

Media Release
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Glenbow Museum
WHERE THE WORLD MEETS THE WEST

Emily Carr Comes to Calgary for the First Time!

CALGARY, AB – Glenbow Museum is excited to host the **first ever exhibition of Emily Carr's work in Calgary**. *Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon* is a landmark exhibition featuring nearly 200 objects by Emily Carr (1871 – 1945) and others, including paintings, drawings, watercolours, caricatures, ceramics, sculpture and photographs. *Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon* takes a fresh look at the life and work of one of Canada's most beloved artists.

Glenbow Museum opens the exhibition to the public on **Saturday, October 27**. **Glenbow is the only prairie venue to host this show that was jointly organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Canada**. The first national touring retrospective exhibition of Carr's work in more than 30 years, it features artwork from the National Gallery, the Vancouver Art Gallery and other major institutions, along with works from private collections.

"I know from my late father that Emily Carr would ride the Canadian Pacific Railway third class on her trips to Ottawa in the 1920s and 30s, but she would never get off the train in Calgary," says Glenbow President and CEO Mike Robinson. "We can now welcome nearly 200 of her works to Glenbow and in her absence celebrate her magnificent gift to all Canadians. No one else has caught the aesthetic spirit of the coastal rainforest and its First Nations residents better than her – come visit and see for yourself."

The exhibit examines Carr's exhibition history and extraordinary life to reveal a complex woman of great talent and conviction. Divided into three sections, the exhibit begins with a partial reconstruction of an exhibition in which Carr's works were seen for the first time on the national stage. The second section of *Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon* reflects on the 1945 *Emily Carr Memorial Exhibition* held the year of her death. The final section looks at the artist from a post-modern viewpoint and explores how her persona and her work have been portrayed and interpreted over time.

"There is no artist in Canadian art that has been so studied, interpreted, and seen as Emily Carr. She is legendary. Yet, she continues to fascinate – to be both inspirational and provocative," says Glenbow Museum's Art Curator Monique Westra. "It seems the more we learn about this extraordinary and complex woman, the more there is to know. This exhibition is unique in presenting Emily Carr in a different way in order to highlight how she can be seen from different viewpoints. It is not a retrospective survey which charts the artist's development in a chronological order. Instead, it asks us to think

about how and why this particular woman – the artist and the writer – became a Canadian icon who now occupies the most revered position in our cultural pantheon."

In response to the Emily Carr exhibition, Calgary-based Artists Uta Hinrichs and Holly Schmidt have created an interactive art installation. The initiative is the result of a unique partnership with the University of Calgary, the Glenbow Museum, and SMART Technologies, and furthers Glenbow's commitment to engage its audiences through technology. The piece provides visitors the opportunity to learn more about the emerging practice of contemporary digital interactive art and is displayed on a large horizontal interactive by SMART Technologies.

Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon **Exhibit Backgrounder**

Emily Carr began serious study of art in her late teens after leaving home in Victoria, British Columbia to attend the California School of Design in San Francisco. Returning for a brief time, Carr soon left Victoria again to attend the Westminster School of Art and study in the studios of a number of British artists. But, it was her year in France between 1910 and 1911 studying Post-Impressionist art that Carr found most inspiring. In 1911, she returned to Vancouver with a commitment to document the First Nations cultures of British Columbia, a project she began in 1907, and produced a great number of watercolours and corresponding canvases in her new French style. These works met with mixed reception until 1927, when her paintings were included in the National Gallery's *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art Native and Modern*, where they were embraced by members of the famed Canadian painters, the Group of Seven. She returned to British Columbia to begin the most productive period of her career, venturing out into remote parts of coastal British Columbia and creating the inspired, powerful canvases for which she is best known.

Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon begins with a reconstruction of the seminal *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art Native and Modern*, which introduced Carr's work to the Canadian art establishment. This remounting of the landmark exhibition is presented in its original spirit, with contemporary works of the time mixed with historical objects of First Nations heritage. Carr's early paintings intermingle with Haida, Tsimshian and Kwakwaka'wakw masks, house posts, carvings and textiles, as well as a selection of works by artists Anne Savage, Paul Kane, Langdon Kihn, and Group of Seven members Edwin Holgate and A.Y. Jackson.

The next section of the exhibition considers Carr as a modernist painter, drawing inspiration from the 1945 *Emily Carr Memorial Exhibition* presented the year of her death at the Art Gallery of Toronto. Gathering a selection of Carr's finest works dating from 1910 to 1942, this section illustrates the artist's skillful use of colour and form, inviting viewers to explore her unique and expressive style. Abandoning her attempts to create straightforward portrayals of First Nations life and art, the exhibition reveals

Carr's exquisite endeavour to describe the fundamental nature of her subject. It is here that Carr's interests in primitivism and spirituality shine through in her paintings of First Nations sculpture and the dramatic landscape of coastal British Columbia.

The final section of *Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon* provides a unique perspective on the artist from a postmodern viewpoint. It introduces the many voices that have been brought to bear on Carr and her work, and examines Carr's self-construction through her caricatures, self-portraits and writings. This section also evaluates her relationship to the landscape and considers her role in the development of cultural tourism on the northwest coast.

Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon is organized jointly by the Vancouver Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Canada. The exhibition is curated by Vancouver Art Gallery senior curator, Ian Thom, National Gallery curator of Canadian art Charles Hill, and Johanne Lamoureux of the Université de Montréal. The exhibition is accompanied by a major full-colour book, including essays by curators, historians and critics, published by Douglas & McIntyre. (*Vancouver Art Gallery*)

***Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon* is on display at Glenbow Museum until January 27, 2008.**

Presented by:



Organized and circulated by the Vancouver Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Canada.

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