

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 7, 2007

Vancouver Art Gallery to Launch Most Comprehensive Website Devoted to a Canadian Artist – Emily Carr

VANCOUVER, BC — On **May 11, 2007**, the **Vancouver Art Gallery** will launch the most extensive online presence focused on a Canadian artist with a new website dedicated to British Columbia painter **Emily Carr**. The launch of the site, to be linked from the Gallery's webpage at www.vanartgallery.bc.ca, will coincide with the opening of the exhibition **Emily Carr and the Group of Seven**, on view at the Gallery **May 12 to April 6, 2008**.

Resulting from an extremely successful collaboration between the Vancouver Art Gallery and the University of British Columbia's Department of Computer Science, web designers 7th Floor Media, and the British Columbia Archives, the website brings together images and information on nearly 1,700 artworks by Carr from more than 30 partner institutions and private collections. The most comprehensive and authoritative source of information on the artist, this online exhibit was developed in partnership with the Virtual Museum of Canada (VMC) at virtualmuseum.ca, an initiative of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

"We are so pleased to be able to use the Internet to share this great Canadian artist with the world," said Ian Thom, senior curator at the Vancouver Art Gallery and a central advisor on the project. "As the holder of the world's most significant collection of Carr's work, the Gallery has a long tradition of exhibiting her art and contributing to the scholarship surrounding it. With this website we are taking a major step forward by making the entire breadth of the artist's work available with the click of a mouse."

Covering the entirety of her creative practice, including paintings, drawings, textiles, pottery, cartoons and writing, the Carr website brings together an extensive database of the artist's work that is searchable in an extremely innovative way. Using an intuitive search engine created by Nando de Freitas, an associate professor in UBC's Department of Computer Science, and UBC PhD student Eric Brochu, the website generates search results that strive to enhance learning. While delivering results to such queries as date, medium, subject matter and other criteria, the website also attempts to group results to reveal unexpected patterns. In this way, the website creates new associations between works that may not immediately occur to the user, increasing the opportunities for learning and for new ideas to emerge.

"We designed the search capacity of the website to provide people with an innovative tool for considering art," said de Freitas. "By allowing the user to visualize Carr's work in various combinations, the site offers the opportunity for users to experience Carr's work in a dynamic fashion unavailable in books or exhibitions. We hope this will further scholarship about the artist, while giving access to Carr's work to new and diverse audiences."

The website strives to make connections between Carr's work and the world in which she lived by including historical photos of the places she painted, relevant quotes from Carr's published writing, and preliminary sketches alongside images of her finished paintings. The site, available in English and French, also includes a complete biography of Carr and texts about her literary contributions, legacy and influence, as well as the Vancouver Art Gallery's collection and the Emily Carr Trust. Also

included is a complete resource section for teachers, incorporating teachers' guides with numerous lesson plans for high school, elementary and ESL classes. The website will be available for Gallery-goers to explore while visiting *Emily Carr and the Group of Seven* with a computer kiosk in the exhibition space.

The Emily Carr website brings together the world's two most significant collections of the artist's work – the Vancouver Art Gallery's collection, which includes the largest number of canvases, and the British Columbia Archives' collection, which possesses the most extensive collection of sketchbooks and works on paper. The project and funding from CHIN represented an opportunity to greatly enrich the quality of documentation for both collections, allowing for the updating and digitization of all records and the photography of the entire BC Archives Carr collection. The project also allowed Ian Thom, a leading expert on Carr, to evaluate records from various collections for the first time and improve existing scholarship. The website will be featured for five years, during which time it is expected the site will continue to grow as new works are discovered and added.

The Virtual Museum of Canada (VMC), an initiative of the Department of Canadian Heritage, was established in partnership with over 1,200 Canadian heritage institutions. Virtualmuseum.ca is a unique portal to the countless stories and treasures held in trust by Canada's museums, and lies at the core of the Government of Canada's strategy to nurture and promote Canada's culture online.

-30-

For advance media access of the Emily Carr website please contact:

Andrew Riley, Public Relations Manager, 604-662-4722,
ariley@vanartgallery.bc.ca

Dana Sullivant, Director of Marketing and Communications, 604-662-4721
dsullivant@vanartgallery.bc.ca

