apex of the church steeple seems to fall to earth, multiplying into a cluster of crosses marking the graves of the dead. These crosses suggest a gathering of the faithful and at the same time stand in testament to the church's failed mission. The building's windowless walls and reduced features create another "marker," suggesting a structure that is both monolithic and uninhabitable. Carr's rendering reveals the mission's loneliness and impossibility—the tree boughs lean down heavily and sweep up forcefully from the bottom of the picture, as if to show the implausibility of a meeting place between two vastly different spiritual forces.

In 1929 Carr travelled by steamer up the west coast of Vancouver Island. She spent time in the Mowachaht village of Yuquot, where she sketched the small Catholic church pictured here. A painting of a church represents a philosophical departure for Carr: during her earlier trips, she had taken no interest in the mission churches that had been built in the villages in the region, choosing instead to focus on Indigenous forms of spiritual expression.



This church at Yuquot was likely the one on which Carr modelled *Church in Yuquot Village*, 1929. Carr has simplified and elongated the church in her composition.

*Church in Yuquot Village* was included in the National Gallery of Canada's Fifth Annual Exhibition of Canadian Art in 1930. Lawren Harris (1885–1970) bought the painting and hung it in his house, declaring it to be her best work. In 1938 *Church in Yuquot Village* was selected for *A Century of Canadian Art* at the Tate Gallery, London, an exhibition that Vincent Massey called "a most representative showing of Canadian painting and sculpture, including all schools and all periods."<sup>1</sup>

The painting's original title—as named by Carr—was *Indian Church*. In 2018, after consultation with Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations on whose territory the church was located, the Art Gallery of Ontario renamed the painting to *Church in Yuquot Village*, using the specificity of its location within the title. Yuquot, whose name is translated to "Where the Winds Blow from Many Directions," was a summer village for the thriving whaling community before colonial contact and continues now as a small community at its original location on Nootka Island, off the coast of Vancouver Island in Nootka Sound. It is also where, in 1778, James



# EMILY CARR

Life & Work by Lisa Baldissera

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Cook first made landfall. Carr saw the church during her 1928 travels through the territory, where it had been built on Mowachaht Muchalaht territory by Roman Catholic missionaries in 1889. The title change is controversial: some are concerned that such practices constitute an act of “whitewashing,” while others see such attempts as an effort of respectful, collaborative renaming seeking to redress the painful history of colonization. The original church in Yuquot that Carr painted later burned down, and a new one was built at the site, which still stands and is used as a community centre.



## VANQUISHED 1930



Emily Carr, *Vanquished*, 1930  
Oil on canvas, 92 x 129 cm  
Vancouver Art Gallery

In *Vanquished*, completed soon after she painted *Church in Yuquot Village*, 1929, Carr uses a new, heavily modelled sculptural language to carve out a scene of desolation and ruin. As she explains in her autobiographical work *Klee Wyck*, in an abandoned village site “a row of crazily tipped totem poles straggled along the low bank skirting Skedans Bay.... In their bleached and hollow upper ends stood coffin-boxes boarded endwise into the pole by heavy cedar planks boldly carved with the crest of the little huddle of bones inside the box, bones that had once been a chief of Eagle, Bear or Whale Clan.”<sup>1</sup> Carr’s salvage paradigm emerges clearly in both paintings.

In the 1930s displaced or commissioned totem poles were featured at world’s fairs and exhibitions as part of an emerging national vision for Canada; at the same time, a growing tourist economy sought to exploit traditional Aboriginal arts. By contrast Carr was determined to attest to the impact of colonialism on village life. The changes that the villages in the Queen Charlotte Islands (Haida Gwaii) had undergone since her first visits in the early 1900s, including the



banning of potlatch ceremonies and the effects of clear-cutting, must have been evident to her. These paintings of the late 1920s and 1930s are invested with a quality of mourning that is both romantic and palpable. By this time Carr had also met the ethnographer Marius Barbeau and was aware of his statements on a “dying race”—a narrative in which the Aboriginal population was no longer seen as a threatening force to early settlers but as a vanquished and disappearing people.

Carr’s vision has been critiqued as a kind of idealized grieving. As the B.C. art historian Marcia Crosby writes,

Carr paid a tribute to the Indians she “loved,” but who were they? Were they the real or authentic Indians who only existed in the past, or the Indians in the nostalgic, textual remembrances she created in her later years? They were not the native people who took her to the abandoned villages on “a gas boat” rather than a canoe.... Her paintings of the last poles intimate that the authentic Indians who made them existed only in the past, and that all the changes that occurred afterwards provide evidence of racial contamination, and cultural and moral deterioration. These works also imply that native culture is a quantifiable thing, which may be measured in degrees of “Indianness” against defined forms of authenticity only located in the past. Emily Carr loved the same Indians Victorian society rejected, and whether they were embraced or rejected does not change the fact that they were Imaginary Indians.<sup>2</sup>



Regalia confiscated from Dan Cranmer’s potlatch held in the village of ‘Mimkwamlis in 1921. Police arrested more than forty First Nations people for participating in the potlatch, a traditional gift-giving ceremony that was outlawed by the federal government in 1884.



## BIG RAVEN 1931



Emily Carr, *Big Raven*, 1931  
Oil on canvas, 87 x 114 cm  
Vancouver Art Gallery

In *Big Raven* solid waves of vegetation and columns of illuminated sky set off the lone figure of the raven, creating an elegiac quality that reflects a new stage in Carr's approach to First Nations themes. Traditionally integrated into the life of the village, the raven has been reclaimed by the forest. The sense of mass signals the development by Carr of a new pictorial language and a new emphasis on indigenous life as threatened: the raven is placed outside the vibrant framework of village life.

After witnessing the boldness of vision of the Group of Seven artists in 1927, when she participated in *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern* at the National Gallery of Canada, Carr was inspired to infuse her work with equivalent power, emotion, and spirituality. The subject matter of *Big Raven* is one that Carr addressed earlier in her work *Cumshewa*, 1912. During the early 1930s, however, Carr shifts her focus compositionally, chromatically,

and stylistically. As we can see by comparing *Big Raven* and *Cumshewa*, she crops and frames individual totem poles and figures; her modelling of the forms becomes sculptural and densely weighted.

Two other paintings from this period—*Grizzly Bear Totem, Angidah, Nass River*, c. 1930, and the remarkable *Big Eagle, Skidigate, B.C.*, 1929—demonstrate the extent of Carr’s stylistic transformation. In *Grizzly Bear Totem* Carr fully integrates her French palette with the B.C. landscape—deep tonalities are enriched and infused with colour, a slash of red invites a provocative rereading of the subject, and the close-cropping amplifies the

totemic force of the figure. In *Big Eagle* the carved eagle is locked in by a fractured Cubist skyscape; the sense of three-dimensionality reaches from figure to sky, replacing a classical figure-ground composition. In their nascent exploration of abstraction, all three works reflect the influences of Lawren Harris (1885–1970), other members of the Group of Seven, and Mark Tobey (1890–1976), a founder of the Northwest School in the United States.



LEFT: Emily Carr, *Cumshewa*, 1912, watercolour and graphite on paper mounted on cardboard, 52 x 75.5 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. RIGHT: Emily Carr, *Big Eagle, Skidigate, B.C.*, 1929, watercolour on paper, 76.2 x 56.7 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



## FOREST, BRITISH COLUMBIA 1931-32



Emily Carr, *Forest, British Columbia*, 1931-32  
Oil on canvas, 130 x 86.8 cm  
Vancouver Art Gallery



In the early 1930s, after travelling to New York, Carr moved from studies to large conceptual paintings. These works reveal a transformation in her art, from a preoccupation with Aboriginal subjects to conceptual explorations in which the forest and trees become armatures upon which she explores more abstract motifs. *Forest, British Columbia* suggests a mythologizing of the forest subject: the scene is illuminated from within, while the folds of foliage disturb the processional composition and its spatial order. The measured interlocking treatment of all areas of the composition seems to imply, within a collective subject, the unifying force that becomes a vital signature in Carr's late paintings.

When Carr visited New York in 1930, she met Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986) and saw the work being done by some of the American and European modernists—Arthur Dove (1880-1946), Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), and Georges Braque (1882-1963).

During this crucial period an expanded vision emerges in Carr's art, characterized by a sharp increase in abstraction, which she developed in part through a series of finished studio charcoal drawings on manila paper. She had access to the abstract work of Bertram Brooker (1888-1955), reproduced in *Yearbook of the Arts in Canada, 1928-1929*, a copy of which was sent to her by friends in Toronto.

*Grey*, 1929-30, is a fine example of this development and the influence of O'Keeffe in particular. Its ambiguous space is heightened by the reduction of colour, suggesting a liminal spiritual space with its own purely formal terms of reference. The concerns of representation have taken a back seat to the spiritual possibilities of abstraction. Carr reveals similar concerns in *Tree Trunk*, 1931, where she seems to focus the spiritual power of growth and the energetic life force into a sweeping phallus-like form. Now serving as a tool for abstraction, her French colour training allows for unmitigated violet, yellow, and red passages.



LEFT: Emily Carr, *Grey*, 1929-30, oil on canvas, 111.8 x 69.9, private collection.  
RIGHT: Emily Carr, *Tree Trunk*, 1931, oil on canvas, 129.1 x 56.3 cm, Vancouver Art Gallery.



## ABOVE THE GRAVEL PIT 1937



Emily Carr, *Above the Gravel Pit*, 1937  
Oil on canvas, 77.2 x 102.3 cm  
Vancouver Art Gallery

Lawren Harris (1885–1970) wrote to Carr in 1929, advising her to leave “the totems alone for a year or more”<sup>1</sup> and pursue instead “the tremendous elusive what lies behind.” In the 1930s Carr focused her attention on the landscape surrounding her Victoria home and developed a new gestural language to represent it. *Above the Gravel Pit* shows her also turning her gaze skyward. In her journal Carr describes this painting as “a skyscape with roots and gravel pits. I am striving for a wide, open sky with lots of movement, which is taken down into dried greens in the foreground and connected by roots and stumps to sky. My desire is to have it free and jubilant, not crucified into one spot, static. The colour of the brilliantly lighted sky will contrast with the black, white and tawny earth.”<sup>2</sup>

Here Carr uses brushwork as a structuring device, reminiscent of the paintings she made in Brittany two decades earlier—for example, *Autumn in France*, 1911—and in the period that immediately followed her return to Canada from France in 1912. The brushwork also provides a design coherence: whereas in the earlier works differing brush-stroke treatments were used within a composition, in this mature work broad strokes become a unifying force.



Emily Carr, *Shoreline*, 1936, oil on canvas, 68 x 111.5 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.

A year before she painted *Above the Gravel Pit* Carr used this same treatment in *Shoreline*, 1936, part of a series of compositions that were inspired by landscapes and seascapes near Victoria—such as in *Albert Head* and *Esquimalt Lagoon* in Colwood, and in *Metchosin*, *Langford*, and *Goldstream Park*.



## SELF-PORTRAIT 1938-39



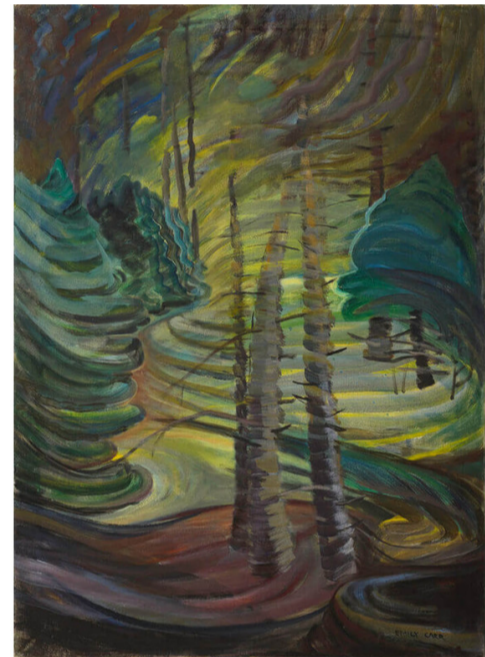
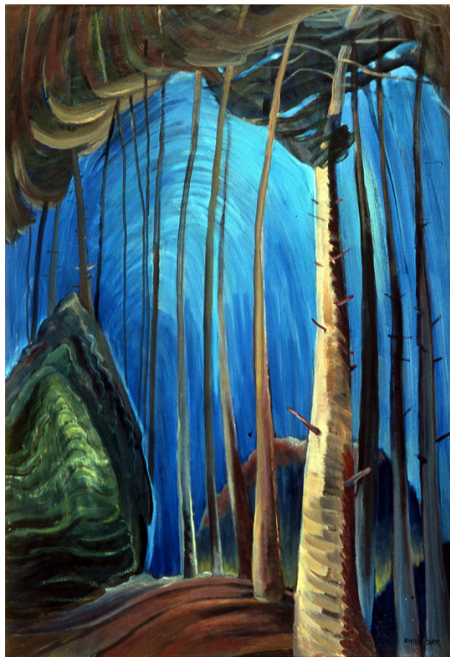
Emily Carr, *Self-Portrait*, 1938-39  
Oil on wove paper, mounted on plywood, 85.5 x 57.7 cm  
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



One of her few self-portraits, this work was painted around the time Carr turned sixty-seven. Although she had suffered a heart attack the year before, in 1937, the image presented is one of strength, confronting the viewer head on. The expressionistic quality of the work can be explained in Carr's own words. "I hate painting portraits," she said in December 1940. "The better a portrait, the more indecent and naked the sitter must feel. An artist who portrays flesh and clothes but nothing else, no matter how magnificently he does it, is quite harmless."<sup>1</sup>

The vibrant palette and expressionistic treatment that dominate *Self-Portrait* are characteristic of her work in the late 1930s. Here, however, the brushwork, instead of opening and loosening the subject, reveals Carr's forceful nature as she scrutinizes the viewer—herself. As she writes, "To paint a self-portrait should teach one something about oneself."<sup>2</sup>

In the late 1930s Carr's work becomes increasingly abstract—a culmination of her abilities in design, imagery, gesture, and tone and an attention to both positive and negative space, which she uses metaphorically and formally. Increasingly expressionistic, sensual, and embodied, paintings such as *Blue Sky*, 1936, and *Dancing Sunlight*, c. 1937, take the expressive brushwork of the earlier paintings even further, almost completely fragmenting the image to create an open, vibrating treatise on the life force she imagined in these forest spaces.



LEFT: Emily Carr, *Blue Sky*, 1936, oil on canvas, 93.5 x 65 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. RIGHT: Emily Carr, *Dancing Sunlight*, c. 1937, oil on canvas, 83.5 x 60 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.

Ultimately, Carr found that the subjects that captured her imagination were to be found in the solitary spaces—the blank canvases—onto which she pursued the larger existential preoccupations that returned to her persistently throughout her life. As Carr writes: "Spirit is undying life. Life is always progressing. The supreme in painting is to imitate that spiritual movement, the act of being."<sup>3</sup>



## ODDS AND ENDS 1939



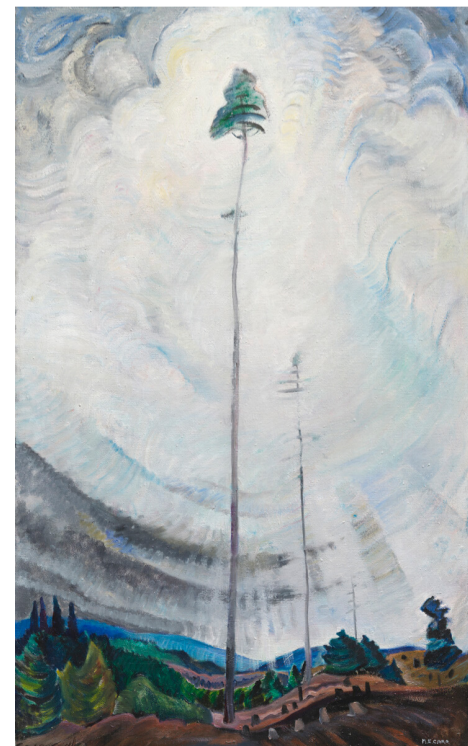
Emily Carr, *Odds and Ends*, 1939  
 Oil on canvas, 67.4 x 109.5 cm  
 Art Gallery of Greater Victoria

During the last decade of her career, Carr's awareness of the ecological issues of the time emerges in her painting. In *Odds and Ends* the cleared land and tree stumps shift the focus from the majestic forest landscapes that lured European and American tourists to the West Coast to reveal instead the impact of deforestation.

Her concern with the force of industry and its environmental impact, developments that were evident in outlying regions near the B.C. capital, paralleled her concern with encroachments on the lives of Indigenous people. Large-scale industrial logging had begun in



Logging was one of British Columbia's largest industries. Large-scale logging resulted in deforestation, pollution, and the degradation of traditional First Nations lands.



Emily Carr, *Scorned as Timber, Beloved of the Sky*, 1935, oil on canvas,



# EMILY CARR

Life & Work by Lisa Baldissera

British Columbia in the 1860s, and its influence was visible. Paintings from this period reveal Carr's anxiety as her choice of subject became the threatened landscape itself.

112 x 68.9 cm, Vancouver Art Gallery.

*Odds and Ends* is part of a series of works, which began with *Scorned as Timber, Beloved of the Sky*, 1935, and *Loggers' Culls*, 1935. Writing in 1934, Carr had noted:

These subjects are stumps and pines and space. They are difficult to express, but my feeling is if one can see the thing clearly enough the expression will follow. The thing is to be able to apprehend things, to know what we are trying to get at, to know what we see. So many of us open our flesh eyes but shut the eyes of the soul. There's a torn and splintered ridge across the stumps I call the "screamers." These are the unsawn last bits, the cry of the tree's heart, wrenching and tearing apart just before she gives that sway and the dreadful groan of falling, that dreadful pause while her executioners step back with their saws and axes resting and watch. It's a horrible sight to see a tree felled, even now, though the stumps are grey and rotting. As you pass among them you see their screamers sticking up out of their own tombstones, as it were. They are their own tombstones and their own mourners.<sup>1</sup>



The painting depicts a lush, green landscape with several tall, slender trees in the foreground. In the middle ground, there is a white tent and a campfire. The background shows rolling hills and a blue sky. The overall style is expressive and modern, characteristic of Emily Carr's work.

# SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

Emily Carr's uniquely modern vision of the British Columbia landscape became associated with the articulation of Canada's national identity in the early twentieth century. More recent critiques assess the work from a feminist and post-colonial perspective. Her work influenced how the West Coast has been imagined and expressed by subsequent generations of artists.



## SUBJECT MATTER AND STYLE

Emily Carr is one of Canada's best-known artists. Her life and work reflect a profound commitment to the land and peoples she knew and loved. Her sensitive evocations reveal an artist grappling with the spiritual questions that the Canadian landscape and culture inspired in her.

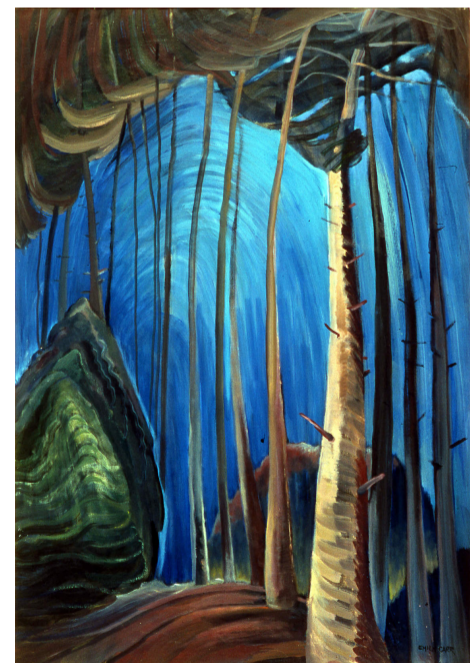


LEFT: Emily Carr, *Big Raven*, 1931, oil on canvas, 87 x 114 cm, Vancouver Art Gallery. RIGHT: Emily Carr, *Grizzly Bear Totem, Angidah, Nass River*, c. 1930, oil on canvas, 92.5 x 54.5 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

With such works as *Big Raven*, 1931, and *Grizzly Bear Totem, Angidah, Nass River*, c. 1930, Carr reframed existing First Nations iconography and developed her own imaginative vocabulary, thereby inventing an image system for the West Coast that embraced political, social, cultural, and ecological subjects in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Using the formal approach of modernism, Carr drew on the legacy of indigenous creators from the coastal area to build a personal language that reflected her powerful vision. Along with the Group of Seven, she spearheaded Canada's first modern art movement.

Carr was shaped by diverse and sometimes conflicting influences. During her education in France, she came into contact with European modernity—specifically, Post-Impressionism and Fauvism and, later, elements of Cubism and German Expressionism. She found herself at odds with the imperialism that viewed indigenous culture as primitive. She had profound curiosity and respect—inevitably within the perspective of her own ancestry and times—for the cultural production of Aboriginal people.

Carr's deep-rooted spirituality was drawn initially from her Protestant origins and later enriched by theosophy, Hinduism, and the transcendentalism of American poet-philosophers such as Walt Whitman, Henry David Thoreau, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. All these influences led her to invent new forms of artistic expression—evident in her late paintings, such as *Blue Sky*, 1936—to reflect her creative vision of the B.C. landscape and what she saw as its spiritual and elemental force.



Emily Carr, *Blue Sky*, 1936, oil on canvas, 93.5 x 65 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



It was this vision that represented the first wave of modern art to emerge from the West Coast of Canada. As the contemporary Canadian artist Jeff Wall (b. 1946) describes her, Carr was an “originary force”<sup>1</sup> of modern art in the West, “representative of traditions in which all of us who work here are in some way or other involved.”<sup>2</sup> Wall’s acknowledgement of Carr’s influence attests to the continuing relevance of her work, its conceptual dissemination outside of national borders, and its legacy for contemporary artistic practices.



Jeff Wall, *Fieldwork: Excavation of the floor of a dwelling in a former Sto:lo nation village, Greenwood Island, Hope, British Columbia, August 2003*. Anthony Graesch, Department of Anthropology, University of California at Los Angeles, working with Riley Lewis of the Sto:lo band, 2003, transparency in lightbox, 219.5 x 283.5 cm, courtesy of the artist.

### MODERN ART AND NATIONHOOD

Carr’s work has also been considered revelatory in its depiction of the specific geographical, political, social, and psychic ruptures that emerged among indigenous, colonial, and migrant populations on the West Coast of Canada. These issues include the complex narrative of settlement and displacement—presented in works such as *Vanquished*, 1930—that marks Canada’s history and the way that preoccupations about land, its exchange, and its envisioning are used to express notions of who belongs on the land and who does not, and how these crucial struggles of belonging are articulated.



Emily Carr and the Group of Seven produced their work at the same time that industrialization and territorialization were shaping Canada as a nation. By evoking an “untouched” landscape, their works demonstrate emergent ideas of capital and property that were being explored and contested—a strategy that the Canadian art historian John O’Brian terms “wildercentric”<sup>3</sup>—while both federal and provincial governments began to look for ways to define Canada as a modern nation. At the time they were painted, works such as *Forest, British Columbia, 1931–32*, were celebrated for their assertions of nationhood, a vision that assisted in furthering Canada’s postwar status on the international stage.



Emily Carr, *Vanquished*, 1930, oil on canvas, 92 x 129 cm, Vancouver Art Gallery.

### FEMINIST ISSUES

Carr’s career is notable for her ability to forge a career as an artist within a patriarchal society. In the late nineteenth century, women’s access to formal training in art was relatively new. In Paris the *École des beaux-arts* had been operating for centuries, but it did not open to women until 1897. The new private academies, *Académie Julian* and *Académie Colarossi*, accepted women around 1870, though the Julian initially charged them double fees. Carr’s peer David Milne (1882–1953) famously commented that he did not trust women’s art, and Harry Phelan Gibb (1870–1948), her tutor in France, corrected his declaration that she would be among the great painters of her day to say, instead, “great women painters.”



Carr was one of the very few women artists in this period who rejected the pastoral landscapes, domestic scenes, and portraits of mothers and children to seek out subjects with challenging political and ecological themes and cultural significance. Her powerful work *Self-Portrait*, 1938-39, painted toward the end of her life, is significant not only for the physical likeness she captures but also for the directness with which she paints her own image. In the same way that Carr sought to depict the spiritual forces in the landscape, her self-portrait is remarkable for the psychological insight it reveals.



Carr on a picnic with two unidentified First Nations women and her dog Billie, at Cha'atl, Queen Charlotte Islands, 1912. Carr challenged traditional gender roles by travelling to isolated communities unaccompanied by a man.

### INDIGENOUS INFLUENCES

In her work Carr sought to make visible the powerful forces she witnessed both in the landscape and in the cultural production of the indigenous peoples of British Columbia. To do so was part of "the ambition of her work and its deep-seated quest for empowerment."<sup>4</sup>



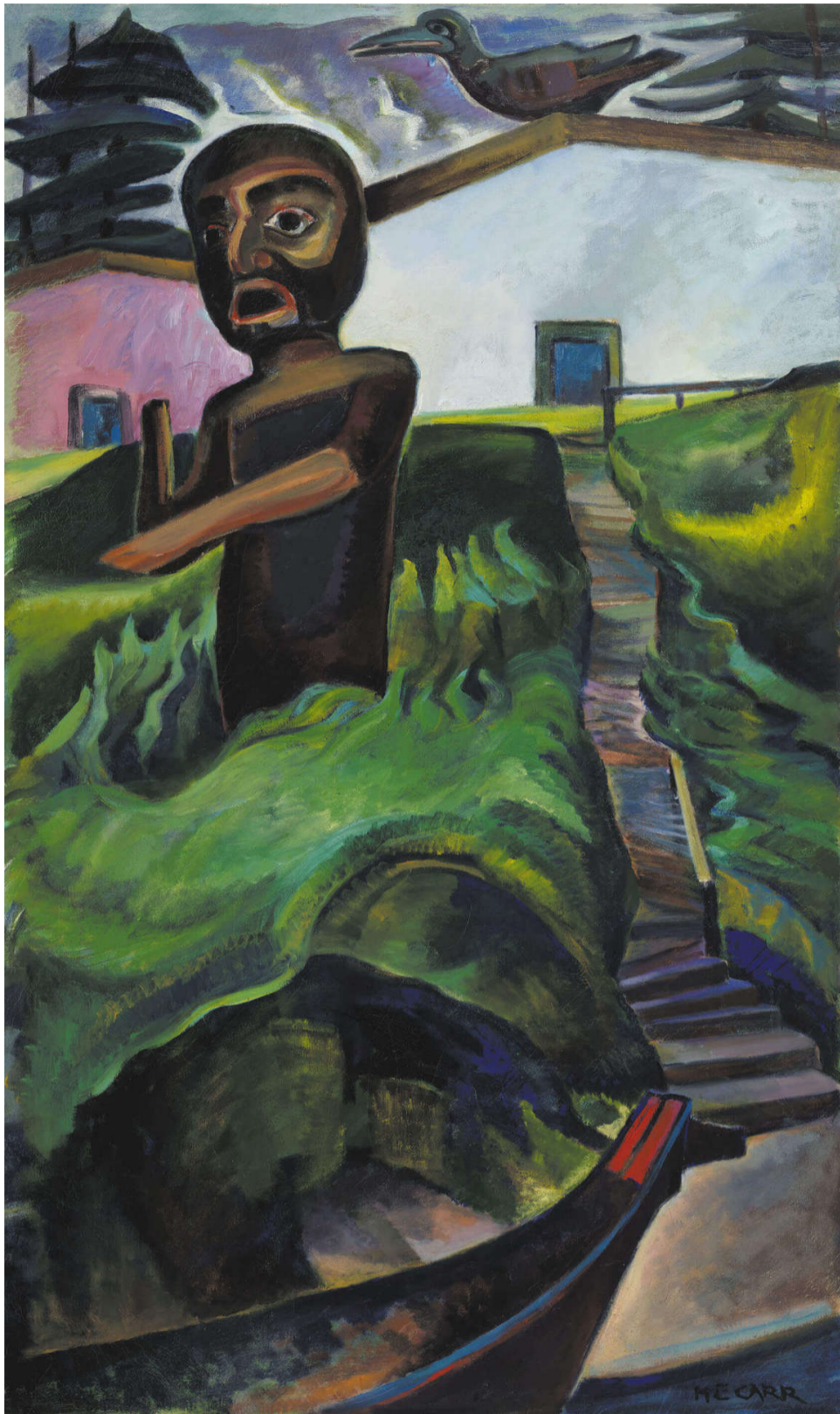
LEFT: Emily Carr, *Blunden Harbour*, c. 1930, oil on canvas, 129.8 x 93.6 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. RIGHT: Totem poles at Blunden Harbour, c. 1901, photographed by Dr. Charles Frederick Newcombe. Carr never actually visited Blunden Harbour, a Kwakwaka'wakw village in Queen Charlotte Strait. Her painting of the harbour was based on this photograph, taken by Dr. Newcombe, an anthropologist who lived in Victoria at the turn of the century.



Johanne Lamoureux, an art historian at the Université de Montréal, describes Carr's preoccupation with and adaptation of the spiritual and talismanic purpose of totem poles in such works as *Blunden Harbour*, c. 1930. In her words, they became an "alibi" that allowed Carr access to a formidable visual language and its symbols:

The totem poles provided a departure point for a pragmatic alibi, for beyond their mythical content they allowed her to revive from painting to painting the powerful and troubling experience of each encounter, and to shock viewers in turn, all the while compelled, even exonerated, by the sincerity of the affect, by the truth of the impact she sought to render. And so she relocated the "fetish" in another religion, the new western religion of modern art in its romantic affiliation.<sup>5</sup>

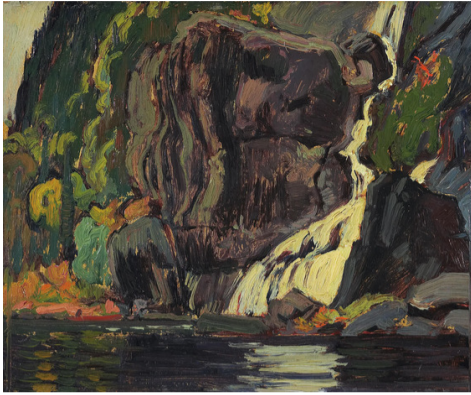
Lamoureux's use of the term "fetish" is derived from Western traditions of psychoanalysis. It associates Carr's adaptation and copying of First Nations creations that refer to specific spiritual elements—such as *The Crazy Stair*, c. 1928–30—as evidence of her belief in the transformative power of art on the viewer.



Emily Carr, *The Crazy Stair*, c. 1928–30, oil on canvas, 110.2 x 66 cm, Audain Art Museum, Whistler. For many years this painting was known as "The Crooked Staircase." An inscription on the back of the canvas was discovered during conservation work in 2013, revealing the original title, *The Crazy Stair*.



While Carr worked in relative isolation on the West Coast from 1904 until her death in 1945, the Group of Seven, men who were British immigrants or the sons of British immigrants, enjoyed regular support and patronage from collectors, critics, and curators as well as collegial encouragement from one another through critiques and conversation. Their paintings—such as *Waterfall, Agawa River, Algoma, 1919*, by J.E.H.



LEFT: J.E.H. MacDonald, *Waterfall, Agawa River, Algoma, 1919*, oil on board, 21.6 x 26.7 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. RIGHT: Lawren Harris, *Isolation Peak, Rocky Mountains, 1930*, oil on canvas, 106.7 x 127 cm, Hart House, University of Toronto.

MacDonald (1873–1932)—depict landscapes that, unlike Carr’s, are often empty of cultural signifiers and inhabitants or signs of industry and occupation.

Lawren Harris (1885–1970), the group’s most prominent member, was influenced in part by Scandinavian modernism, and he embraced its Symbolist and nationalistic renderings in works such as *Isolation Peak, Rocky Mountains, 1930*. In his words, “We [Canadians] are on the fringe of the great North and its living whiteness, its loneliness and its replenishment, its resignations and release, its call and answer, its cleansing rhythms.”<sup>6</sup> The racial undertones of Harris’s address, although not directly intended, parallel the government’s policies of exclusion and suppression regarding Aboriginal peoples and non-white migrants—policies that were being implemented at the same time that the nation was cutting the imperial apron strings that tied it to Britain.



Emily Carr, *Odds and Ends, 1939*, oil on canvas, 67.4 x 109.5 cm, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



Following her participation in the National Gallery of Canada's *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern* and her meeting with Harris and other members of the Group of Seven, Carr felt emboldened to pursue a deeper spiritual dimension in her work. In paintings like *Odds and Ends*, 1939, she returns to her exploration of forest themes, both in their natural grandeur and in their despoliation by loggers.

#### RECEPTION OF CARR'S WORK

Carr's use of indigenous art forms in her paintings was criticized in the early 1990s through a series of post-colonial readings by indigenous artists and critics as well as art historians and scholars. In 1912, after Carr returned from her second trip to France, she determined to continue documenting the province's "disappearing indigenous culture"—an aspiration she regularly proclaimed to her Aboriginal hosts—by painting its totems and villages, in works such as *War Canoes*, *Alert Bay*, 1912. She was sincere in this objective, completely unaware of her own internalized colonial response to indigenous cultures and its latent exploitative and romanticizing effect on her representation of Aboriginal life.



Emily Carr, *War Canoes, Alert Bay*, 1912, oil on canvas, 63.5 x 80 cm, Audain Art Museum, Whistler.



The public reception of Carr's paintings during this period was embedded in the much wider "trafficking of Native images,"<sup>7</sup> a phrase coined by art historian Gerta Moray to refer to the exhibition, promotion, and sale of cultural artifacts produced by First Nations peoples at world's fairs and in tourist brochures and curio shops. At the same time that indigenous people were banned from taking part in traditional ceremonies, such as potlatches, or producing cultural objects for ritual purposes, Indian agents regularly donated confiscated artworks to public museum collections or to Canada's world's fair exhibits.

The British Columbia government also used images of indigenous artwork to promote the tourism industry abroad, proclaiming their exoticism while, simultaneously, the compulsory residential schools for Aboriginal children reinforced policies of forced assimilation. Government policies prohibited First Nations people from conducting their traditional ceremonies such as the potlatch or raising money to pursue land claims.

These policies of repression and dispossession from lands and customs had begun in the late seventeenth century on the East Coast, and they reached the West in the mid-nineteenth century. Their enforcement peaked during the first decades of the twentieth century as Carr undertook her work. Given this context, some Aboriginal groups and art historians such as Marcia Crosby and Gerta Moray in the 1990s included Carr in their criticism of colonial attitudes toward Canada's indigenous people.



A review of *Exhibition of West Coast Art: Native and Modern* written by Muriel Brewster, published in the *Toronto Star Weekly*, January 21, 1928. The exhibition, organized by the National Gallery of Canada, travelled to the Art Gallery of Toronto in early 1928. Carr's *Tanoo, Q.C.I.*, 1913, is illustrated, alongside Edwin Holgate's *Totem Poles*, *Gitsegukla*, 1926.



Installation view of four of the seven paintings by Carr exhibited at Documenta 13 in Kassel, Germany, in 2012.





# EMILY CARR

Life & Work by Lisa Baldissera

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In the twenty-first century both the art world and the art market have become interested in artists working within modern practices but from locations on the periphery. The result has been a resurgence of interest in Carr's work. This has been further underscored by the placement of Carr's work within an international context at Documenta 13, where seven of her paintings were exhibited in Kassel, Germany, in 2012. Such new projects also serve to complicate the narrative of her life and work, framing her beyond national borders.

In 2014 the exhibition *Convoluted Beauty: In the Company of Emily Carr* at the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon re-examined Carr's work in the context of Canadian and international contemporary artists exploring ideas of exile and displacement. Also in 2014 the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London, England, in collaboration with the Art Gallery of Ontario, mounted a solo exhibition of Carr's work, *From the Forest to the Sea: Emily Carr in British Columbia*, the first in England since the exhibition held at Canada House in 1990. As a result of such projects, the sophistication and courage of Carr's work has increasingly received the international acclaim and resonant critical reception it deserves.





# STYLE & TECHNIQUE

**Carr travelled extensively, learning from European, American, and indigenous forms and receiving formal training at art academies as well as with private tutors. She continued to grow in artistic power throughout her life as a result of her own intense observation and vigorous experimentation in a variety of methods and media, reflecting the fusion of her wide-ranging influences.**



**EARLY WORK, 1890–1910**

Carr began her study of art in San Francisco at the California School of Design in 1890. The school later became known as the training ground for several West Coast American Impressionist painters, but its teachings were conservative: students progressed from drawing plaster casts of classical art to still lifes to nude models—though true to her Victorian upbringing, Carr refused to attend classes in the latter. (When she studied in England in 1899–1904, she overcame her qualms, writing in her autobiography years later, “I had dreaded this moment and busied myself preparing my material, then I looked up. Her live beauty swallowed every bit of my shyness.”<sup>1</sup>



LEFT: Emily Carr, *Chrysanthemums*, c. 1900, oil on canvas, 43.8 x 34.9 cm, Vancouver Art Gallery. RIGHT: Emily Carr, *Emily's Old Barn Studio*, c. 1891, graphite on paper, 30.4 x 22.7 cm, British Columbia Archives Collection, Royal B.C. Museum, Victoria.

Carr described her work in California as “hum drum and unemotional—objects honestly portrayed, nothing more.”<sup>2</sup> After three years she returned to Victoria and taught children’s art classes in her first studio, the loft of a converted cow barn in the yard of the family home, a scene she depicted in *Emily's Old Barn Studio*, c. 1891. In the late 1890s Carr travelled to the Nuu-chah-nulth village at Ucluelet on the west coast of Vancouver Island and documented it through a series of drawings.



When she had saved enough money from her studio classes, Carr embarked in 1899 on her second study sojourn, in London. She had heard of the British art schools from two of her friends in Victoria, the artists Sophie Pemberton (1869-1959) and Theresa Wylde, who had studied in England while Carr was in California. Although the stronger art schools of the day were on the Continent, language was a barrier; in London there were also family friends. But Carr arrived at the Westminster School of Art a few years too late. Once a training ground for distinguished artists such as Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898) and Dame Ethel Walker (1861-1951), the school had seen its reputation decline after their most distinguished professor, Frederick Brown, left for the Slade School of Fine Art. At Westminster she was taught traditional nineteenth-century design, anatomy, life drawing, and clay modelling techniques, including working from the school's vast collection of classical casts. Her art from her days at Westminster, such as *Chrysanthemums*, c. 1900, was unremarkable. Disappointed, she left the school and travelled to Europe.

On May 7, 1901, Carr wrote from England to a family friend, Mary Cridge, about her visit to the Louvre, where she was delighted "to see the very pictures you had heard of & dreamt of half your life. I wondered if I would wake up and find it was a dream."<sup>3</sup> The scholar Kathryn Bridge speculates that if Carr was in Paris before the end of March, she likely would have seen *Exposition d'oeuvres de Vincent van Gogh*, the first retrospective of the artist, presented at the Galerie Bernheim Jeune from March 15 to 31.<sup>4</sup> In the autobiography she wrote at the end of her life, Carr recalls that she had begun to think that "Paris and Rome were probably greater centres for Art than London. The art trend in London was mainly very conservative. I sort of wished I had chosen to study in Paris rather than in London."<sup>5</sup>



Emily Carr, *A Study in Evolution*, 1902, watercolour and ink on paper, 32.5 x 63.5 cm, British Columbia Archives Collection, Royal B.C. Museum, Victoria.



Emily Carr, *Cumshewa*, 1912, watercolour and graphite on paper, mounted on cardboard, 52 x 75.5 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. *Cumshewa*, which depicts a totem pole at Cumshewa, Queen Charlotte Islands, was revisited by Carr in the large canvas *Big Raven*, 1931.



Later that year she registered at the Porthmeor Studios in St. Ives, Cornwall, under the tutelage of Julius Olsson (1864-1942) and his assistant, Algernon Talmage; she chronicled his teachings in her illustrated narrative *The Olsson Student*, c. 1901-2. The school was known for its *plein air* technique. Olsson insisted that his students set up their easels on the sand, but Carr found that the bright Cornish beaches triggered her migraines. When Olsson left on holiday, Talmage allowed her to go up to the Tregenna Woods to paint. Carr recalled Talmage's formative advice to "remember, there is sunshine too in the shadows,"<sup>6</sup> as well as his recommending that she see the "indescribable depths and the glories of the greenery, the ... crowded foliage that still had breath space between every leaf."<sup>7</sup>

Carr received a withering critique from Olsson on his return. She left St. Ives after only eight months and went to the artist colony at Bushey, Hertfordshire. Before long she rejected the academic teachings of its founder, Hubert von Herkomer (1849-1914), preferring instead to join the more bohemian Meadows Studios in the same small town. There John Whiteley became her tutor, and Carr continued her *plein air* painting with his encouragement. Whiteley advised her to "see the coming and going among the trees."<sup>8</sup> When she returned to Canada she began to produce paintings of the towering trees of Stanley Park, a forest reserve in Vancouver.



Theodore J. Richardson, *Totem Poles and Houses of the Kaigani Haidas at Old Kasaan, Prince of Wales Island, Alaska*, c. 1903, watercolour and gouache on paper, 41 x 56 cm, Library and Archives Canada.



While Carr was in Alaska in 1907 she painted *Totem Walk at Sitka*, depicting Tlingit and Haida poles that had been resituated for the tourists.<sup>9</sup> There she met an American artist, likely Theodore J. Richardson (1855–1914), who had also made Sitka a subject of his art. Richardson did extensive research into First Nations culture in Alaska, travelling with indigenous guides and producing *plein air* watercolours. Some of these were later developed into more extended studio works, though Richardson is best known for his pastels and watercolours of southeast Alaska that document Tlingit art and architecture in the region.

Intrigued by Richardson's interest in what he described as a mission to preserve a dying culture—a colonial vision that Carr herself shared—she decided to create a series of works that would document First Nations culture and way of life. During successive summers she travelled to northern villages for this purpose; she writes of this time, "Indian Art broadened my seeing, loosened the formal tightness I had learned in England's schools. Its bigness and stark reality baffled my white man's understanding. I was as Canadian-born as the Indian but behind me were Old World heredity and ancestry as well.... The new West called me, but my Old World Heredity, the flavour of my upbringing, pulled me back. I had been schooled to see outsides only, not [to] struggle to pierce."<sup>10</sup>

### FRENCH INFLUENCE, 1910–11

It was not until 1910 that Carr again travelled for study, this time to Paris. "I did not care a hoot about Paris history," she writes. "I wanted *now* to find out what this 'new Art' was about. I heard it ridiculed, praised, liked, hated. Something in it stirred me but I could not at first make head nor tail of what it was all about. I saw at once that it made recent conservative painting look flavourless, little, unconvincing."<sup>11</sup> It proved to be the most influential of all her study excursions. She stayed for fifteen months, and here the technical and stylistic training she experienced would change her work irrevocably.



LEFT: Frances Hodgkins, *Boats by the Harbour Wall*, c. 1910, watercolour, 49.2 x 50.7 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki.  
 RIGHT: Harry Phelan Gibb, *Bathers*, n.d., oil on canvas, 65.7 x 76.5 cm, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. The tremendous influence of Hodgkins and Phelan Gibb is evident in the brushwork and use of colour in Carr's paintings of France and of B.C. First Nations communities following her return to Canada.



Carr initially enrolled at the Académie Colarossi on the advice of the English artist Harry Phelan Gibb (1870-1948) but left for private study with the Scottish artist John Duncan Fergusson (1874-1961). Tiring of the large city she retreated to a spa in Sweden for several months, returning to study outside Paris and then in Brittany under the tutelage of Gibb and, later, the New Zealand artist Frances Hodgkins (1869-1947).

During this time, Carr produced many small paintings, both onsite and in her studio, including such works as *Le paysage (Brittany Landscape)*, 1911, which depicts the French countryside. Gibb, a friend of Henri Matisse (1869-1954) and the expatriate American writer Gertrude Stein, was an important influence, encouraging her to pursue her First Nations project. As she experimented with composition, colour, and execution and came into more intensive contact with contemporary European art movements—primarily Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, Expressionism, and Cubism—she transformed and developed as a painter. She also admired Gibb’s work: “There was rich delicious juiciness in his colour, interplay between warm and cool tones,” she writes. “He intensified vividness by the use of complementary colour.”<sup>12</sup>



Emily Carr, *Trees in France*, c. 1911, oil on canvas, 35.3 x 45.5 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.

Significantly for her later work, Carr rejected Gibb’s deliberate distortions of the figure and, by extension, the primitivism of Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and Georges Braque (1882-1963). In her words, the distortion of the figure was to be done “with meaning, for emphasis and with great sincerity,”<sup>13</sup> as in the Aboriginal sculpture and painting she had seen in British Columbia, and not for formal impact alone.

By the end of her studies in France, Carr had successfully integrated her need to work in a non-urban setting with her desire for creative achievement as an artist. In paintings from this period, such as *Autumn in France*, 1911, she had, moreover, firmly established the technical approach and stylistic language that were to distinguish her modernity. Her art began to adapt, through simplification of detail and a variety of brush marks. She worked as much in oil as in watercolour, and she experimented with pattern and tonal variation, using high and low tones to create a structure for the painting. Compositions become more strategic, overlaying colour to reveal the patterns in the geography or to create interior scenes—as in *French Knitter (La Bretonne)*, 1911.





Emily Carr, *Le paysage (Brittany Landscape)*, 1911, oil on board, 45.7 x 62.2 cm, private collection. At the Salon d'Automne in 1911, Carr's work was exhibited in the company of paintings by Marcel Duchamp, Fernand Léger, and Henri Matisse.

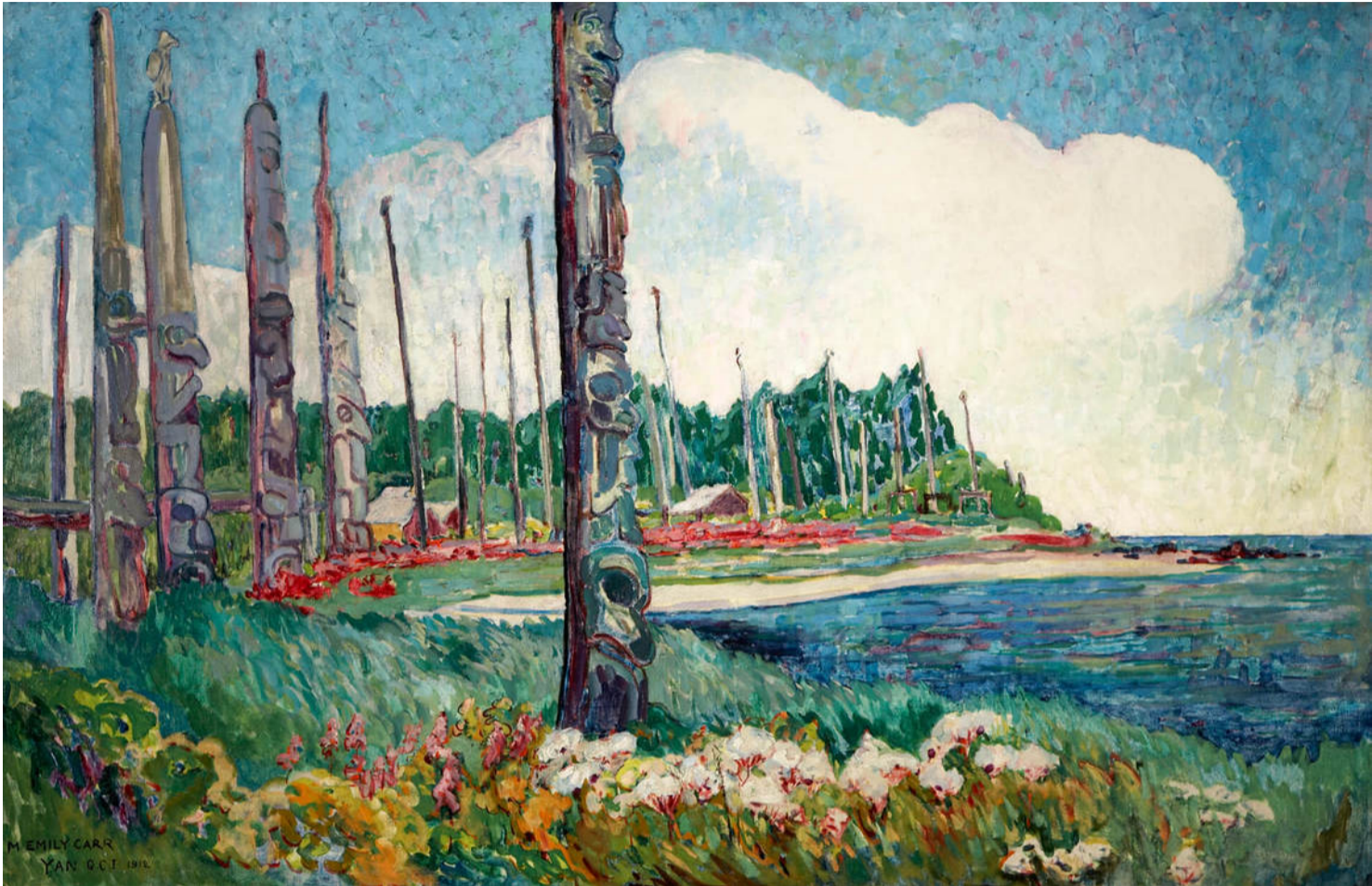
The paintings Carr submitted to the Salon d'Automne in Paris in 1911, such as *Le paysage* (which came to be known as *Brittany Landscape*), reflect these same features—compositional experimentation, dynamic and unexpected coloration, and a vast array of brushwork—as do the Fauvist-style works she exhibited in Vancouver the following year.

### EARLY FIRST NATIONS THEMES, 1911–13

When Carr returned to Canada she resumed her travels and documentation project along the Northwest Coast of British Columbia. She also reworked in her new French style several earlier drawings and sketches of Aboriginal subjects. She made watercolours and drawings, field notes, and sketches that she could use later as source material for studio paintings.

She occasionally used photographs in making her paintings, acquiring them from professional photographers or from her travelling companions, as the curators Peter Macnair and Jay Stewart describe in their project *To the Totem Forests*.<sup>14</sup> As usual Carr worked *en plein air*, drawing and painting. Her subjects were single totem poles or figures, as well as village scenes. All were infused with the vibrant colour, active brushwork, and reduced form of the French school—as can be seen in *Yan, Q.C.I.*, 1912.





Emily Carr, *Yan, Q.C.I.*, 1912, oil on canvas, 99.5 x 153 cm, Art Gallery of Hamilton.

At home in Victoria Carr produced mostly small-scale studio paintings in watercolour as well as oils. Unfortunately, her intense work from this period received little support, and, between 1913 and 1927, she produced few paintings.

### MODERNISM AND LATER FIRST NATIONS THEMES, 1927–32

When Carr travelled to Ottawa in the summer of 1927 for the National Gallery of Canada's *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern*, the experience transformed her life.

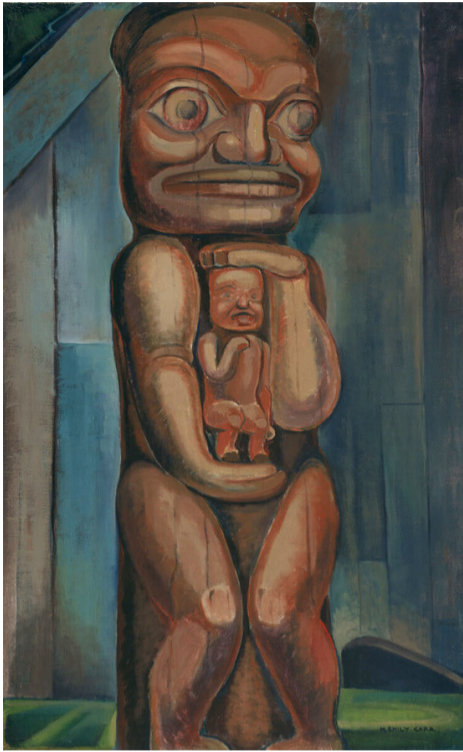
Not only were her works well represented in the show but also she met members of the Group of Seven and other artists working in the modernist style. Lawren Harris (1885-1970) introduced her to theosophy—an esoteric philosophy with roots in Gnosticism that neatly mirrored the modernist preoccupations with the sublime and posited a universal experience in which spirit and matter were fused. Through Harris, her quest for a spiritual dimension to her work emerged as a central investigation. In paintings like *Odds and Ends*, 1939, she returned to her exploration of forest themes, both in their natural grandeur and in their despoliation by loggers. Ultimately, however, Carr found that she preferred the more personal God of her traditional religion to theosophy—a decision that strained her long-standing and warm friendship with Harris.



Installation view of *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern* at the National Gallery of Canada in 1927. Carr's *Yan, Q.C.I.*, 1912, is pictured at centre.



Between 1928 and 1930 Carr made her last excursions to the First Nations villages, returning to many of the northern sites she had visited decades earlier—the Nass and Skeena Rivers and Haida Gwaii, then to Friendly Cove, and finally to Quatsino. During these trips she produced many watercolours as source material for her studio works. First she made drawings in small sketchbooks, and from these she produced more resolved watercolours. She also experimented with charcoal drawings on manila paper, which reveal a new minimalist direction in her art and became the source of some of her major paintings of this period.



LEFT: Emily Carr, *Totem Mother, Kitwancool*, 1928, oil on canvas, 109.5 x 69 cm, Vancouver Art Gallery. RIGHT: Emily Carr, *Lower Portion of D'Sonoqua Pole*, c. 1928, charcoal on paper, 37.8 x 24.8 cm, British Columbia Archives Collection, Royal B.C. Museum, Victoria.

Carr's strategy of developing her work from sketch to finished painting became much more remarkable during this period: as in *Big Raven*, 1931, the monumentality of the figure is reinforced through a more stylized treatment. Indigenous people no longer appear in the landscape, and the effect is to create a sense of mourning, ruin, and decay—stemming, in all likelihood, from the dislocation of the indigenous populations and destruction of the original sites since her earlier visits. By this time many poles had been dismantled and the villages left empty. Ethnologists, politicians, and the media of the day underscored the political urgency of her project and drove her to find the formal and artistic means to achieve it effectively. During this same period, however, Harris advised her to abandon Aboriginal subjects and to work directly with the landscape.

Landscape works of the time, such as *Forest, British Columbia*, 1931–32, reflect the elements that helped to shape her work: the teachings of the French schools and her observation of the work of indigenous artists, as well as Lawren Harris's encouragement and influence. Her conversations at this time with the American artist Mark Tobey (1890–1976) also helped her to see the structure of the forest and to express it in her work.



Mark Tobey, *Moving Forms*, 1930, gouache on paper, 27.3 x 49.5 cm, Seattle Art Museum.



### THE FOREST, SKY, AND SEA, 1933–37

The period from 1933 to 1937 marked a new focus for Carr's work. Moving away from the iconography offered by the totems and carved Aboriginal figures, she returned to forest themes.

From 1932 on, Carr had begun to replace her watercolours on paper with a more expressive substitute that retained the chromatic and textural range of oil on canvas while using less-expensive means, as she did in works such as *Sunshine and Tumult*, 1938–39. She worked on paper and used gasoline to thin her oil paints, which resulted in a viscosity and density that still retained the ease of watercolour during her excursions. Initially she used these materials only for sketches for larger canvases, but by 1936 she was making finished works in these media. With this new technique she was able to demonstrate the powerful expressionistic forces she sought more directly.

In 1933 Carr purchased a caravan, which she called "the Elephant," so that she could live in the forest near Victoria as she worked. For several weeks at a time she remained in places like Goldstream Park, where she felt great contentment. Sky, land, and forest are chiselled in her earlier forest paintings, the entire canvas fusing into a Cubist grid of interlocking planes or modelled lushly and organically into a kind of muscular, painterly draping. Paintings from the earlier period display the reduction of form that stems from the influence of Harris's abstraction.

The simplification and unification of formal elements found in the isolation of a single tree, for example, was a result of influences from First Nations style and iconography. Carr created works that become contemplations on life and death, birth and decay. Although her painterly approach loosened and changed, the subject of the solitary tree persists with works such as *Scorned of Timber*, *Beloved of the Sky*, 1935.



Emily Carr, *Sunshine and Tumult*, 1938–39, oil on paper, 87 x 57.1 cm, Art Gallery of Hamilton.



LEFT: Emily Carr, *Loggers' Culls*, 1935, oil on canvas, 69 x 112.2 cm, Vancouver Art Gallery. RIGHT: Carr and her caravan, "the Elephant," at the southwest end of Esquamalt Lagoon in May 1934. Photograph by Mrs. S.F. Morley.

After 1933 Carr's formal and spiritual concerns are fused with her concept of "unity in movement." She writes,



I woke up this morning with “unity of movement” in a picture strong in my mind. I believe Van Gogh had that idea. I did not realize he had striven for that till quite recently so I did not come by the idea through him. It seems to me that clears up a lot. I see it very strongly out on the beach and cliffs. I felt it in the woods but did not quite realize what I was feeling. Now it seems to me the first thing to seize on in your layout is the direction of your main movement, the sweep of the whole thing as a unit. One must be very careful about the transition of one curve of direction into the next, vary the length of the wave of space but keep it going, a pathway for the eye and the mind to travel through and into the thought. For long I have been trying to get these movements of the parts. Now I see there is only one movement. It sways and ripples. It may be slow or fast but it is only one movement sweeping out into space but always keeping going—rocks, sea, sky, one continuous movement.<sup>15</sup>

Carr continued to explore these spiritual forces aesthetically through her art. As she wrote in 1934, “What does spirituality in painting mean? First, the seeing beyond the form to the spiritual reality underlying it—its meaning. Second, the determination, power and courage to stick to the ideal at all costs, but there is a danger of letting the ideal become diluted with vagueness, uncertainty, indecision; then the thing is lost and left unsaid.”<sup>16</sup>



LEFT: Lawren Harris, *North Shore, Lake Superior*, 1926, oil on canvas, 102.2 x 128.3 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.  
RIGHT: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Grey Tree, Lake George*, 1925, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 76.2 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

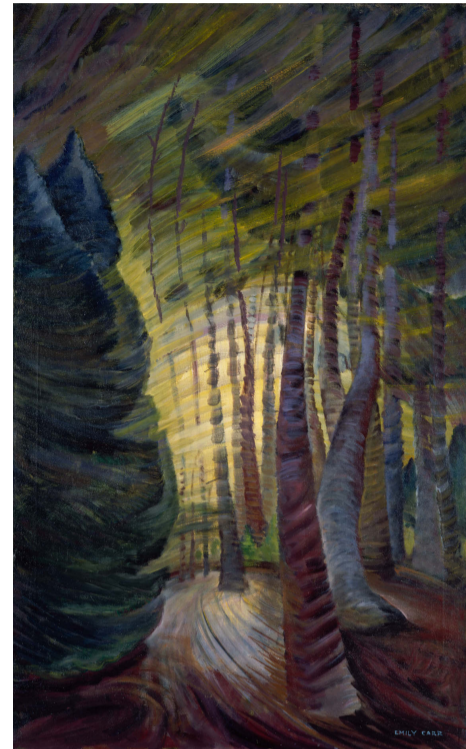
In the later works the metaphysics of Carr's quest combine with the foreboding elements of the land itself—the forests acting as an extension of her salvage paradigm. Already the effects of deforestation had become visible in British Columbia, and can be seen in such works as *Loggers' Culls*, 1935. Here, Carr's enquiry extends to the creation of a spiritual cosmology that encompasses forest, land and sea. She writes, “When I want to realize growth and immortality more I go back to Walt Whitman. Everything seemed to take such a hand in the ever-lasting on-going with him—eternal overflowing and spilling of things into the universe and nothing lost.”<sup>17</sup>



### LAST PAINTINGS, 1937–42

After her heart attack in 1937 Carr found that her health increasingly interfered with her ability to work outdoors in the landscape. Her last excursions took place in 1942. The works from these final years—such as *Above the Gravel Pit*, 1937, and *Odds and Ends*, 1939—emerge from the depths of the forest: light and the open sky play a greater role, and movement in nature is married to her brushwork. The static forms of earlier work give way to roiling, open mark making and loose passages of colour. These works are atmospheric, light, and vibrant and reference a wide variety of styles, from Post-Impressionism and Expressionism to painterly abstraction.

Carr's spiritual quest for an overallness or unity in her canvases, a quest that would reflect her search for oneness in art and religion, became an expression of consciousness, life force, and spiritual energy in her final works. Rather than using the brush to describe volume and structure, Carr lets mark making itself become the subject. The fluidity of the oil-on-paper works comes to fruition in the virtuosity of the brushwork, as in *Sombreness Sunlit*, c. 1938–40.



Emily Carr, *Sombreness Sunlit*, c. 1938–40, oil on canvas, 110.7 x 67.2 cm, British Columbia Archives Collection, Royal B.C. Museum, Victoria.





# WHERE TO SEE

The National Gallery of Canada and the Vancouver Art Gallery have the largest number of works by Emily Carr, but her work can be found in public and private collections across Canada. Although the works listed below are held by the following institutions, they may not always be on view.





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## ART GALLERY OF GREATER VICTORIA

1040 Moss Street  
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada  
1-250-384-4171  
aggv.ca



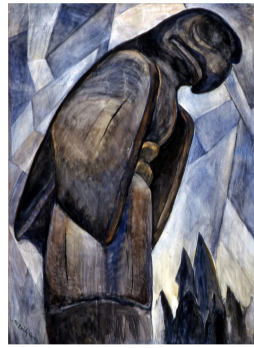
**Emily Carr, *Totem Walk at Sitka*, 1907**  
Watercolour on paper  
38.5 x 38.5 cm

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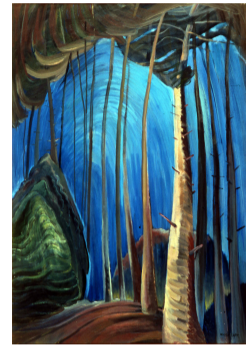
**Emily Carr, *Beacon Hill Park*, 1909**  
Watercolour on paper  
35.2 x 51.9 cm

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**Emily Carr, *Big Eagle, Skidigate, B.C.*, 1929**  
Watercolour on paper  
76.2 x 56.7 cm

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**Emily Carr, *Blue Sky*, 1936**  
Oil on canvas  
93.5 x 65 cm

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**Emily Carr, *Odds and Ends*, 1939**  
Oil on canvas  
67.4 x 109.5 cm

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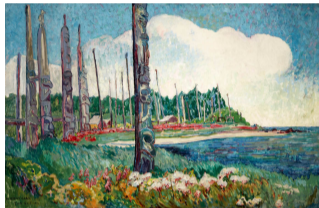
# EMILY CARR

Life & Work by Lisa Baldissera

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## ART GALLERY OF HAMILTON

123 King Street West  
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada  
905-527-6610  
artgalleryofhamilton.com



**Emily Carr, *Yan, Q.C.I.*, 1912**

Oil on canvas  
99.5 x 153 cm



**Emily Carr, *Sunshine and Tumult*,  
1938-39**

Oil on paper  
87 x 57.1 cm

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## ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

317 Dundas Street West  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
1-877-255-4246 or 416-979-6648  
ago.net



**Emily Carr, *Church in Yuquot  
Village*, 1929**

Oil on canvas  
108.6 x 68.9 cm

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**MCMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION**

10365 Islington Avenue  
Kleinburg, Ontario, Canada  
905-893-1121 or 1-888-213-1121  
mcmichael.com



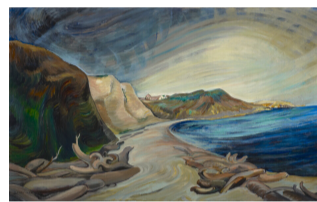
**Emily Carr, *Breton Farm Yard*, c. 1911**

Oil on paperboard  
32.3 x 40.8 cm



**Emily Carr, *Trees in France*, c. 1911**

Oil on canvas  
35.3 x 45.5 cm



**Emily Carr, *Shoreline*, 1936**

Oil on canvas  
68 x 111.5 cm



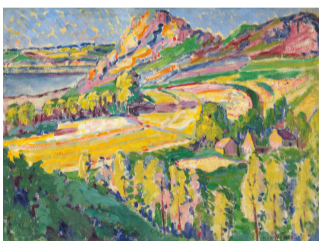
**Emily Carr, *Dancing Sunlight*, c. 1937**

Oil on canvas  
83.5 x 60 cm

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**NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA**

380 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
613-990-1985  
gallery.ca



**Emily Carr, *Autumn in France*, 1911**

Oil on paperboard  
49 x 65.9 cm



**Emily Carr, *Cumshewa*, 1912**

Watercolour and graphite on paper, mounted on cardboard  
52 x 75.5 cm



**Emily Carr, *Potlatch Figure (Mimquimlees)*, 1912**

Oil on canvas  
46 x 60.3 cm



**Emily Carr, *Bell*, c. 1927**

Fired red clay with paint and metal wire  
11 x 8.5 cm diameter

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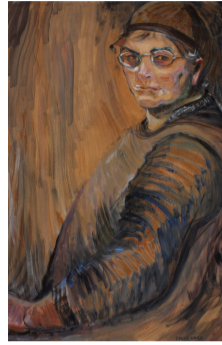
**Emily Carr, *Blunden Harbour*, c. 1930**

Oil on canvas  
129.8 x 93.6 cm



**Emily Carr, *Grizzly Bear Totem, Angidah, Nass River*, c. 1930**

Oil on canvas  
92.5 x 54.5 cm



**Emily Carr, *Self-Portrait*, 1938-39**

Oil on wove paper,  
mounted on plywood  
85.5 x 57.7 cm

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## ROYAL BRITISH COLUMBIA MUSEUM

675 Belleville Street  
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada  
250-356-7226  
royalbcmuseum.bc.ca



**Emily Carr, *Emily's Old Barn Studio*, c. 1891**

Graphite on paper  
30.4 x 22.7 cm



**Emily Carr, *A Study in Evolution*, 1902**

Watercolour and ink on  
paper  
32.5 x 63.5 cm



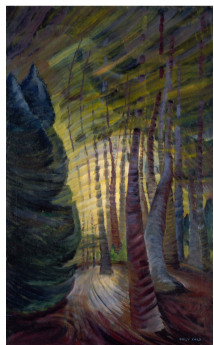
**Emily Carr, *Tanoo, Q.C.I.*, 1913**

Oil on canvas  
110.5 x 170.8 cm



**Emily Carr, *Lower Portion of D'Sonoqua Pole*, c. 1928**

Charcoal on paper  
37.8 x 24.8 cm



**Emily Carr, *Sombreness Sunlit*, c. 1938-40**

Oil on canvas  
110.7 x 67.2 cm



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**VANCOUVER ART GALLERY**

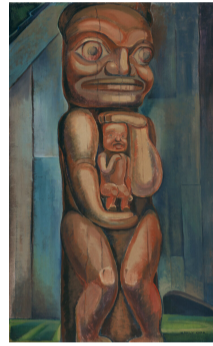
750 Hornby Street  
 Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada  
 604-662-4700  
 vanartgallery.bc.ca



**Emily Carr, *Chrysanthemums*, c. 1900**  
 Oil on canvas  
 43.8 x 34.9 cm



**Emily Carr, *Totem Poles, Kitseukla*, 1912**  
 Oil on canvas  
 126.8 x 98.4 cm



**Emily Carr, *Totem Mother, Kitwancool*, 1928**  
 Oil on canvas  
 109.5 x 69 cm



**Emily Carr, *Vanquished*, 1930**  
 Oil on canvas  
 92 x 129 cm



**Emily Carr, *Big Raven*, 1931**  
 Oil on canvas  
 87 x 114 cm



**Emily Carr, *Tree Trunk*, 1931**  
 Oil on canvas  
 129.1 x 56.3 cm



**Emily Carr, *Zunoqua of the Cat Village*, 1931**  
 Oil on canvas  
 112.2 x 70.1 cm

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# EMILY CARR

Life & Work by Lisa Baldissera



**Emily Carr, *Forest, British Columbia, 1931-32***  
Oil on canvas  
130 x 86.8 cm

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**Emily Carr, *Loggers' Culls, 1935***  
Oil on canvas  
69 x 112.2 cm

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**Emily Carr, *Scorned as Timber, Beloved of the Sky, 1935***  
Oil on canvas  
112 x 68.9 cm

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**Emily Carr, *Above the Gravel Pit, 1937***  
>Oil on canvas  
77.2 x 102.3 cm

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## NOTES

### BIOGRAPHY

1. Emily Carr, *The Book of Small* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1942), 113-14.

Emily Carr, *A Little Town and a Little Girl* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1951), 167-68.

3. Emily Carr, *Growing Pains: The Autobiography of Emily Carr* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1946), 184.

4. Emily Carr, *Opposite Contraries: The Unknown Journals of Emily Carr and Other Writings*, ed. Susan Crean (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2003), 204.

5. For details of Carr's extensive trips, see Gerta Moray, *Unsettling Encounters: First Nations Imagery in the Art of Emily Carr* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006).

6. Emily Carr, *Opposite Contraries: The Unknown Journals of Emily Carr and Other Writings*, ed. Susan Crean (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2003), 204.

7. Emily Carr, quoted in Doris Shadbolt, *The Art of Emily Carr* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1979), 40.

8. Emily Carr, quoted in Jay Stewart and Peter Macnair, "Reconstructing Emily Carr in Alaska," in *Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon*, ed. Charles C. Hill, Johanne Lamoureux, and Ian M. Thom (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre; Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2006), 27.

9. Emily Carr, *Opposite Contraries: The Unknown Journals of Emily Carr and Other Writings*, ed. Susan Crean (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2003), 204.

10. Emily Carr, quoted in Gerta Moray, *Unsettling Encounters: First Nations Imagery in the Art of Emily Carr* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 57.

11. Doris Shadbolt, ed., *The Complete Writings of Emily Carr* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1997), 658.

12. Emily Carr, quoted in *The Complete Writings of Emily Carr*, ed. Doris Shadbolt (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1997), 661

### KEY WORKS: AUTUMN IN FRANCE

1. Emily Carr, *Growing Pains: The Autobiography of Emily Carr* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2005), 266.

2. Emily Carr, *Growing Pains: The Autobiography of Emily Carr* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2005), 267.

3. Emily Carr, *Growing Pains: The Autobiography of Emily Carr* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2005), 267.



## KEY WORKS: TANOO, Q.C.I.

1. Marcia Crosby, "A Chronology of Love's Contingencies," in *Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon*, ed. Charles C. Hill, Johanne Lamoureux, and Ian M. Thom (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre; Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2006), 164.
2. Alert Bay in Carr's title refers to the village of 'Yalis.

## KEY WORKS: CHURCH IN YUQUOT VILLAGE

1. *A Century of Canadian Art* (London: Tate Britain, 1938). Vincent Massey was governor general of Canada from 1952 to 1959 and a philanthropist who tirelessly promoted Canadian arts and culture.

## KEY WORKS: VANQUISHED

1. Emily Carr, *Klee Wyck* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2003), 120-21.
2. Marcia Crosby, "Construction of the Imaginary Indian," in *Beyond Wilderness: The Group of Seven, Canadian Identity, and Contemporary Art*, ed. John O'Brian and Peter White (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 220.

## KEY WORKS: ABOVE THE GRAVEL PIT

1. Letter from Harris to Carr, n.d., 1929.
2. Emily Carr, *Hundreds and Thousands: The Journals of Emily Carr* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1966), 391.

## KEY WORKS: SELF-PORTRAIT

1. Emily Carr, *Hundreds and Thousands: The Journals of Emily Carr* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2006), 437.
2. Emily Carr, *Hundreds and Thousands: The Journals of Emily Carr* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2006), 437.
3. Emily Carr, quoted in *Opposite Contraries: The Unknown Journals of Emily Carr and Other Writings*, ed. Susan Crean (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004), 137.

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1. Emily Carr, *Hundreds and Thousands: The Journals of Emily Carr* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1966), 132-33.

## SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

1. Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, ed., *Documenta 13: The Guidebook, Catalogue 3/3* (Kassel: Hatje Cantz, 2012), 148.
2. Jeff Wall, "Traditions and Counter-Traditions in Vancouver Art: A Deeper Background for Ken Lum's Work," *Witte de With: The Lectures* (Ghent, Belgium: Imschoot, uitgevers, 1990), 67.





3. John O'Brian, "Wild Art History," in *Beyond Wilderness: The Group of Seven, Canadian Identity, and Contemporary Art*, ed. John O'Brian and Peter White (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 21.
4. Johanne Lamoureux, "The Other French Modernity of Emily Carr," in *Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon*, ed. Charles C. Hill, Johanne Lamoureux, and Ian M. Thom (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre; Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2006), 53.
5. Johanne Lamoureux, "The Other French Modernity of Emily Carr," in *Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon*, ed. Charles C. Hill, Johanne Lamoureux, and Ian M. Thom (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre; Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2006), 53.
6. Lawren Harris, quoted in Scott Watson, "Race, Wilderness, Territory, and the Origins of Modern Canadian Landscape Painting," in *Beyond Wilderness: The Group of Seven, Canadian Identity, and Contemporary Art*, ed. John O'Brian and Peter White (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2007), 277.
7. Gerta Moray, "Emily Carr and the Traffic in Native Images," in *Antimodernism and Artistic Experience: Policing the Boundaries of Modernism*, ed. Lynda Jessup and Matthew Teitelbaum (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 71-93.

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2. Emily Carr, *Growing Pains: The Autobiography of Emily Carr* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1946), 203.
3. Emily Carr, *Sister and I: From Victoria to England*, introduction by Kathryn Bridge (Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum, 2011), 12. The letter is in the City of Victoria Archives.
4. Kathryn Bridge, email, July 24, 2014.
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7. Emily Carr, quoted in Paula Blanchard, *The Life of Emily Carr* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1987), 87.
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9. Jay Stewart and Peter Macnair, "Reconstructing Emily Carr in Alaska," in *Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon*, ed. Charles C. Hill, Johanne Lamoureux, and Ian M. Thom (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre; Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2006), 26.
10. Emily Carr, *The Complete Writings of Emily Carr*, ed. Doris Shadbolt (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1993), 427.
11. Emily Carr, quoted in Doris Shadbolt, *The Art of Emily Carr* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1979), 34.
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13. Emily Carr, quoted in Johanne Lamoureux, "The Other French Modernity of Emily Carr," in *Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon*, ed. Charles C. Hill, Johanne Lamoureux, and Ian M. Thom (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre; Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2006), 45.
14. For their comprehensive website, see <http://www.emilycarr.org>.
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## GLOSSARY

### **Barbeau, Marius (Canadian, 1883–1969)**

A pioneering anthropologist and ethnologist, Barbeau is considered the founder of folklore studies in Canada. Based at the National Museum of Canada, Ottawa, he studied French-Canadian and Indigenous communities, collecting songs, legends, and art, and documenting customs and social organization. His interests led him to work with several artists, including Emily Carr, A.Y. Jackson, and Jean Paul Lemieux.

### **Beardsley, Aubrey (British, 1872–1898)**

A writer, draftsman, and illustrator, and a major figure in the late nineteenth-century movements of Art Nouveau and Symbolism. Beardsley produced a remarkable body of work in his short life; among his most famous drawings are those he made for Oscar Wilde's *Salome* (1894).

### **Bonnard, Pierre (French, 1867–1947)**

A painter and printmaker associated with the Nabis, a group of French Post-Impressionist artists who emerged in the late 1880s and maintained a distance from the Parisian avant-garde. Bonnard often worked in a decorative mode and with an Impressionist use of colour; he painted interior scenes and landscapes, created posters and theatre sets, and designed household objects.

### **Braque, Georges (French, 1882–1963)**

A seminal figure in the history of modern art. Working alongside Picasso from 1908 to 14, Braque developed the principles of major phases of Analytic and Synthetic Cubism and, along with the latter, the use of collage. After the First World War he pursued a personal style of Cubism admired for its compositional and colouristic subtleties.

### **Brooker, Bertram (Canadian, 1888–1955)**

A British-born painter, illustrator, musician, poet, Governor General's Award-winning novelist, and Toronto advertising executive. In 1927 Brooker became the first Canadian artist to exhibit abstract art. His work is in the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, and other major collections.

### **Canadian Group of Painters**

Founded in 1933 after the disbanding of the Group of Seven by former members and their associates, the Canadian Group of Painters championed modernist painting styles against the entrenched traditionalism of the Royal Canadian Academy. They provided a platform for artists across Canada who were pursuing a variety of new concerns, from the formal experimentation of Bertram Brooker to the modern-figure subjects of Prudence Heward and Pegi Nicol MacLeod and the expressive landscapes of Emily Carr.

### **Cubism**

A radical style of painting developed by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in Paris between 1907 and 1914, defined by the representation of numerous perspectives at once. Cubism is considered crucial to the history of modern art for its enormous international impact; famous practitioners also include Juan Gris and Francis Picabia.

**Dove, Arthur (American, 1880–1946)**

An important American modernist and one of the first artists in the United States to create entirely non-representational works. Among Dove's clear influences are the French avant-garde painters Henri Matisse and Paul Cézanne as well as Cubism and Futurism. His first solo exhibition was held at Alfred Stieglitz's 291 gallery in New York.

***en plein air***

French for "open air," used to describe the practice of painting or sketching outdoors to observe nature and in particular the changing effects of light.

**Expressionism**

An intense, emotional style of art that values the representation of the artist's subjective inner feelings and ideas. German Expressionism started in the early twentieth century in Germany and Austria. In painting, Expressionism is associated with an intense, jarring use of colour and brush strokes that are not naturalistic.

**Fauvism**

The style of the Fauves (French for "wild beasts"), a group of painters who took their name from a derogatory phrase used by the French journalist Louis Vauxcelles. As a historical movement, Fauvism began at the controversial Salon d'Automne in 1905, and ended less than five years later, in early 1910. Fauvism was characterized by bold, unmixed colours, obvious brush strokes, and a subjective approach to representation. Among the most important of the Fauves were Henri Matisse, André Derain, and Maurice de Vlaminck.

**Fergusson, John Duncan (Scottish, 1874–1961)**

A prominent early twentieth-century painter, Fergusson studied in Paris and spent many years there in artistic circles that included Impressionists, Fauves, and Cubists. His work, like that of other artists now known as the Scottish Colourists, displays the bold hues and graphic forms typical of French Post-Impressionist painting.

**figure-ground relationship**

A compositional term referring to the perception of an object (the figure), as distinguished from its surround (the ground), especially in a context where this distinction is ambiguous. These two elements are interdependent—one defines the other. They can also be articulated as positive and negative shapes.

**German Expressionism**

A modernist movement in painting, sculpture, theatre, literature, and cinema. Expressionism's birth is often traced to 1905, when Die Brücke (The Bridge), a group of Dresden painters, broke with the practices and institutions of the academy and bourgeois culture, declaring themselves a "bridge" to the future. Another bold new group, Der Blaue Reiter (the Blue Rider), formed in 1911, focused more on the spiritual in art. Significant Expressionist painters include Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Franz Marc, and Egon Schiele.





## **Gibb, Harry Phelan (British, 1870–1948)**

A painter and ceramicist who studied in the United Kingdom, Belgium, and Germany, and with painter Jean-Paul Laurens in Paris; he lived in the French capital for twenty-five years and earned the admiration of Gertrude Stein. The influence of Paul Cézanne is immediately evident in works such as *Dartmoor Farm*, 1931, and *Still Life*, 1932.

## **Group of Seven**

A progressive and nationalistic school of landscape painting in Canada, active between 1920 (the year of the group's first exhibition, at the Art Gallery of Toronto, now the Art Gallery of Ontario) and 1933. Founding members were the artists Franklin Carmichael, Lawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson, Frank Johnston, Arthur Lismer, J.E.H. MacDonald, and Frederick Varley.

## **Harris, Lawren (Canadian, 1885–1970)**

A founding member of the Group of Seven in Toronto in 1920, Harris was widely considered its unofficial leader. His landscape-painting style, unlike that of the other members of the Group, evolved into pure abstraction. The Group of Seven broke up in 1933, and when the Canadian Group of Painters was formed in 1933, Harris was elected its first president.

## **Herkomer, Hubert von (German/British, 1849–1914)**

An artist and teacher whose practice included painting, illustration, sculpture, and set design for the stage and cinema. Herkomer also composed and performed in operas and was a journalist, playwright, and pioneer producer/director of British silent films. He is best known as a portrait painter, among the most successful in late nineteenth-century Britain and France.

## **Hodgkins, Frances (New Zealander/British, 1869–1947)**

A watercolourist and art teacher who from 1901 studied and painted in Britain, North Africa, and Europe, spending more than ten years in Paris. Hodgkins settled in England, where she was associated with the Seven and Five Society, a group of modernist painters and sculptors whose work, like hers, moved from traditional styles toward abstraction.

## **Housser, Frederick (Canadian, 1889–1936)**

A writer, financial editor of the *Toronto Daily Star*, and art critic, who wrote the first book on the Group of Seven, in 1926. *A Canadian Art Movement: The Story of the Group of Seven* was highly influential and hotly contested at the time of its publication. He was a good friend of the artists, a fellow theosophist, and, with his first wife, Bess (an artist who later married Lawren Harris), an early private collector of the group's work. He died soon after his second marriage, to Yvonne McKague Housser.

## **Impressionism**

A highly influential art movement that originated in France in the 1860s and is associated with the emergence of modern urban European society. Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and other Impressionists rejected the subjects and formal rigours of academic art in favour of scenes of nature and daily life and the careful rendering of atmospheric effects. They often painted outdoors.



## **Jackson, A.Y. (Canadian, 1882–1974)**

A founding member of the Group of Seven and an important voice in the formation of a distinctively Canadian artistic tradition. A Montreal native, Jackson studied painting in Paris before moving to Toronto in 1913; his northern landscapes are characterized by the bold brushstrokes and vivid colours of his Impressionist and Post-Impressionist influences.

## **Kandinsky, Wassily (Russian, 1866–1944)**

An artist, teacher, and philosopher who settled in Germany and later in France, Kandinsky was central to the development of abstract art. Much of his work conveys his interest in the relationships between colour, sound, and emotion. *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1911), his famous treatise on abstraction, draws on mysticism and theories of divinity.

## **Lee Nam (Chinese/Canadian, n.d., flourished c. 1930s)**

An immigrant from China, Lee Nam was employed as a bookkeeper by a Chinese merchant in Victoria, British Columbia. He practised the traditional art of Chinese brush painting. During 1933–35 he was an inspiration to Emily Carr, who left an account of his work in her journals, published as *Hundreds and Thousands: The Journals of Emily Carr* (1966). As yet no surviving works by Lee Nam have been located.

## **Lismer, Arthur (British/Canadian, 1885–1969)**

A landscape painter and founding member of the Group of Seven, Lismer immigrated to Canada from England in 1911. He was also an influential educator of adults and children, and he created children's art schools at both the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto (1933) and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (1946).

## **MacDonald, J.E.H. (British/Canadian, 1873–1932)**

A painter, printmaker, calligrapher, teacher, poet, and designer, and a founding member of the Group of Seven. His sensitive treatment of the Canadian landscape was influenced by Walt Whitman's poetry and Henry David Thoreau's views on nature.

## **Matisse, Henri (French, 1869–1954)**

A painter, sculptor, printmaker, draftsman, and designer, aligned at different times with the Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, and Fauvists. By the 1920s he was, with Pablo Picasso, one of the most famous painters of his generation, known for his remarkable use of colour and line.

## **Milne, David (Canadian, 1881–1953)**

A painter, printmaker, and illustrator whose work—principally landscapes—displays the tonal brilliance and concern with process of his Impressionist and Post-Impressionist influences. Milne lived in New York early in his career, where he trained at the Art Students League and participated in the Armory Show in 1913.



**modernism**

A movement extending from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century in all the arts, modernism rejected academic traditions in favour of innovative styles developed in response to contemporary industrialized society. Beginning in painting with the Realist movement led by Gustave Courbet, it progressed through Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, and Cubism and on to abstraction. By the 1960s, anti-authoritarian postmodernist styles such as Pop art, Conceptual art, and Neo-Expressionism blurred the distinction between high art and mass culture.

**Monet, Claude (French, 1840–1926)**

A founder of the Impressionist movement in France. Monet's landscapes and seascapes are among the canonical works of Western art. Introduced to *plein air* painting as a teenager, Monet returned to it throughout his life as a means of exploring the atmospheric effects and perceptual phenomena that so interested him as an artist.

**Morrice, James Wilson (Canadian, 1865–1924)**

One of Canada's first modernist painters and first artists to gain international recognition, during his lifetime Morrice was nonetheless more celebrated in Europe than he was at home. He is best known for richly coloured landscapes that show the influence of James McNeill Whistler and Post-Impressionism.

**Northwest School**

An informal artists' group linked by their interest in the quality of light, open skies, and natural forms in the American Pacific Northwest. Their work, influenced by Abstract Expressionism and Asian art, is marked by a spiritual feeling for nature. The painters chiefly associated with the school are Guy Anderson (1906–1998), Kenneth Callahan (1905–1986), Morris Graves (1910–2001), and Mark Tobey (1890–1976).

**Olsson, Julius (British, 1864–1942)**

A painter and teacher at the Cornish School of Landscape, Figure and Sea Painting in St. Ives, Cornwall and of Swedish descent, Olsson was part of the *plein air* British Impressionist movement that discovered the picturesque Cornish fishing village and seacoast in the late nineteenth century. St. Ives became a famous artists' colony that by the 1930s was attracting such avant-garde residents as Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth.

**O'Keeffe, Georgia (American, 1887–1986)**

A critical figure in American modernism, O'Keeffe was encouraged as a young artist by the photographer Alfred Stieglitz, whom she married in 1924. Her expressive and often nearly abstract paintings were inspired by natural forms such as landscapes, flowers, and bones. After Stieglitz's death she settled permanently in northern New Mexico.



## **Pellan, Alfred (Canadian, 1906–1988)**

A painter active in Paris art circles in the 1930s and 1940s. In Montreal Pellan taught at the École des beaux-arts (now part of the Université du Québec à Montréal) from 1943 to 1952. He was the leader of the short-lived Prisme d'yeux (1948), a painters' group that opposed and wanted to discredit the ideas of the Automatistes. His work from the 1950s on is markedly Surrealist.

## **Pemberton, Sophie (Canadian, 1869–1959)**

A landscape and portrait painter first trained in San Francisco and London and then at the Académie Julian in Paris, where she became the first Canadian and the first woman to win a prestigious Prix Julian. Pemberton participated in the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition and showed her work at the Paris Salon and the Royal Academy of Arts.

## **Picabia, Francis (French, 1879–1953)**

A painter, poet, and leader of the anti-rationalist and antiwar Dada movement in Europe that arose in protest against the art establishment and the First World War. Picabia's artistic production was so diverse as to remain unclassifiable; beginning as a Post-Impressionist, he experimented with Fauvism, Cubism, Orphism, and Futurism.

## **Picasso, Pablo (Spanish, 1881–1973)**

One of the most famous and influential artists of his time, Picasso was a prominent member of the Parisian avant-garde circle that included Henri Matisse and Georges Braque. His painting *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1906–7, is considered by many to be the most important of the twentieth century.

## **Pissarro, Camille (Danish/French, 1830–1903)**

An influential art teacher and innovator who was largely self-taught, Pissarro was born in Saint Thomas (now in the U.S. Virgin Islands) and moved to Paris in 1855. He participated in all eight Impressionist exhibitions, but in the 1880s his style tended to Post-Impressionism, and he explored the technique of Pointillism.

## **post-colonial art history**

An art history informed by critical theorization of the social, political, and cultural consequences of colonialism or imperialism for both the colonizers and the colonized. Post-colonial or settler art history explores questions of national identity, ethnicity, agency, and authenticity in the work of artists within cross-cultural contexts.

## **Post-Impressionism**

A term coined by the British art critic Roger Fry in 1910 to describe painting produced originally in France between about 1880 and 1905 in response to Impressionism's artistic advances and limitations. Central figures include Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, and Vincent van Gogh.





## **Richardson, Theodore J. (American, 1855–1914)**

A landscape painter and art teacher best known for his watercolours that focus on First Nations culture in Alaska. Originally from Maine, Richardson worked as an art teacher in Minneapolis and made many trips to Alaska, beginning in 1884.

## **Roberts, Goodridge (Canadian, 1904–1974)**

A painter and influential teacher from New Brunswick, whose modernist sensibility developed in the late 1920s when he attended the Art Students League of New York. Roberts settled in Montreal in 1939 and within ten years was celebrated nationally for his careful but intense approach to figure painting, still life, and landscape.

## **Rouault, Georges (French, 1871–1958)**

Known for his highly personal and expressive style, Rouault first gained notoriety in the early 1900s with his compassionate renderings of prostitutes and other marginalized people. Informed by Christian spiritualism, his work was finally embraced by the church shortly before his death.

## **salvage paradigm**

In the context of twentieth-century ethnography, travel literature, and anthropology, the salvage paradigm is an ideological position whereby a dominant Western society assumes the inevitability of a non-Western culture's demise, owing to its perceived inability to adapt to modern life. The conclusion is that the non-Western culture can be "saved" only by the collection, documentation, and preservation of artifacts and accounts of its presence.

## **Shadbolt, Jack (Canadian, 1909–1998)**

Primarily known as a painter and draftsman, Shadbolt studied art in London, Paris, and New York before returning to British Columbia. He taught at the Vancouver School of Art from 1945 to 1966, becoming the head of the school's painting and drawing section. Major influences include Emily Carr and Aboriginal art of the Pacific Northwest.

## **sublime**

A complex and important idea in the history of aesthetics, sparked in late seventeenth-century Europe by the translation of the ancient Greek text *On the Sublime* (attributed to Longinus) and furthered by the eighteenth-century philosopher Edmund Burke and many others. In painting, the sublime is often expressed in scenes of exalted or mysterious grandeur—terrifying storms at sea, wild skies, steep mountains—natural phenomena that both threaten the observer and inspire awe.

## **Tobey, Mark (American, 1890–1976)**

An abstract painter whose work was influenced by Cubism and Chinese calligraphy and frequently evoked his Baha'i faith. Tobey's all-over "white writing" paintings of the 1930s to the 1950s were developed independently of Abstract Expressionism. He lived in Seattle for many years and was associated with the Northwest School.

## **van Gogh, Vincent (Dutch, 1853–1890)**



Among the most recognizable and beloved of modernist painters, van Gogh is the creator of *Starry Night* and *Vase with Sunflowers*, both from 1889. He is a nearly mythological figure in Western culture, the archetypal “tortured artist” who achieves posthumous fame after a lifetime of struggle and neglect.

**Varley, F.H. (Frederick Horsman) (British/Canadian, 1881–1969)**

A founding member of the Group of Seven, known for his contributions to Canadian portraiture as well as landscape painting. Originally from Sheffield, England, Varley moved to Toronto in 1912 at the encouragement of his friend Arthur Lismer. From 1926 to 1936 he taught at the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts, now known as Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

**Vuillard, Édouard (French, 1868–1940)**

A printmaker, decorative artist, and painter who preferred the difficult medium of distemper for its opaque qualities. Vuillard was a member of the Nabis, Post-Impressionist painters influenced by the work of Paul Gauguin; their domestic scenes employ intense colour, flattened space, and areas of vivid patterning. He later became an accomplished and popular portraitist.

**Walker, Dame Ethel (British, 1861–1951)**

A sculptor and painter of portraits, flower studies, and landscapes trained at London’s Slade School of Art. Walker’s palette, sombre at first, brightened over the course of her career to hues more evocative of Impressionism. In 1900 she became the first woman member of the New English Art Club, founded in 1885 as an alternative to the more conventional Royal Academy.

**Wall, Jeff (Canadian, b. 1946)**

A leading figure in contemporary photography since the 1980s, whose conceptual, life-size colour prints and backlit transparencies often refer to historical painting and cinema. Wall’s work exemplifies the aesthetic of what is sometimes called the Vancouver School, which includes the photographers Vikky Alexander, Stan Douglas, Rodney Graham, and Ken Lum, among others.





# SOURCES & RESOURCES

**Carr's work has been widely written about, and her own writings provide a fascinating narration of her thoughts, travels, and considerations of artistic life. Through these texts, as well as plays, documentary films, websites, and a number of major exhibitions, Carr's powerful influence on art in Canada is well documented.**

## KEY EXHIBITIONS

Carr's work has been exhibited across Canada, in Europe, and in the United States. These entries do not include the numerous small shows that she also took part in, especially her exhibitions in Victoria at the beginning of her career. Her work has been the subject of more retrospectives than any other historical Canadian artist.



LEFT: Lawren Harris and Ira Dilworth at the Vancouver Art Gallery around the time of the opening of the new Emily Carr Memorial Galleries, 1951. RIGHT: The catalogue cover for *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern*, 1927, designed by Emily Carr.

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- 1911** Grand Palais, Société du Salon d'Automne, Paris.
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- 1913** Dominion Hall, Vancouver. Solo exhibition.
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- 1927** *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Travelled to Art Gallery of Toronto (Art Gallery of Ontario); Art Association of Montreal (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts).
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- 1930** *Group of Seven*, Art Gallery of Toronto (Art Gallery of Ontario). Travelled to Art Association of Montreal (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts).
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- 1931** *Group of Seven*, Art Gallery of Toronto (Art Gallery of Ontario).
- 
- 1938** *Exhibition by Emily Carr*, Vancouver Art Gallery.  
*A Century of Canadian Art*, Tate Gallery, London, England.





# EMILY CARR

Life & Work by Lisa Baldissera

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- 1939** *Canadian Group of Painters, New York World's Fair.*
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- 1945–46** *Emily Carr: Her Paintings and Sketches, collaboration between Art Gallery of Toronto (Art Gallery of Ontario) and National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Travelled to Art Association of Montreal (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts) and Vancouver Art Gallery.*
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- 1949** *Memorial Exhibition, Henry Art Gallery, Seattle.*
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- 1951** *Emily Carr Memorial Galleries, opening exhibition, Vancouver Art Gallery.*
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- 1952** *Venice Biennale, with David Milne, Alfred Pellán, and Goodridge Roberts. Canada's first participation in this event.*
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- 1958** *One Hundred Years of B.C. Art, Vancouver Art Gallery.*
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- 1962** *The World of Emily Carr: A New Exhibition of Her Paintings from the Newcombe Collection, Hudson's Bay Company, Victoria and Vancouver.*
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- 1971** *Emily Carr: A Centennial Exhibition Celebrating the One Hundredth Anniversary of Her Birth, organized by Vancouver Art Gallery. Travelled to Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.*
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- 1974** *Contemporaries of Emily Carr in British Columbia, Simon Fraser Gallery, Burnaby, B.C.*
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- 1977** *Emily Carr Gallery, opening exhibition, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Victoria.*
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- 1979** *Emily Carr: The Mature Years—Les années de maturité, organized by Vancouver Art Gallery. Travelled to Canada House, London, England; Centre culturel canadien, Paris.*
- 
- 1982** *Emily Carr: Sky Paintings, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.*
- 
- 1983** *Visions and Victories: Ten Canadian Women Artists, London Regional Art Gallery (Museum London).*
- 
- 1986–87** *The Advent of Modernism, organized by High Museum of Art, Atlanta. Travelled to Center for the Fine Arts, Miami; Brooklyn Museum; Glenbow Museum, Calgary.*
- 
- 1987–88** *The Expressionist Landscape: North American Modernist Painting, 1920–1947, organized by Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama. Travelled to IBM Gallery of Science and Art, New York; Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse; Akron Art Museum; Vancouver Art Gallery.*



# EMILY CARR

Life & Work by Lisa Baldissera

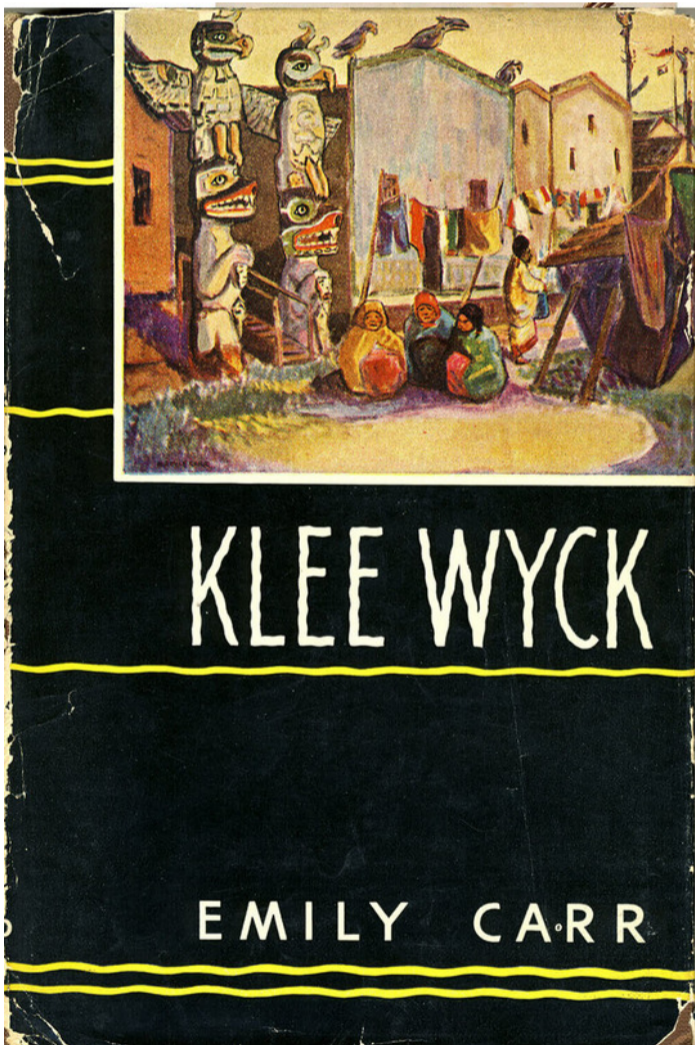
- 
- 1990** *Emily Carr*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.  
*The True North: Canadian Landscape Painting, 1896-1939*, Barbican Art Gallery, London, England.
- 
- 1990–91** *The Logic of Ecstasy*, organized by London Regional Art and Historical Museums (Museum London). Travelled to Art Gallery of Greater Victoria; Edmonton Art Gallery (Art Gallery of Alberta); Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon; Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton; Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax.
- 
- 1991** *Emily Carr in France*, Vancouver Art Gallery.
- 
- 1995–96** *Gasoline, Oil, and Paper: The 1930s Oil-on-Paper Paintings of Emily Carr*, organized by Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon. Travelled to Edmonton Art Gallery (Art Gallery of Alberta); Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.
- 
- 1998–99** *Emily Carr: Art and Process*, organized by Vancouver Art Gallery. Travelled to Art Gallery of Greater Victoria; Kamloops Art Gallery.
- 
- 1999–2000** *To the Totem Forests: Emily Carr and Contemporaries Interpret Coastal Villages*, organized by Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Travelled to Vancouver Art Gallery; Kamloops Art Gallery.
- 
- 2001–02** *Carr, O’Keeffe, Kahlo: Places of Their Own*, organized by McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, ON. Travelled to Santa Fe Museum of Fine Arts; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.; Vancouver Art Gallery.  
*Emily Carr: Eccentric, Artist, Author, Genius*, Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria.
- 
- 2006–08** *Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon*, collaboration between Vancouver Art Gallery and National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Travelled to Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; Glenbow Museum, Calgary.
- 
- 2007–08** *Emily Carr and the Group of Seven*, Vancouver Art Gallery.
- 
- 2008** *Canadian Women Modernists: The Dialogue with Emily Carr*, Vancouver Art Gallery.
- 
- 2009** *Two Visions: Emily Carr and Jack Shadbolt*, Vancouver Art Gallery.
- 
- 2010–13** *Emily Carr: On the Edge of Nowhere*, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



- 
- 2011**      *The Other Emily: Redefining Emily Carr*, Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria.
- 
- 2012**      Documenta 13, Kassel, Germany.
- 
- 2014**      *From the Forest to the Sea: Emily Carr in British Columbia*, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, England. Travelled to Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 2015.  
*Convuluted Beauty: In the Company of Emily Carr*, Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon.

#### WRITINGS BY EMILY CARR

Carr's gifts as an artist were paralleled by her literary accomplishments. She wrote extensively on her life and work, the people who were important to her, and the places where she lived and travelled. Her efforts were rewarded by a wide readership and acclaim and helped to reinforce her reputation as an important figure on the national art scene.



LEFT: First edition of Carr's autobiographical work *Klee Wyck*, which won the 1941 Governor General's Award for non-fiction. RIGHT: Carr's *The Book of Small* (1942) is a collection of stories based on her early life in Victoria.

"Lecture on Totems," 1913. In *Opposite Contraries: The Unknown Journals of Emily Carr and Other Writings*. Edited by Susan Crean. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004.



"Modern and Indian Art of the West Coast." Supplement, *McGill News*, June 1929.

*Fresh Seeing: Two Addresses by Emily Carr*. Speech to Women's Canadian Club of Victoria, Crystal Garden, 1930. Preface by Doris Shadbolt, introduction by Ira Dilworth. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1972.

*Klee Wyck*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1941.

*The Book of Small*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1942.

*The House of All Sorts*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1944.

*Growing Pains: The Autobiography of Emily Carr*. Foreword by Ira Dilworth. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1946.

*A Little Town and a Little Girl*. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1951.

*The Heart of a Peacock*. Edited by Ira Dilworth. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1953.

*Pause: A Sketch Book*. Edited by Ira Dilworth. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1953.

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*Dear Nan: Letters of Emily Carr, Nan Cheney and Humphrey Toms*. Edited by Doreen Walker. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990.

*Flirt, Punk and Loo: My Dogs and I*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1997.

*The Complete Writings of Emily Carr*. Edited by Doris Shadbolt. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1997.

*Opposite Contraries: The Unknown Journals of Emily Carr and Other Writings*. Edited by Susan Crean. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2003.

*Corresponding Influence: Selected Letters of Emily Carr and Ira Dilworth*. Edited by Linda Morran. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006.

*Sister and I: From Victoria to England*. Introduction by Kathryn Bridge. Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum, 2011.

*Sister and I in Alaska*. Edited by David Silcox. Vancouver: Figure 1 Publishing, 2014.

## CRITICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Comprehensive documentation exists on Carr both in major art publications and in critical reviews. New archival discoveries have also been made regularly since her death, and the scholarship on her work continues to grow and be enhanced by new interpretations.

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Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996.

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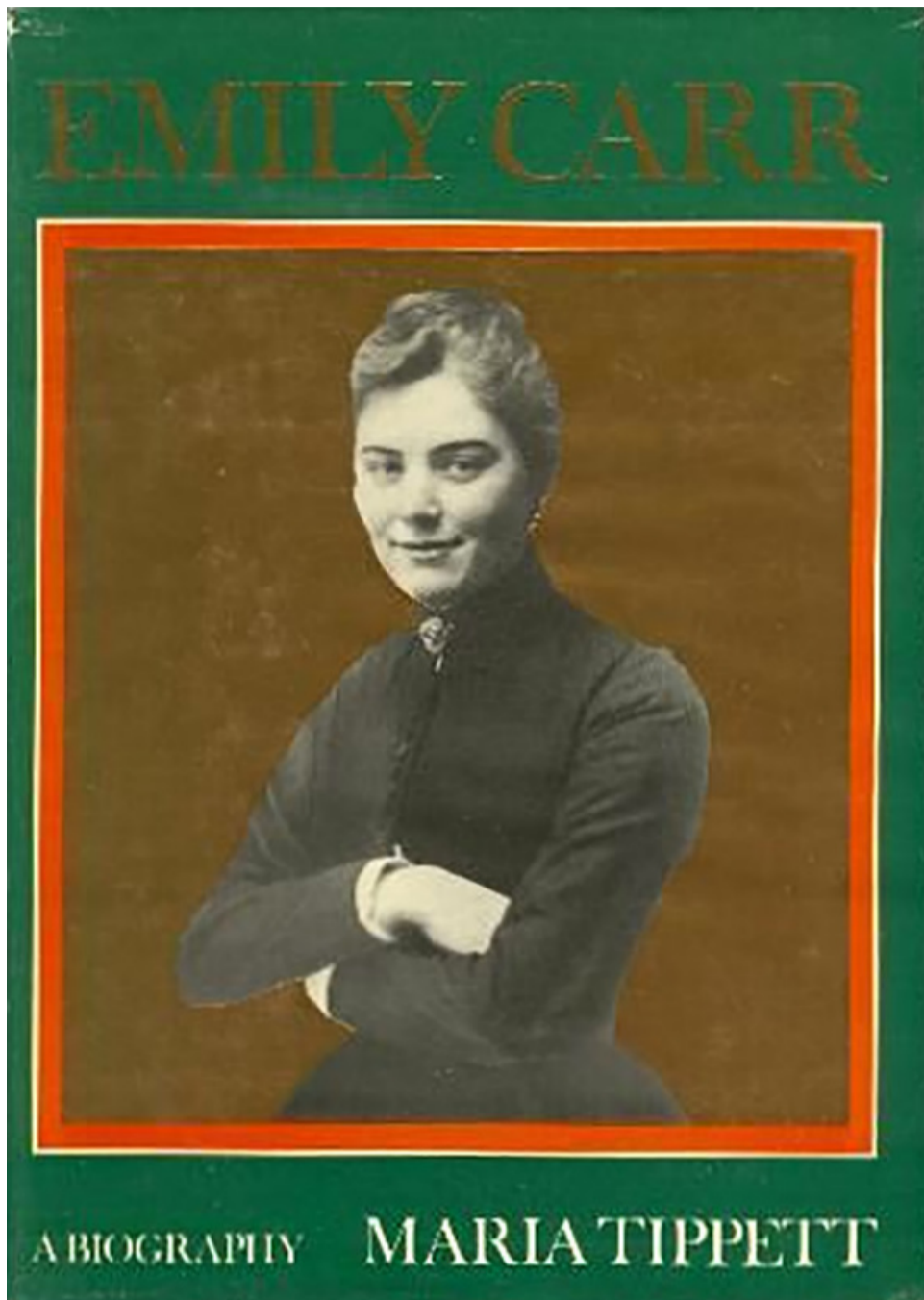
———. *Unsettling Encounters: First Nations Imagery in the Art of Emily Carr*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006.

Newlands, Anne. *Emily Carr: An Introduction to Her Life and Art*. Willowdale, ON: Firefly, 1996.

O'Brian, John, and David Alexander, eds. *Gasoline, Oil, and Paper: The 1930s Oil-on-Paper Paintings of Emily Carr*. Saskatoon: Mendel Art Gallery, 1995. Exhibition catalogue.

O'Brian, John, and Peter White, eds. *Beyond Wilderness: The Group of Seven, Canadian Identity, and Contemporary Art*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007.

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*Emily Carr: A Biography* (1979) by Maria Tippett.



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———. *Emily Carr*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1990.

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Exhibition catalogue.

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Exhibition catalogue.

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Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996.

### FILM AND THEATRE

Carr's life story and art have fascinated audiences since the National Film Board of Canada produced the first film on her life in 1946, as part of a Canadian artists series. Since that time her work has been featured in a number of critically acclaimed documentaries and stage productions.

Four major documentaries have been produced on the life of Emily Carr. A one-hour piece, *The Life and Times of Emily Carr*, was produced in 1997 by Biography Channel, a Canadian television network affiliated with the CBC. In 1978 the National Film Board of Canada produced two films, *Growing Pains* and *Little Old Lady on the Edge of Nowhere*.





A still from the short film *Bone Wind Fire* (2011), directed by Jill Sharpe.

The feature-length documentary *Winds of Heaven: Emily Carr, Carvers and the Spirit of the Forest* (2010, directed by Michael Ostroff) examines her work with indigenous cultures more thoroughly. The National Film Board produced *Bone Wind Fire* (2011), a short documentary about Carr, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Frida Kahlo.

A short memorial presented in 1963 on CBC Radio, featuring A.Y. Jackson, can be heard at <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/arts-entertainment/visual-arts/visual-arts-general/remembering-artist-emily-carr.html>. Courtesy Royal British Columbia Museum Archives, Victoria, D-03843.

Carr's work has also been the inspiration for numerous stage productions: *Emily Carr: A Stage Biography with Pictures* (Herman Voaden, 1960); *Klee Wyck: A Ballet for Emily Carr* (score by Ann Mortiffee, performed by the Anna Wyman Dance Theatre, CBC TV, 1975); *Song of This Place* (Joy Coghill, 1987); *The Magnificent Voyage of Emily Carr* (Jovette Marchessault, 1990, published as a book in 1992); and *The Remarkable Emily Carr* (Susan Shillingford, 2008).

#### WEB RESOURCES

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria: <http://aggv.ca/collection/emily-carr>



# EMILY CARR

Life & Work by Lisa Baldissera

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Canadian Encyclopedia:

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/emily-carr>

Library and Archives Canada, *To the Totem Forests: Emily Carr and*

*Contemporaries Interpret Coastal Villages*: [http://epe.lac-](http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/205/301/ic/cdc/totems/contents.htm)

[bac.gc.ca/100/205/301/ic/cdc/totems/contents.htm](http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/205/301/ic/cdc/totems/contents.htm)

Vancouver Art Gallery:

[http://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca/collection\\_and\\_research/emily\\_carr.html](http://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca/collection_and_research/emily_carr.html)

Virtual Museum of Canada, Vancouver Art Gallery: [http://www.museevirtuel-](http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/emily_carr/en/index.php)

[virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/emily\\_carr/en/index.php](http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/emily_carr/en/index.php)





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### LISA BALDISSERA

Lisa Baldissera has worked in curatorial roles in public art galleries in Western Canada since 1999, including as Senior Curator at Contemporary Calgary (2014-16) and as Chief Curator at the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon (2012-14). She was Curator of Contemporary Art at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria from 1999 to 2009, where she produced more than fifty exhibitions of local, Canadian, and international artists. She holds MFAs in Creative Writing (UBC) and Art (University of Saskatchewan) and a PhD from Goldsmiths College, University of London. Baldissera has served on contemporary art juries across Canada and internationally, including the Alvin Balkind Curator's Prize (The Doris and Jack Shadbolt Foundation), the Canada Council for the Arts, the Saskatchewan Arts Board, the Royal Bank of Canada Canadian Painting Competition, the Hnatyshyn Foundation Visual Arts Awards, the Sobey Art Award, the British Columbia Arts Council, the Prix Pierre-Prince-de-Monaco, and as a guest of the British Arts Council outreach program.

Baldissera's recent curatorial projects at Griffin Art Projects include the solo exhibitions, *Stan Douglas: Allegories of the Present* and *William Kentridge: The Colander*, the latter of which was accompanied by an international conference, *Worldings*, which brought together South African and Canadian artists, curators and activists. Other recent exhibitions have included *Person/one on Arendtian forms of care, citizenship, and personhood* and *Per Diem: The Gerd Metzdorff Collection*. At Contemporary Calgary in 2017, the project *UTOPIA FACTORY* considered issues of urban planning, monuments, public art and reconciliation in the building of a new art gallery, while *WILD: Fabricating a Frontier* (with M:ST and Calgary Underground Film Festival) complicated frontier narratives in contested zones and settler colonial contexts. Co-curated with Joanne Bristol, the exhibition *extratextual* featured over twenty Canadian and international artists who explore how modes of writing, as well as concepts of textuality and narrative, have informed artistic production. *Never the Same: what (else) can art writing do?* an international symposium co-produced with Bristol on the agencies and futures of art writing was held in Calgary in 2017. Baldissera's doctoral thesis addressed vulnerability in the public sphere through exhibitions, a short story collection of ficto-critical writing, and the examination of Canadian writers and artist Emily Carr, Billy-Ray Belcourt, and Lisa Robertson, and American writers Chris Kraus, Christina Sharpe, and Claudia Rankine. Baldissera is currently the Director of Griffin Art Projects in North Vancouver, B.C.



**“Carr’s vision of the West Coast of Canada was a revelation to me as a young artist, born and raised in British Columbia, as was the rarity of her dual gifts, in creative writing and in visual art. In Victoria, where I lived for many years, I would sometimes hear stories from those who had living memories of her—even the small anecdotes were deeply inspiring to me. Especially moving was the realization that for Carr, finding a territory and a voice of her own was a lifelong journey.”**



## COPYRIGHT & CREDITS ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### From the Author

My sincere thanks to Mark Cheetham and to Sara Angel, for the opportunity to work on this project and to consider Carr's legacy for new readers. My deepest gratitude to the fleet of Carr specialists, whose dedication to Carr and research before me has provided such support to my own project, especially to Gerta Moray, Ian Thom, Charles Hill, Kathryn Bridge, Peter Macnair, Jay Stewart, Johanne Lamoureux, Marcia Crosby, and the legacy of Doris Shadbolt. Warm appreciation is also reserved for Joan Borsa, Marianne Nicolson, and Mary Kavanagh for our conversations about Carr, insight, and encouragement. I am also very grateful to my editors, Rosemary Shipton and Meg Taylor, for their hard work and many discussions throughout.

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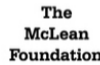
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Emily Carr, *Vanquished*, 1930. (See below for details.)

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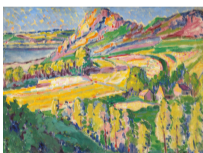
Biography: Emily Carr in San Francisco at age twenty-two, c. 1893. British Columbia Archives Collection, Royal B.C. Museum Corporation, Victoria (H-02813).



Key Works: Emily Carr, *Totem Walk at Sitka*, 1907. (See below for details.)



Significance & Critical Issues: Emily Carr, *Odds and Ends*, 1939. (See below for details.)



Style & Technique: Emily Carr, *Autumn in France*, 1911. (See below for details.)



Sources & Resources: *Emily Carr in Her Studio*, 1939, photograph by Harold Mortimer-Lamb. (See below for details.)



Where to See: Installation view of *Exhibition of West Coast Art: Native and Modern*, National Gallery of Canada, 1927. (See below for details.)

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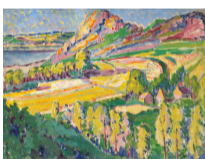
*Above the Gravel Pit*, 1937. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust, VAG 42.3.30. Photograph by Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery.



*Alaska Journal*, 1907, detail of page 19. Private collection.



*Alaska Journal*, 1907, detail of page 35. Private collection.



*Autumn in France*, 1911. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



*Beacon Hill Park*, 1909. Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Bell*, c. 1927. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, gift of Margot Johnston, Ottawa, 1998.

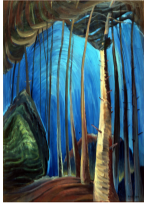


*Big Eagle, Skidigate, B.C.*, 1929. Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.





*Big Raven*, 1931. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust, VAG 42.3.11. Photograph by Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery.



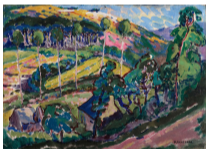
*Blue Sky*, 1936. Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Blunden Harbour*, c. 1930. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



*Breton Farm Yard*, c. 1911. McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, gift of F. Joy Peinhof-Wright.



*Le paysage (Brittany Landscape)*, 1911. Private collection.



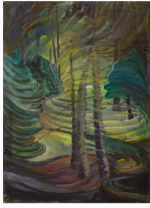
*Chrysanthemums*, c. 1900. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund, VAG 88.11.



*The Crazy Stair*, c. 1928-30, Audain Art Museum, Whistler.



*Cumshewa*, 1912. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



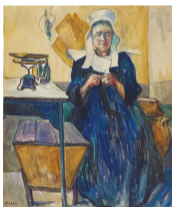
*Dancing Sunlight*, c. 1937. McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, purchase 1978.



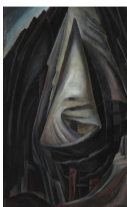
*Emily's Old Barn Studio*, c. 1891. British Columbia Archives, Victoria.



*Forest, British Columbia*, 1931-32. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust, VAG 42.3.9. Photograph by Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery.



*French Knitter (La Bretonne)*, 1911. Private collection.



*Grey*, 1929-30. Private collection.



*Grizzly Bear Totem, Angidah, Nass River*, c. 1930. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, gift of Mr. and Mrs. C.S. Band, Toronto, 1968.



*Church in Yuquot Village*, 1929. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, bequest of Charles S. Band, Toronto, 1970.





*Loggers' Culls*, 1935. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, gift of Miss I. Parkyn, VAG 39.1. Photograph by Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery.



*Lower Portion of D'Sonoqua Pole*, c. 1928. British Columbia Archives, Victoria.



*Odds and Ends*, 1939. Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Potlatch Figure (Mimquimlees)*, 1912. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



*Scorned as Timber, Beloved of the Sky*, 1935. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust, VAG 42.3.15. Photograph by Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery.



*Self-Portrait*, 1938-39. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, gift of Peter Bronfman, 1990.



*Shoreline*, 1936. McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, gift of Mrs. H.P. de Pencier.



*Sketchbook for Pause*, 1903, detail of page 3. McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, gift of Dr. Jack Parnell.



*Sketchbook for Pause*, 1903, detail of page 9. McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, gift of Dr. Jack Parnell.



*Sombreness Sunlit*, c. 1938-40. British Columbia Archives, Victoria.



*Sunshine and Tumult*, 1938-39. Art Gallery of Hamilton, bequest of H.S. Southam, CMG, LL.D, 1966. Photograph by Mike Lulich.



*A Study in Evolution*, 1902. British Columbia Archives, Victoria.



*Tanoo, Q.C.I.*, 1913. British Columbia Archives, Victoria.

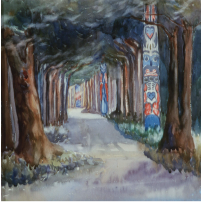


*Totem Mother, Kitwancool*, 1928. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust, VAG 42.3.20. Photograph by Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery.



*Totem Poles, Kitseukla*, 1912. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Founders' Fund, VAG 37.2. Photograph by Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery.





*Totem Walk at Sitka*, 1907. Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.



*Tree Trunk*, 1931. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust, VAG 42.3.2. Photograph by Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery.



*Trees in France*, c. 1911. McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, gift of Dr. Max Stern, Dominion Gallery, Montreal.



*Vanquished*, 1930. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust, VAG 42.3.6. Photograph by Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery.



*Yan, Q.C.I.*, 1912. Art Gallery of Hamilton, gift of Roy G. Cole, 1992. Photograph by Mike Lalich.



*War Canoes, Alert Bay*, 1912, Audain Art Museum, Whistler.



*Zunoqua of the Cat Village*, 1931. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust, VAG 42.3.21. Photograph by Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery.

### Credits for Photographs and Works by Other Artists



*Bathers*, n.d, by Harry Phelan Gibb. Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Lucy Carrington Wertheim, 1948.



*Boats by the Harbour Wall*, c. 1910, by Frances Hodgkins. Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki.



Carr and her caravan, "the Elephant," 1934, photograph by Mrs. S.F. Morley. British Columbia Archives Collection, Royal B.C. Museum Corporation, Victoria (D-03844).



The Carr family residence, c. 1869. British Columbia Archives Collection, Royal B.C. Museum Corporation, Victoria (C-03805).



Carr on a picnic with two women and her dog Billie, Queen Charlotte Islands, 1912. British Columbia Archives collection, Royal B.C. Museum Corporation, Victoria (F-07756).



Carr on horseback, Cariboo Regional District, B.C., c. 1909. Private collection.



Carr on the beach on Tanoo, 1912. British Columbia Archives Collection, Royal B.C. Museum Corporation, Victoria (F-00254).





Carr with her pets, in the garden of her home, Victoria, 1918. British Columbia Archives Collection, Royal B.C. Museum Corporation, Victoria (HP51747).



Church and grounds at Yuquot (Friendly Cove). British Columbia Archives Collection, Royal B.C. Museum Corporation, Victoria (A-06087).



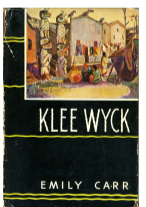
Cover of *The Book of Small* by Emily Carr (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1942).



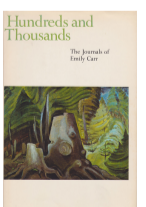
Cover of *Emily Carr: A Biography* by Maria Tippett (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1979).



Cover of the catalogue for *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern*, designed by Emily Carr. (National Gallery of Canada, 1927).



Cover of *Klee Wyck* by Emily Carr (Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1941).



Cover of *Hundreds and Thousands* by Emily Carr (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1966).



*Emily Carr and the Group of Seven*, c. 1927, by Arthur Lismer. McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, gift of The Robert and Signe McMichael Trust (2011.2.24).



*Emily Carr in Her Studio*, 1939, by Harold Mortimer-Lamb. Modern print from original negative. Vancouver Art Gallery, gift of Claudia Beck and Andrew Gruft.



*Totem Poles and Houses of the Kaigani Haidas at Old Kasaan, Prince of Wales Island, Alaska*, c. 1903, by Theodore J. Richardson. Library and Archives Canada.



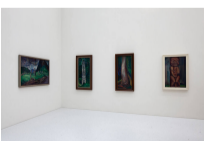
*Fieldwork: Excavation of the floor of a dwelling in a former Sto:lo nation village, Greenwood Island Hope, British Columbia, August 2003*. Anthony Graesch, Department of Anthropology, University of California at Los Angeles, working with Riley Lewis of the Sto:lo band, 2003, by Jeff Wall. Courtesy of the artist.



*Grey Tree, Lake George*, 1925, by Georgia O'Keeffe. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY.



Installation view of *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern* at the National Gallery of Canada in 1927. National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives. Photo © NGC.



Installation view of four of the seven paintings by Carr exhibited at Documenta 13, 2012. Photograph by Anders Sune Berg.





*Isolation Peak, Rocky Mountains*, 1930, by Lawren Harris. Hart House, University of Toronto.



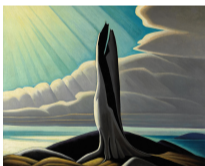
Lawren Harris and Ira Dilworth at the Vancouver Art Gallery, 1951. Vancouver Art Gallery.



Logging in British Columbia; clearcut, mill, and dock, photograph by H.W. Roozeboom. British Columbia Archives Collection, Royal B.C. Museum Corporation, Victoria (D-05018).



*Moving Forms*, 1930, by Mark Tobey. Seattle Art Museum, Eugene Fuller Memorial Collection.



*North Shore, Lake Superior*, 1926, by Lawren Harris. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Photo © NGC.



*People and Sails at Royan*, 1910, by John Duncan Fergusson. The Fergusson Gallery, Perth & Kinross Council, Scotland.



Regalia confiscated from Dan Cranmer's potlatch held in the village of 'Mimkwamlis in 1921. British Columbia Archives Collection, Royal B.C. Museum Corporation, Victoria.



Review of Exhibition of West Coast Art: Native and Modern, "Some Ladies Prefer Indians," by Muriel Brewster (Muriel Bruce), *Toronto Star Weekly*, January 21, 1928. Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau, Marius Barbeau fonds, file B290-2.1.001.



*Sitka + Surroundings—Totem Poles in Forest*, c. 1918, by Louis Shotridge. University of Pennsylvania Museum, 15178.



Still from the short film *Bone Wind Fire* (2011), directed by Jill Sharpe. National Film Board.



Students painting from life at the art school in St. Ives, c. 1905. British Columbia Archives Collection, Royal B.C. Museum Corporation, Victoria (I-68874).



Studio portrait of Carr and her sisters, c. 1895. British Columbia Archives Collection, Royal B.C. Museum Corporation, Victoria (A-02037).



Studio portrait of Carr's parents, c. 1876. British Columbia Archives Collection, Royal B.C. Museum Corporation, Victoria (A-09184).



Totem poles at Blunden Harbour, c. 1901, photograph by Dr. Charles Frederick Newcombe. British Columbia Archives collection, Royal B.C. Museum Corporation, Victoria (A-09132).



*Waterfall, Agawa River, Algoma*, by J.E.H. MacDonald. Art Gallery of Ontario, purchase, 1933.





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# EMILY CARR

Life & Work by Lisa Baldissera

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