

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 11, 2013



Image credit: Emily Carr, *Deep Forest*, ca. 1931, oil on canvas
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

Unparalleled Vigour and Power in Canadian Art: *Emily Carr: Deep Forest* opens December 21st at the Vancouver Art Gallery

Vancouver, BC – The Vancouver Art Gallery unveils its latest exhibition ***Emily Carr: Deep Forest*** on **December 21, 2013**. Home to the most important art collection of Emily Carr (1871-1945) in the world, the Vancouver Art Gallery is pleased to showcase over forty paintings of the West Coast forests by this internationally celebrated artist in a single exhibition.

“We are fortunate to have so many significant pieces from throughout Emily Carr’s career, but our permanent collection is particularly rich in her forest paintings from the 1930s,” said the Gallery’s Director Kathleen S. Bartels. “It is crucial to put these works under the spotlight. Emily Carr re-shaped how the coastal forest landscape was perceived in British Columbia with her artistic vision which was profoundly radical at that time.”

The forest paintings of Emily Carr, particularly those of the 1930s, are the most sustained and important depiction of the BC landscape in the first half of the twentieth century. “Just as she had with First Nations totemic art, Carr brought a new attention and focus to the forests of British Columbia at a time when few others were exploring the subject matter,” said Ian M. Thom, the Gallery’s Senior Curator - Historical. “The vigour and power of these works is without parallel in Canadian art.”

During the 1930s, while her fellow British Columbian artists thought of the forests as either untamed wilderness or simply a source of lumber, Carr saw the vitality of the natural world and seized the opportunity to express her vision. Far from feeling that the forests of the West Coast were a difficult subject matter, Carr was thrilled by the greens and browns found in the natural world. Carr’s remarkably personal and spiritual vision of the forest is seen in these works. Whether in the deep mystery of *Forest Interior*, *Black, Grey and White*, which glows with an inner light, the intensity of the greens seen in *Cedar* or the deep blue of the vaulting sky in *Above the Trees*, these images provided a new paradigm, a new way of seeing the landscape of the coastal rainforest.

In a passage from her 1934 journal, Carr wrote:

What do these forests make you feel? Their weight and density, their crowded orderliness. There is scarcely room for another tree and yet there is space around each. They are profoundly solemn yet upliftingly joyous. You can find everything in them that you look for, showing how absolutely full of truth, how full of reality the juice and essence of life are in them. They teem with life, growth, expansion...

Emily Carr is one of Canada's most renowned artists. Born in Victoria in 1871, Carr trained in San Francisco, London and France. Her first important body of work was executed in 1912 when, using the new sense of colour and paint handling she developed in France in 1911, she turned her attention to the totemic art of the First Nations of British Columbia. This work was not well received when it was first exhibited in 1913 and for many of the years that followed she rarely painted. In 1927 she was included in the *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern* at the National Gallery of Canada, where her work was widely praised. Encouraged by fellow artists, notably Lawren Harris, Carr returned to painting and continued to paint actively until 1942, when ill health curtailed her practice. In later life, she devoted more time to writing; her first book, *Klee Wick* won the Governor General's Award for Literature in 1941. She is best known for her attention to the totemic carvings of the First Nations people of British Columbia and the rain forests of Vancouver Island.

Emily Carr: Deep Forest is organized by the Vancouver Gallery and curated by Ian M. Thom, Senior Curator-Historical.

Visionary Partner:

Michael O'Brian Family Foundation

-30-

Images are available upon request.

MEDIA INFORMATION:

Debra Zhou, Communications Specialist
Direct: 604-662-4722 Mobile: 604-671-2358
dzhou@vanartgallery.bc.ca

About the Vancouver Art Gallery

The Vancouver Art Gallery is a not-for-profit organization supported by its members, individual donors, corporate funders, foundations, the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts. We thank everyone for their continuing generosity