

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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British Columbia's Best Take On the Province's Landscape in New Vancouver Art Gallery Exhibition

New painting by Gordon Smith presented along with stellar works by
Emily Carr, E.J. Hughes and Ann Kipling

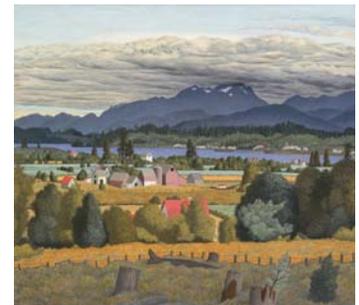
VANCOUVER, BC – The Vancouver Art Gallery's *Western Landscapes* presents stunning works by four of British Columbia's foremost landscape artists: **Emily Carr**, **E.J. Hughes**, **Ann Kipling** and **Gordon Smith**. On view from **March 7 to May 10, 2009**, the exhibition explores the artists' common passion for the province's landscape and their distinct approaches for expressing its dramatic wilderness and coastal environment.

"Viewing the work of these superb west coast artists together presents the opportunity to see British Columbia's spectacular natural setting through the eyes of some of the province's best," said Vancouver Art Gallery senior curator **Ian Thom**. "Four distinctly different visions are on display, each grappling with and giving meaning to our dramatic environment. It is a pleasure to be able to consider them all together to reflect on their profound insights into our natural world."

Consisting of 102 paintings, drawings and prints from the Gallery's permanent collection, *Western Landscapes* includes a 2009 work by West Vancouver painter **Gordon Smith**. For the past 60 years, Smith has experimented with landscape painting. Often working in abstract forms, he moves between controlled negotiations of colour and form and intuitive experiments with paint application. In his works from the 1950s, Smith often employed a grid pattern as the basis for experimentation. His works from the 1970s incorporate a more representational approach to the landscape. In more recent decades, the artist's work is marked by highly expressive brushwork and a rich modulation of colour.

Western Landscapes includes a large selection of **Emily Carr**'s oil-on-paper drawings from the 1930s. Never shown in such large number, the Gallery's collection of these works reflects the artist's direct engagement with British Columbia's landscape and reveals her deep affection for the land. With particular emphasis on the wilderness near Victoria, these works are among the finest achievements of her extensive career. A departure in both media and artistic purpose, Carr's oil-on-paper drawings represent some of artist's most lively expressions of woods, beaches, the sea and the sky.

The complex and methodical canvases of **E.J. Hughes** explore industry and human activity of British Columbia's beach and coastal regions. The artist employed a disciplined, multi-step method that often involved the production of detailed pencil studies before a final work on canvas was produced. The stages of this process, which are represented in *Western Landscapes*, give his paintings remarkable clarity in which no element is arbitrary or unconsidered. Although based in the realist tradition, Hughes' meticulous paintings often challenge reality with unnatural colours,



E. J. Hughes
Comox Valley, 1953
oil on canvas and composition board
91 x 101 cm
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund

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shapes and perspectives. Reflecting a deep and thoughtful affection for British Columbia's landscape, Hughes' paintings reflect his understanding of the land as an important backdrop for human activity.

Ann Kipling's powerful drawings and prints are created through sustained viewing of the land. Her images display a sense of immediacy, resulting from her response to the fleeting aspects of nature. Unlike Hughes, Kipling never produced preliminary drawings, preferring to work directly on paper and metal plates over the course of a single prolonged sitting. Despite her seemingly spontaneous gestures, the artist employed intensely disciplined methods resulting from thoughtful rendering of line and form. Her works included in **Western Landscapes** span a 30-year period from 1966 to 1996. The artist lives and continues her practice in Falkland, British Columbia

Born in 1919, **Gordon Smith** immigrated to Canada with his family in 1933 and currently resides in West Vancouver. His family settled in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where he attended the Winnipeg School of Art under L.L. Fitzgerald. Smith first exhibited with the Manitoba Society of Artists, after which he joined the Canadian infantry and served in Britain, Scotland and Sicily. On his return to Canada he was discharged from the army and began studies at the Vancouver Normal School and Vancouver School of Art, followed by advanced painting courses at the California School of Fine Arts, San Francisco and summer studies in art history at Harvard University in Boston.

Emily Carr (1871-1945) received early artistic training included studies at the California School of Design in San Francisco, followed by international study in London and Paris. Upon her return to Canada, Carr made her first trips to Haida villages along the Skeena River and on Haida Gwaii, where she discovered totemic subjects that would appear frequently in her canvases. Influenced by the French Fauvist painters, she rendered her images in bright colours and gestural strokes, breaking with the conventions of Canadian landscape painting. Carr passed away in 1945.

E.J. Hughes (1913-2007) was raised in Nanaimo and moved attended the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts, where he studied with Frederick Varley, Charles H. Scott and Jock Macdonald. After working and travelling as a Canadian war artist, a position that took him to England and Alaska, Hughes settled in Victoria, where he began producing the paintings for which he is now best known. He passed away in 2007.

Born in 1934, **Ann Kipling** attended the Vancouver School of Art and the Instituto San Miguel de Allende in Mexico before moving to Lynn Valley, British Columbia, in 1962. Motivated by a desire to use metal as a base for her drawings, she purchased a small etching press and experimented with drypoint and etching techniques. Three years later, she moved to Sunshine Falls on Indian Arm. In 1967 she moved again, to Richmond, where she produced her final prints before focusing exclusively on drawing. Kipling currently resides in Falkland, British Columbia.