

JEFF WALL

&

RAPTURE AND RUIN:

Landscape Work from the Collection



Jeff Wall
Bad Goods, 1985
transparency in lightbox
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund

TEACHER'S STUDY GUIDE

FALL 2008

Vancouver
Artgallery

Vancouver Art Gallery

Teacher's Guide for School Programs

This tour includes works from two exhibitions running concurrently; *Jeff Wall* and *Rapture & Ruin: Landscape Work from the Collection*.

Vancouver-based artist Jeff Wall has received international acclaim for his compelling photographic works, which often take the form of large-scale luminous colour transparencies. Many historical and contemporary artists—both international and local—are showcased in *Rapture & Ruin*, an exhibition that looks at the tradition of the landscape in a wide range of work from the Vancouver Art Gallery's extensive collection. The works include photographs, paintings, prints and sculpture.

DEAR TEACHER:

This guide will assist you in preparing for your tour of *Jeff Wall* and *Rapture & Ruin*. It also provides follow-up activities to facilitate discussion after your Gallery visit. Engaging in the suggested activities before and after your visit will reinforce ideas generated by the tour and build continuity between the Gallery experience and your ongoing work in the classroom. Most activities require few materials and can be adapted easily to the age, grade level and needs of your students. Underlined words in this guide are defined in the Vocabulary section.

The tour of *Jeff Wall* and *Rapture & Ruin* has three main goals:

- To make connections among work in two different exhibitions that include a wide variety of historical and contemporary artworks,
- To consider diverse artistic traditions, disciplines and media,
- To explore individual artworks within historical, geographical, social and cultural contexts.

THE EXHIBITIONS:

Jeff Wall

Vancouver-based Jeff Wall has become internationally recognized for his large-scale illuminated colour transparencies. These are one-of-a-kind photographs presented in light-boxes normally associated with the world of advertising; they glow and have an enormous physical presence. Included in this exhibition are Wall's lesser-known images of children from his Children's Pavilion series, some of his more recent large black-and-white photographs, as well as the Vancouver Art Gallery's collection of Wall's more iconic staged images.

Wall's large-scale transparencies appear at first to be snapshots of everyday scenes. But it is immediately evident that they are carefully set up images that demand closer reflection to reveal the layers of meaning. All of his images contain an underlying surface tension; things are not as they seem. There is an air of theatricality in every clearly staged gesture, a sense that the action occupies a space that exists somewhere between the real and the imagined world.

Wall has said of his work: "It is not photography, cinema, painting, or propaganda—though it has strong associations with them all." He has called his work cinematography rather than photography. He creates his monumental works with the methods associated with filmmaking; they sometimes involve months of planning, rehearsals and shooting. He uses actors on location, elaborate sets and a crew of technicians.

Wall creates his huge, flawless transparencies by using digital technology to combine multiple images into one seamless image. His resulting photo-montages cannot be said to capture a single moment, as with conventional photography. Implicit in every image, for Wall, is not only the moment captured in the photograph; he is also interested in the moment before and the moment after. New technologies are also of prime importance in his recent return to black-and-white photography. His simultaneous use of traditional black-and-white photographs, which he makes with the help of up-to-the-moment technology to create large-scale images, exemplifies Wall's ongoing engagement with the intersection of the past and present. He says: "It took me a while to resolve some of the technical problems of working in black-and-white at the scale I wanted, and so I didn't actually make any large prints until 1996. Now I consider black-and-white to be an integral part of what I'm doing. It seems to me just a completion or expansion of what photography is. I like to see myself as a Modernist, in that I'm responding to what the medium really is."

The qualities that Wall is looking for in his works ultimately have more in common with painting than photography. He is making associations with the large paintings on the museum wall that demand our close attention. By creating a single image, instead of the repeated copies usually associated with the photograph, he is further deepening this connection to historical painting. Furthermore, the scale of his work addresses a public space; it is clearly not intended for intimate domestic settings.

Although connected to the Vancouver school, who are thought of as the founders of photo-conceptualism, Jeff Wall distances his work from the confines of conceptualism. While he critiques society and culture in his works, and embraces much of the technology associated with this group of artists, for Wall the art is not all about the idea. Wall creates an end product that is a single, fine, important and beautifully crafted object that is of prime

importance to his artistic practice. He says that an “artwork that has only one obvious meaning is either dull or propagandistic, and that good art must be beautiful to hold a viewer’s attention.”

This is the first solo exhibition of Jeff Wall’s work in Vancouver since 1990. It features the Gallery’s recent acquisitions, which have not been previously exhibited in Vancouver. Organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Grant Arnold, Audain Curator of British Columbia Art.

Rapture and Ruin: Landscape Work from the Collection

Landscape is a genre so familiar and accepted in Western art that it is interesting to note that it only emerged as an acceptable and distinct category during the eighteenth century. Until that point the landscape had merely served as a backdrop to more illustrious religious and historical themes. This exhibition examines some of the traditions that have shaped the idea of the landscape from the eighteenth century until the present. It explores two major streams still present in the genre today, one that presents nature as an idyllic, complete, perfect state, and one that critiques the environment at large through multiple lenses and perspectives.

This exhibition begins with landscapes as transcendental, euphoric paeans to nature—the *Rapture* in the exhibition’s title. We can find Lawren Harris’ idealized landscapes of the great Canadian wilderness exemplifying this glorification of nature. A more contemporary version of the idea of nature in a transcendent state can be seen in the glowing mountain sculpture by Anish Kapoor.

As we move through the exhibition, we find artists presenting a more dualistic or contradictory approach to nature—still resplendent in its natural glory, but uncertainty is evident. We see Emily Carr’s *Scorned as Timber, Beloved of the Sky* with its inherent critique of the destruction wreaked by the logging industry. We find Cézanne’s fragmented *Bathers*, who are simultaneously at one and at odds with the wilderness they inhabit. We also find Karin Bubas’ photograph *Woman in Fog*, with the woman placed and dressed somewhat at odds with the landscape, contemplating the vast wasteland ahead.

As we continue through to the *Ruin* end of the exhibition, we see a changing exploration of nature. This is a very different kind of landscape, featuring a more complex, problematic relationship to the environment, one that is replete with decay and destruction. We find Danny Singer’s vision of a small town main street from his *Streetscape* series—a vision of urban desolation and abandonment through an unreal lens created by a hundred exposures fused together to create one panoramic view. We also find Komar and Melamid’s cynical painting-by-numbers approach in *Canada’s Most Wanted Painting*.

Rapture & Ruin was organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Grant Arnold, Audain Curator of British Columbia Art.

ARTISTS' BACKGROUND

Karin Bubas (born 1976)

Karin Bubas, born in North Vancouver, is a photographer who lives and works in Vancouver. She studied at the Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design, graduating in 1998. She has exhibited extensively, both nationally and internationally. Her work has included images that appear to be either found or staged, but either way, the narrative retains its significance. Whether showing interior details of her grandparents' home, exterior shots of Victorian houses or nighttime glimpses around doors and windows, her attention to detail and her use of colour, light and texture remain consistent.

In her *Studies in Landscapes and Wardrobe* she continues to tell a story. She plays the role of director, presenting a series of images that could be scenes from a movie or a painting. Bubas has positioned her protagonists with their faces turned away from the camera, in carefully selected costumes that seem somewhat at odds with the world of nature they inhabit. She is asking us to question the figure's presence in the landscape, and consider the relationship between nature and culture.

Woman in Fog (2006) is from *Studies in Landscapes and Wardrobe*. It is a large colour photograph depicting a woman in a long blue coat, head turned toward the foggy, marshy terrain, with the heavy white sky taking up two-thirds of the image.

Emily Carr (1871–1945)

Emily Carr was born in Victoria, BC, in 1871, the same year that British Columbia officially became a province of Canada. Carr studied drawing and painting in California, England and France. In France she studied the bright colours and new painting techniques of the French Post-Impressionist artists of the time. On her return to British Columbia, she began travelling extensively along the BC coast to Alert Bay, the Queen Charlotte Islands (Haida Gwaii) and up the Skeena River, documenting First Nations art. This was an extremely unusual activity for a woman at this time. In these works, highly influenced by her French training, she used bright Fauvist colours and, often, broken brushwork. Her work was poorly received—she was in fact ridiculed for it.

In the 1930s, Carr began devoting most of her attention to landscape, particularly the forest, as her subject matter. These paintings express her strong identification with the British Columbia landscape. Greatly influenced by her exchange of letters with Lawren Harris, Carr sought to capture a sense of the spiritual presence that she experienced in nature. In the late 1930s, as her health worsened, Carr began to focus more energy on writing, and she produced an important series of books in which she told the many stories of her unconventional life. She died in 1945 in Victoria at the age of seventy-four.

The works in this exhibition include *Wood Interior* (1932–35), *Scorned as Timber, Beloved of the Sky* (1935) and *Grey* (c. 1929). The paintings exemplify her mature style, for which she has been recognized as an artist of major importance.

Paul Cézanne (1839–1906)

Paul Cézanne was born and raised in Provence, France. Against his father's wishes, he decided to become an artist and moved to Paris to achieve his goal. Along with many important Impressionist painters, he exhibited his work in the first Salon des Refuses, which

displayed work rejected by the Paris Salon. Although he exhibited with the Impressionists on numerous occasions, his work is considered to best exemplify Post-Impressionism. He is often described as the artist who formed a bridge between nineteenth-century Impressionism and twentieth-century Cubism. Cézanne said: “I want to make of Impressionism something solid and lasting like the art in the museums.”

From the 1870s until his death, Cézanne returned repeatedly to the theme of bathers in the landscape; he expressed that his goal was to find a way to fuse the figures into the landscape. The figures and the surrounding landscape occupy places of equal significance, forming a complex interplay between observed nature and the mastery of design, colour, composition and draftmanship.

Les Baigneurs (Grande Planche) 1898 is a lithograph showing four male bathers in a wooded landscape with mountains in the background. Through repetition of line and form, Cézanne has created an energetic surface, full of movement, merging the figures into the blustery landscape.

Hamish Fulton (born 1956)

Hamish Fulton was born in London and lives in Kent, England. One of an innovative new generation of British artists, he initially studied sculpture, and in 1969 turned to an artistic activity based on walking. He came to believe that art was not limited to the production of objects, but could be about “how you view life.” He began to go on short walks, and then to make art about the experience of walking. Since then, he has walked across four continents and twenty-four countries, through mountains, hills and forests, in places as diverse as Canada, France, Japan, Baffin Island, Peru, England and California.

He has been called a conceptual artist, a landscape artist, a sculptor and a photographer, but he prefers to call himself a Walking Artist. He has said, “If I do not walk, I cannot make a work of art,” and “my art form is the short journey, made by walking in the landscape.” The work that arises from these walks takes many forms, including photographs, maps, graphs, texts, publications and large-scale installations. Since the 1960s, his work has been published widely and shown in museums internationally.

Fulton’s photographs neither document the landscape nor provide a cohesive record of the process. They function more as signs or mementos of a human act. The accompanying texts do not attempt to give a complete description; they might give some selected objective details of place, time or distance covered, or more subjective details of the artist’s state of mind. *Rock Fall Echo Dust* (1989) is a large printed text showing the words in the title, while *Mountain Skyline* (1989) consists of a black line, tracing the skyline of mountains in Nepal.

Anish Kapoor (born 1954)

Anish Kapoor was born in Bombay (Mumbai), India. In 1972 he moved to England, where he attended art school; he still works and lives in London. He travels frequently to India, and says that his artistic influences come from both Western and Eastern cultures. He had his first solo exhibition in 1980 and has since exhibited across Europe, Asia and the USA, winning Britain’s prestigious Turner prize in 1991.

His sculptures and installations are frequently simple curved monochromatic forms. Materials have included quarried stone, coloured pigment, stainless steel and water. His recent work includes highly reflective surfaces that distort the surrounding space and increasingly blur the boundaries between art and architecture. His works are described as

displaying dualities such as light and dark, earth and sky, visible and invisible, substance and emptiness, male and female, body and mind.

His *Untitled* of 1994 is a glossy white construction made of thin jig sawed fiber board layers, which resemble a scale model of a hollow contoured mountain. At the age of twenty-five, Kapoor declared that he no longer wanted to make art—he wanted to make “belief.” We are asked to consider his work not just as physical entities or forms, but also as symbol and metaphor, and to contemplate his structure’s inner depths.

Vitaly Komar (born 1943) and **Alexander Melamid** (born 1945)

Komar and Melamid were born in Moscow, where they graduated from art school in 1967. Their first joint show took place in the same year. They said: “Even if only one of us creates some of the projects and works, we usually sign them together. We are not just an artist, we are a movement.” In 1973 they were expelled from the youth section of the Soviet Artist Union, accused of making subversive art (for “distortion of Soviet reality”). In 1974 they were arrested during a performance in a Moscow apartment. In 1977 they emigrated to Israel and the next year to New York, where they still live. They continued to work collaboratively and prolifically until 2003, using painting, performance, installation, photography, public sculpture, music and poetry.

From 1994 to 1997, Komar and Melamid worked on the series *People’s Choice*. Using surveys conducted by professional polling companies, they created the “most wanted” and “least wanted” paintings of countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and America. The results were published in their book, *Painting by Numbers: Komar & Melamid’s Scientific Guide to Art*.

In 1999, the Vancouver Art Gallery commissioned the pair to create *Canada’s Most Wanted* painting. The scale, composition and subject matter were determined by interpreting data from a national poll, and resulted in a landscape of blues (30%), greens (18%) and beige (8%). The end result highlights both the statistical accuracy and the aesthetic absurdity of “painting by numbers.”

Danny Singer (born 1945)

Danny Singer was born in Calgary and lives in Vancouver. He studied film at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, but soon switched over to work in photography. His work has been exhibited across Canada, the United States and Europe.

Since 1999, Singer has been working on his *Streetscapes* Series. He has spent much of the last decade driving through the back roads of Saskatchewan, Alberta and the American Great Plains, in search of the small prairie towns clustered around a single, linear main street. He observed that “there was no suburban sprawl to denote the town and the main street seemed to have all the elements that defined the town neatly presented within its length.” Singer constructs the resulting images by carefully “stitching together” multiple images digitally (sometimes as many as a hundred) to create a ten-foot-long seamless panorama. The resulting “floating perspective,” which approximates the sense of walking down a small-town main street, appears at once believable and impossible.

Brock (2004), one such panorama, lyrically depicts the main street of the small Saskatchewan town. The image is one of more than twenty meticulously constructed photographs from the ongoing *Streetscapes* series, each offering an uninterrupted detailed view of a disappearing world.

PRE- or POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: Life & Times Timeline (all grades)

Objective:

Students research some of the artists represented in this exhibition and their artistic practices, styles and influences. They make a class timeline showing the interconnections and overlap between the artists' lives, times and art.

Materials:

- ❑ the Internet: The artists can all be googled individually. These two sites are useful:
www.artcyclopedia.com
www.wikipedia.com
- ❑ artists' Biographies sheet (see next page)
- ❑ books on the artists and their times
- ❑ long, narrow sheet of paper (at least 5 ft x 1 ft)
- ❑ writing materials, coloured markers

Process:

1. Divide the students into eight groups and assign each group one of the artists from the Artists' Biographies sheet. Have them read the information.
2. Have students research the artist, expanding on each point on the Biographies sheet.
3. Have them collect some examples of the artist's landscape work.
4. Attach the large sheet of paper horizontally on a wall. Draw a timeline horizontally along the centre, from one end to the other, marking 1830 on the left and 2008 on the right.
5. As each group concludes their research, ask them to come up to the wall and enter information about their artist on the Timeline. Personal information can be written below the line, information about their art, above. Have them use different coloured markers for different types of information. The teacher can add in significant events, e.g. world wars, Canadian Confederation, the collapse of the Soviet Union...
6. Once each group has had a turn to add their artist to the Timeline, have a representative from each group talk to the class about their artist, using the Timeline and showing images by each artist.

Conclusion:

Discuss the artists with the class.

- Were artists working around the same time or from the same country producing similar kinds of work?
- Were the artists' materials, processes and ideas similar or different?
- Is there a continuum or relationship between the earlier and later artists?
- Did any of them appear to be influenced by the same themes or events?
- Which artists' work are students most drawn to? Why?

Artists' Biographies

Karen Bubas

- Born in 1976 in Vancouver, where she still lives
- Graduated from the Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design in 1998, has exhibited her photographs internationally
- Takes found and staged photographs, paying attention to detail, texture, light, colour
- *Woman in Fog* (2006) is from *Studies in Landscape and Wardrobe*, a series of staged images of women in the landscape

Emily Carr

- Lived in Victoria from 1871 to 1945
- Studied art in California, England and France, travelled up British Columbia's coast
- Known for her paintings of First Nations villages and the forests of BC; often ridiculed for her non-traditional use of bright colours and broken brushwork
- *Scorned as Timber, Beloved of the Sky* (1935), *Wood Interior* (1932–35) and *Grey* (c. 1929) are among Carr's best-known mature landscape paintings

Paul Cézanne

- Lived in France from 1839 to 1906
- Studied art and exhibited with Impressionist painters, became known as a Post-Impressionist who paved the way for future artists
- Returned to the theme of bathers in the landscape repetitively; his aim was to fuse the figure and the landscape
- *Les Baigneurs (Grande Planche)* 1898 is a lithograph that shows four male bathers in a wooded landscape

Hamish Fulton

- Born in London in 1956, lives in England
- Studied sculpture but turned to walking as his artistic activity, saying, "If I do not walk, I cannot make a work of art" and "My art form is the short journey, made by walking in the landscape"
- The work that comes out of his walking takes the form of installations, photographs, graphs, texts and publications
- *Rock Fall Echo Dust* (1989) and *Mountain Skyline* (1989) are visual records that include maps and text

Anish Kapoor

- Born in India in 1954, has lived in England since 1972
- Studied art in England, travels back to India frequently; says his artistic influences come from both Eastern and Western cultures
- Makes large-scale sculptures and installations out of stone, steel and coloured pigment that often take the shape of simple curved forms
- *Untitled* of 1994 is a glossy white construction made of thin fiber board layers resembling a scale model of a contoured hollow mountain

Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid

- Born in Russia in the mid-1940s and have lived in New York since 1978
- Met while studying art in Russia and worked together for the next thirty years, saying: “Even if only one of us creates some of the projects and works, we usually sign them together. We are not just an artist, we are a movement”
- Created the *People’s Choice* series by using information from surveys to paint the “most wanted” and “least wanted” paintings of eleven countries
- *Canada’s Most Wanted* painting is a landscape of blues (30%), greens (18%) and beige (8%)

Danny Singer

- Born in 1945 in Calgary, lives in Vancouver
- Studied film at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, soon switched to photography; his work has been exhibited internationally
- Since 1999 has been working on his *Streetscape* series, a series of ten-foot-long panoramic images created by “stitching together” multiple images
- *Brock* (2004) is one of a series of main streets of small prairie towns across Canada and the United States

Jeff Wall

- Born in 1946 in Vancouver, where he still lives
- Studied art in Vancouver and London, teaches university courses in Vancouver
- Internationally known for his large backlit colour transparencies, which are elaborately staged using film-like setups, including actors on location, a crew of technicians and post-shooting digital manipulation
- Work in the exhibition include *Children* (1988), *Bad Goods* (1984), *War Game* (2007) and *Outburst* (1989)

PRE- or POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: Working in the Open Air (primary students)

Objective:

Students follow a traditional landscape artist's work process by sketching outdoors and then, back in the classroom, creating a painting based on the sketch.

Discussion:

Emily Carr—amongst many other landscape artists—often created sketches for her landscapes out in nature, where she could study the colours and textures of the trees, foliage, lakes and sky, and observe the way light, wind and weather affected the subjects. Carr began sketching in charcoal, but later developed a technique of thinning out oil paints with gasoline, which enabled her to create quick, colourful sketches. She would take the sketches she had accumulated out in the field back into the studio, and there she would make oil paintings based on—but not exactly the same as—her sketches.

Emily Carr wrote the following passage in her book *Growing Pains*:

“Outdoor study was as different from studio study as eating is from drinking. Indoors we munched and chewed our subjects. Fingertips roamed objects feeling for bumps and depressions. We tested textures, observed contours. Sketching outdoors was a fluid process, half looking, half dreaming, awaiting invitation from the spirit of the subject to ‘come, meet me half way.’ Outdoor sketching was as much longing as labour. Atmosphere, space cannot be touched, bullied like the vegetables of still life or like the plaster casts. These space things asked to be felt not with fingertips but with one’s whole self.”

Materials:

For Part 1:

- ❑ drawing pads or sheets of paper on clipboards
- ❑ coloured pencils, crayons or pastels

For Part 2:

- ❑ thicker paper for painting
- ❑ paint—preferably liquid tempera or acrylic, but any available paint will work
- ❑ paintbrushes

Process:

Part 1:

1. Discuss Carr's two-step approach to her painting, and tell the students they are going to go outdoors and make a colour sketch as a precursor to a painting. Read them the above excerpt from *Growing Pains*.
2. Choose an outdoor area with some greenery and one or more trees. Have the students decide on a starting perspective; for example:
 - close up, with tree trunk or branches filling the page,
 - from a distance, including grass, trees and sky,
 - looking up, including the top of the tree and an expanse of sky,
 - a single tree.

3. Have them look closely at the greens and yellows of the leaves, the browns and greys of the trunk and branches, and the blues and greys of the sky. Remind them that landscape painters like Carr didn't use just one colour, but mixed and blended colours and shades to create rich, dense surfaces.
4. Have the students make a few colour sketches from different perspectives or angles, from close up and far away. Encourage them to fill the page with quick detail—broad strokes of colours, lines and shapes that include all the elements in their line of vision.

Part 2:

1. Back in the classroom, within a week after making the sketches, have the students look at their sketches and choose the one they would most like to make a painting from. What parts of their sketch do they want to leave in? What parts would they like to change? Does the composition feel balanced, or are there some areas they would like to add something to or remove something from? Would they like to combine elements from two drawings?
2. Have the students set up workspaces at their tables, where they can see their sketches and have access to paper, paint and brushes.
3. Have them paint their landscapes, encouraging them to fill the page, layering on and blending colours as they work.

Conclusion:

- Display the students' work: painting alongside sketch.
- Have them look at the work and talk about the similarities and differences in materials, location, colours, shapes and compositions.
- Discuss the process, how easy or hard it was to create the work, the differences between making the sketch and creating the painting.

PRE- or POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: Colour Combos (primary students)

Objective:

Students look at the ways in which the painters represented in this exhibition might choose colours. They learn to mix different shades and tones of green, and finally use these colours to create a forest painting.

Discussion – Part 1:

A brief review of colour theory will help students make informed decisions about using and understanding colour in painting. Students should not see colour as absolute; colours react and change in context and in contrast to one another.

- *Primary colours* cannot be mixed from other colours. They are blue, red and yellow.
- *Secondary colours* are mixed from two primaries. They are green, purple and orange.
- *Tertiary colours* are mixed from two colours adjacent to each other on the colour wheel (one primary and one secondary); e.g., yellow-green, green-blue.
- *Complementary colours* are opposite each other on the colour wheel. They share no common colours. For example, red (a primary) and its complementary green (made up of the primaries blue and yellow) provide maximum contrast and intensify each other.
- *Analogous colours* are three colours next to each other on the colour wheel, all of which contain a common primary (e.g., yellow, yellow-green and green). Analogous colours are used to create harmonious compositions with subtle contrasts.
- *Shades* are created by mixing colours with varying amounts of black.
- *Tints* are created by mixing colours with varying amounts of white.
- *Warm colours* are reds, oranges and yellows and tend to pop to the foreground of the picture plane.
- *Cool colours* are blues, greens and purples and tend to recede to the back of the picture plane.

Discussion – Part 2:

One of Carr's painting challenges was to learn to mix paint that could show the infinite variety of tones and shades of colours found in natural environments, such as the sky, the sea or a forest interior. In this activity, students experiment with mixing colours to find out how many greens they can create to make their own forest scene come alive.

Materials:

- ❑ 2 sheets of paper per student
- ❑ blue, yellow, white, black and red paint (tempera, acrylic or watercolour)
- ❑ paintbrushes
- ❑ magazine pages, pieces of fabric, scissors and glue

An alternative to paint: Have students collect pages from magazines containing different shades of green in order to create a collage of a forest interior.

Process:

Review colour theory in as much detail as necessary.

1. Read these quotations from Cezanne and Carr to the class:
Paul Cezanne wrote, "Shadow is a colour as light is, but less brilliant; light and shadow are only the relation of two tones."
Emily Carr wrote in her journal: "Sketching in the big woods is wonderful... Everything is green. Everything is waiting and still. Slowly things begin to move, to slip into their places. Groups and masses and lines tie themselves together. Colours you had not noticed come out, timidly or boldly. In and out, in and out your eye passes. Nothing is crowded; there is living space for all. Air moves between each leaf. Sunlight plays and dances. Nothing is still now. Life is sweeping through the spaces. Everything is alive. The silence is full of sound. The green is full of colour. Light and dark chase each other."
2. Discuss.
3. Have students mix small amounts of blue and yellow paint, and experiment by adding to their greens different amounts of black (to create shades) and white (to create tints) directly on the paper. Remind students to clean the paintbrush between colours.
4. How many greens are they able to make? Have the students make up a name for each colour and use a pencil to label the colours on the paper.
4. Have students create a close-up forest landscape using the many greens they discovered. They can also add cut-up magazine pages and bits of fabric to create a variety of greens and texture.
5. Have students use small amounts of red to highlight, outline or emphasize a part of their painting.
6. Have students use small amounts of blue to highlight, outline or emphasize a part of their painting.

Conclusion:

- Display and talk about the students' work.
- Discuss the effects of the complementary colour (red) and analogous colours (blues, greens and yellows) in bringing attention to different areas of their paintings.

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: Seeing Photographically (all levels)

This three-part activity can be completed in sections or as a single unit.

Objectives:

Students consider **framing**, **focus** and **lighting** in order to analyze and construct photographs.

Discussion:

Photographers make many choices when setting up their compositions. They might, like Karen Bubas, use natural outside **lighting**, or, like Jeff Wall, elaborate movie-like, artificially lit sets. However, they all have to consider the quality of the light on their subjects, and what overall effect they want to achieve. The choice to highlight certain parts of the composition, to intensify or eliminate shadows, to allow direct or diffused light, is fundamental to creating any image.

How the photograph is **framed**—what the perimeters of the final image are—will affect our reading of the photograph. What is or is not included in the final frame needs to be carefully selected in order to create a tight composition.

Photographers might adjust the **focus** in an image—or part of an image—to change the overall look or to achieve the effect they want.

Materials:

- ❑ paper and scissors to make a viewfinder
- ❑ assorted magazines
- ❑ cameras—one or more from home or school, or disposable; digital or print film. If possible, one camera per group; alternatively, groups can share

Process:

Part 1:

Have the students work in pairs with some magazines.

1. **Looking at Framing:** Have students make a viewfinder by cutting a rectangle (about 3x4") out of the centre of a larger sheet of paper. Have them use this viewfinder to examine various magazine images, looking first at the whole image, then at parts of it through the viewfinder, isolating or connecting different parts of the image. Ask them to consider the following:
 - What do you see through the viewfinder?
 - How does the image change as you move the viewfinder around the image?
 - What new connections do you find?
 - What attracts your attention? Why?
2. Have students look closely at one particular image through the viewfinder. How can you use the viewfinder to carefully reframe the image? Look especially at the edges of the composition.
What do you choose to focus on or edit out? Why?
3. **Looking at Lighting:** Ask students to look at the lighting in different images and consider the effect of the lighting on the composition.
Look at images with the following:
 - natural outdoor lighting

- natural and/or artificial indoor lighting
 - strong shadows
 - light coming from one direction
 - back lighting
4. **Looking at Focus:** Ask students to look at the ways a change in focus can affect a photograph.
- Look for images with:
- the background, the foreground or the midground out of focus
 - everything in sharp focus
 - everything in soft focus
- Why do you think the photographer(s) made these choices in focus?

Part 2:

1. Divide students into groups, preferably with one camera per group. Ask students to go outdoors and choose scenes containing some natural elements (e.g. trees, grass) to photograph in the following ways:
 - **Changing the framing:** from closer, from farther away, including more/less background—or foreground—elements.
 - **Changing the lighting:** in the shade, in the sun, backlit, with/without a flash.
 - **Changing the focus** (if camera allows): focus on something close up with the background out of focus. Then try to focus on something farther away with an object out of focus in the foreground, etc.

Part 3:

1. Either have some images printed for each group, or have students to look at their digital images. Some questions for discussion:
 - What do you notice when the **framing** changes?
 - Is there too much/too little background?
 - Are the surrounding architectural lines/edges straight? Does it matter?
 - What kind of **lighting** was used?
 - Which lighting is most successful? Why?
 - What do you notice about the differently **focused** images? Which parts are sharply focused, softly focused, out of focus?
2. Have each group choose the photograph that they consider to be the most successful and have them discuss why.
3. Have the students show their group's chosen photograph to the rest of the class, and explain what they felt was successful about it.

Conclusion:

Have the students discuss what they learned about composing a photograph, and ask them to isolate the qualities of a successfully framed photograph.

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: Multiple Perspectives (all grades)

Objective:

Students look at ways of constructing a non-realistic or imaginary landscape as a way to think about multiple perspectives.

Discussion:

Artists as far back as Cézanne broke down the picture plane, flattening and rearranging space through use of shape, colour and brushstroke, so that we might find space compressed and flattened, or see multiple viewpoints simultaneously.

Many artists working in photography today, including Danny Singer and Jeff Wall, use digital technology to construct artificial landscapes. We read the resulting images as if they are real spaces, but on closer inspection we find that they cannot truly exist in space or time.

David Hockney—whose work is NOT included in this exhibition—is an interesting artist for students to use as a reference for this activity; he created collages using multiple overlapping photographs in the pre-digital era. Look at www.hockneypictures.com. (Click on works, photos, then photographic collages.)

Materials:

- art materials, which could include magazines, cameras, fabric, clay, paint...
- paper, markers, scissors, glue
- the Internet:

<http://www.dannysinger.net>

Other artists like Cézanne, Jeff Wall, Karen Bubas and David Hockney can be googled individually.

Process:

1. Have the class look at some images from Danny Singer's *Streetscape* series. (Click on Works on Singer's website, choose Canadian Towns, summer or winter; each image can be enlarged.) Some of these ten-foot-long photographs include 100 separate shots that he has "stitched together" digitally.
2. Ask students what tells them that this is not one whole or complete image (clues: perspective, straight lines, focus).
3. Ask students to think of ways to construct a landscape containing particular elements (e.g., a mountain, a tree and the sea) from simultaneous multiple viewpoints. Think:
 - **Literally** : Artists ranging from Cézanne to Singer have played with perspective and planes, flattening, stretching and changing the natural forms.
 - **Conceptually**: Hamish Fulton has made graphs, words and photographs to present the ideas contained in what he considers his real art form—his long walks.
 - **Materially**: Anish Kapoor has used various materials to create sculptures that transcend the literal world, but represent the physical world in shapes, forms and colours.
4. In small groups, ask students to decide how they will create an imaginary non-literal landscape with multiple perspectives, containing the same three elements (mountain, tree and sea).
 - Will it be two- or three-dimensional?
 - Will it contain words or text or diagrams?

- What materials will they use? (magazines to cut and collage, photographs joined together, clay, fabric, a combination...)
5. Have them collect their materials and construct their landscape.
 6. Display the work.

Conclusion:

Have the class discuss the ideas presented by the varying perspectives and materials.

- What choices did they make about space, and perspective?
- Do the materials clarify the idea? How?
- Do the viewers perceive the space in the way that the artist intended?

Follow-up:

During the tour, have students look for the different ways the artists have used their ideas and materials to construct their landscapes.

VOCABULARY

abstract: a style of art that can be thought of in two ways:

- a. the artist begins with a recognizable subject and alters, distorts, manipulates or simplifies elements of it;
- b. the artist creates purely abstract forms that are unrecognizable and have no direct reference to external reality (also called non-representational art).

conceptual art: art in which the ideas behind the creation of the work were more significant than the end product. During the 1960s and '70s, conceptual artists rejected the idea of the unique, precious art object and focused on intellectual explorations into artistic practice.

contemporary: created in the last thirty years. Most contemporary artists are living artists.

Fauvism: a name (meaning “wild beasts”) for an art movement that originated in France at the end of the nineteenth century. Fauvists were concerned with creating fresh, spontaneous looking images, and used brilliant colours in an arbitrary and decorative way.

Impressionism: a late nineteenth-century art movement that focused on everyday subject matter, and sought to capture ephemeral qualities of light and specific moments of time. Paintings included visible brushstrokes and often showed unusual visual angles.

installation: art that is created from a wide range of materials and installed in a specific environment. An installation may be temporary or permanent. The term came into wide use in the 1970s, and many installation works were conceptual.

landscape: artwork in which the subject is a view of the exterior physical world. Traditionally, landscapes have been paintings or drawings depicting natural scenes and are often concerned with light, space and setting.

Modern: a historical period of art practice—from 1850 to 1970—during which approaches to art embraced new ideas in science, political thought and many other areas. The Modernists rejected the restrictions of past art traditions and stressed innovation over all other criteria.

narrative: a story or representation of events taking place over time.

performance art: works in any of a variety of media that are performed before a live audience. The performance itself, rather than a specific object, constitutes the artwork. Documentation is often an important part of the performance.

photo-conceptualism: an artistic movement that emerged in Vancouver in the 1960s and '70s. The work is characterized by large-format photographic prints. This movement explored the ideas behind the photograph, appropriate subject matter, the assumed “truth” of photography and the nature of photography as fine art versus commercial art.

Post-Impressionism: a term that refers to the art that followed Impressionism, rather than a cohesive artistic style or movement. For the most part, the artists used vivid colours, thick paint, strong brushstrokes and everyday subject matter. Some included distortions and arbitrary colour, and emphasized geometric forms.

RESOURCES

Print:

- Arnold, Grant. *Jeff Wall*. Vancouver Art Gallery Collection, 2008.
- Carr, Emily. *Beloved Land: The World of Emily Carr*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1996.
- Hill, Charles C., Johanne Lamoureux, Ian M. Thom, et al. *Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre/National Gallery of Canada/Vancouver Art Gallery, 2006.
- Krumrine, Mary Louise. *Paul Cézanne: The Bathers*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990.
- Luckyj, Natalie. *Visions and Victories: Ten Canadian Women Artists 1914–1945*. London ON: London Regional Art Gallery, 1983.
- Murray, Joan. *Canadian Art in the Twentieth Century*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1999.
- Shadbolt, Doris, ed. *The Emily Carr Omnibus*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1993.
Includes *Klee Wyck, The Book of Small, The House of All Sorts, Growing Pains, Pause, The Heart of a Peacock and Hundreds and Thousands*.
- Smith, Annie. *Getting Into Art History*. Toronto: Barn Press, 1993.
- Wall, Jeff. *Jeff Wall: Selected Essays and Interviews*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2007.
- Wells, Liz, ed. *Photography: A Critical Introduction*. New York/London: Routledge, 2000.
- Wypijewski, JoAnn, ed. *Painting by Numbers: Komar & Melamid's Scientific Guide to Art*. New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1997.

Video:

- Force Four Productions. *A Woman of All Sorts*. CBC Television, 1997.

BCTF Teaching Aids:

- Bosello, Tony. *PHOTOGRAPHY: A Series of Supplementary Lessons for the Secondary Teacher*. BCTF Lesson Aid #9654, 1998.
Series of activities on depth of field, shutter speed, viewpoint, elements of design, principles of design, composition, lighting, assessment of negatives, analysis of photographs, framing, special effects and photojournalism.
- Clark, Karin. *Long Ago in Victoria* (K–2). BCTF Teaching Aid 3107, 1996.
- Gage, Susan. *TRFic! A Temperate Rainforest Teacher's Guidebook* (intermediate), BCTF Teaching Aid 9533, 1998.

Online:

www.artcyclopedia.com

Online art encyclopedia, listing international artists, and museums and galleries with collections of their work.

www.wikipedia.com

Online dictionary and encyclopedia, created collaboratively by laypeople.

<http://cwahi.concordia.ca/>

Canadian Women Artists History Initiative is a newly founded collaborative that brings resources and researchers together to enhance scholarship on historical women artists in Canada.

http://cybermuseum.gallery.ca/cybermuseum/teachers/plans/intro_e.jsp?lessonid=42

Series of lesson plans examining the documentary functions of photography.

Additional information can be found by Googling individual artists.