Vancouver Artgallery

LINEAGES AND LAND BASES

FINAL DIDACTICS

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lineages and land bases

The artworks gathered for this exhibition address differing understandings of the self and personhood in relation to nature, a concept that is culturally, historically and linguistically informed.

Sḵwx̱wú7mesh sníchim (the Squamish language) has no word for nature, although it has many words that relate to the land and water. Within this worldview, people are intimately bound to non-human entities, such as plants, rocks, animals or places, locating subjectivity well beyond humans. In contrast, the modern Euro-Canadian distinction between nature and culture provided the foundation, in the early 20th century, for the development of a national art and identity in Canada. Paintings of vast empty landscapes premised an idea of wilderness that effectively erased Indigenous presence from the representation of nature at the same time that these communities were being displaced from their homelands.

lineages and land bases **presents works from the Vancouver Art Gallery's permanent collection by artists who have challenged the nature-culture divide, seeking new ways to conceptualize and represent their relation to the world around them while grappling with the troubled inheritance of settler colonialism. At the centre of the exhibition is a case study that assesses the intersections between the basketry of Sewi̱nchelwet (Sophie Frank) (1872–1939), a woman from the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and the late landscape paintings of Emily Carr (1871–1945). The two women were close contemporaries and friends for 33 years, a relationship also shaped by the profound inequalities of their time. The comparison of these two distinct, yet interconnected, perspectives both prefigures and extends the critique of the separation of nature and culture seen elsewhere in the exhibition, urging us to think anew about the meaning of self and its ties to the non-human world.**

Organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Tarah Hogue, Senior Curatorial Fellow, Indigenous Art, with Sḵwx̱wú7mesh advisors Chief Bill Williams and Tracy Williams

Art historians John O'Brian and Peter White argue that landscape functions "as a powerful political unifier. It has helped to consolidate the drive toward national sovereignty, as well as to contain prior Aboriginal claims to land. Through the fiction of wilderness, a fiction that should not be confused with nature's wild unpredictability or with a condition unique to Canada, 'empty' land was declared to be there for the taking—and then it was mythologized" (2007).

The artworks in this room all include or allude to a human presence in the landscape and provoke questions surrounding the conventions of landscape art and its use in an essentialized Canadian visual identity. The exclusions produced by the "fiction of wilderness" are here contrasted with artistic assertions of Indigenous sovereignty and explorations of citizenship and belonging for non-European communities, confronting the way in which whiteness is naturalized alongside specific imaging of the landscape.

The artworks presented here also engage the figure in the landscape as part of a larger effort to understand who we are as individuals within a larger community, a community that includes non-human persons. Trees feature prominently in many of the works on display as figures in their own right—as signifiers of shelter or displacement, refuge or exile, and as markers of enduring cultural and spiritual relations with the land.

In works that fuse personal memory with larger histories, artists in this section of the exhibition search for ways of thinking about our entanglements with systems of exchange, knowledge, belief and culture related to the land. Artists like Patricia Deadman and Ed Pien connect their personal experiences of place to questions of belonging and representation, while Lui Shou Kwan, Arnold Shives and Julie Duschenes draw from nature to conjure symbolic representations of the psyche.

Often emanating melancholy and absence, these artists' works share a rhizomatic framework for engaging and understanding the relational interface between ourselves and the natural world. Describing her works as "nervous systems," artist Landon Mackenzie points to the interconnectivity she and others seek to access through their artistic production. Marian Penner Bancroft's graphite rubbings from the surface of her house paired with photographs of a Stó:lō transformer rock—ancestors believed to have once walked the earth, setting it right by changing people into plants, animals, rivers and geological formations, thus binding them to non-human entities and creating a mutual obligation of care—attempt a more ethical engagement with the lineages, cultures and lands that surround her home.

This alcove includes audio recordings of three artists in the exhibition, who discuss personal, emotional, affective and consciousness-based explorations of land.

The graphic in this alcove is an interpretation of the river system of the Lower Fraser Valley, including Vancouver, made by the Vancouver Art Gallery Design Department

The artworks in *lineages and land bases* urge us to rethink our relation to the world around us by looking to the ways in which we are complexly entangled with it. Artists in the exhibition consider alternate modes to capitalist development and resource extraction, which continue to dominate relations with the environment, choosing instead to draw upon forms of circulation and exchange connected to the generative processes and temporality of the land itself. In so doing, they point to ideas of personhood as being located well beyond humankind and ask us to contend with nature on its own terms.

For example, seen here is *Cetology* (2002), by Brian Jungen, who often reworks prefabricated commodities, such as these white plastic monobloc chairs, into sculptures that address perceptions of First Nations cultures in relation to Western art history, the global economy and the art object. Representing a bowhead whale, a large baleen whale from the Arctic that has a massive bow-shaped lower jaw, *Cetology* brings to mind museum display and categorization as well as alludes to captive whales in aquariums and the petroleum plastic by-products that pollute their natural environments. Using the ready-made materials of mass production, this work highlights the spectacle and problematics of capitalist tourism and throwaway culture in tandem with the whaling industry. In the Pacific Northwest, from which Jungen draws much of his inspiration, whales remain an integral part of Indigenous life. In this whale sculpture made of disposable consumer plastics, Jungen has created an enduring tribute to these giants of the deep and their intricate dance with humanity.

In 1906, Sewi̲nchelwet (Sophie Frank) (1872–1939), a woman from the Sḵwx̱ wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), knocked on the door of Emily Carr's (1871–1945) Vancouver home, offering her baskets for barter or sale as a modest livelihood within the city's burgeoning settler economy. Both Carr and Frank were born and raised in this region, they both had creative practices tied to its lands and waters and they were close contemporaries, yet their realities and their interactions with each other were profoundly shaped by the inequalities produced by colonialism.

This gallery's reflection on the 33-year friendship between Carr and Frank arises from Canadian art historian Kristina Huneault's research on ideas of personhood and subjectivity that are related to the natural world, and embedded within the materials and processes of basketry and painting. Huneault's writing points to the differences between, on the one hand, the material products of looking at nature and, on the other, those that result from working with it—a comparison exemplified in the work of Carr and Frank. Carr's paintings are a product of looking and are meant to be viewed—the visual being the most distancing of senses—whereas baskets, which are products of sensuous engagement between maker and material, are both aesthetic and utilitarian.

However, Huneault also suggests that Carr's and Frank's aesthetic concerns share certain principles, which are best understood through their respective worldviews:

> Carr's late landscape paintings, particularly the ones made after 1934, are pictorial statements of her faith that everything in the world was "all connected up." Her quest as a painter was to capture that intertwining… Her words are closely echoed by the teachings of Salish makers: "we have learned through experience that everything is interconnected"… Such beliefs, shared across cultures and down through generations, constitute a philosophical bedrock that links Carr's painting to Salish basketry even as cultural differences have meant that the principle of connection has been understood and materialized quite differently across aesthetic practices.
>
> —*I'm Not Myself at All: Woman, Art, and Subjectivity in Canada,* 2018

From left to right:

P'elawk'wia (Margaret Baker)
goblet shaped coiled cedar root basket, n.d.

cedar, cherry bark
Collection of the North Vancouver Museum & Archives

Emily Carr

Not Titled, 1924–30

Not Titled, 1924–30

Not Titled, 1924–30

clay, paint
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Bequest of Alice Carr

VAG 51.27, 6, 20, .21 a-b

In 1913, Emily Carr mounted an exhibition in Vancouver of her paintings with Indigenous subject matter, which failed to garner patrons or support. She decided to return to Victoria and gave up painting for the next thirteen years. Struggling to earn a living, she produced pottery and hooked rugs that appropriated First Nations iconography for the tourist market. In her 1946 autobiography, *Growing Pains*, Carr wrote, "I hated myself for prostituting Indian Art; our Indians did not 'pot,' their designs were not intended to ornament clay—but I did keep the Indian design pure."

Baskets served as vital trade commodities between Indigenous Peoples before and following contact with Europeans and were used to cook, store and transport food. For Sewin_chelwet (Sophie Frank) and her contemporaries, however, baskets became a primary source of income within the burgeoning settler economy. To appeal to a Euro-Canadian clientele, basket makers innovated new motifs and forms, such as the goblet seen here by P'elawk'wia (Margaret Baker). However, the encroachment of settlement and industry on Indigenous territories made it increasingly difficult to source materials. Far from bringing her into the kind of rapturous communion with nature that Carr sought, the new circumstances of Sk_wx_wú7mesh (Squamish) existence drew Frank further from the land: "I buy all our food… I have not been working in my garden for I am in Vancouver every day trying to sell baskets."

From left to right:

Chucháwlut (Mary Anne August)

Coiled cedar root basket with fitted lid, n.d.

cedar root, cherry bark, grass
Collection of the North Vancouver Museum & Archives

Sewi̲nchelwet (Sophie Frank)

Coiled storage basket, n.d.

cedar root, sapling wood, wild cherry bark
Collection of Richard Daly and Liv Mjelde

Sut'elut (Monica Williams)

Coiled storage basket, n.d.

cedar root, sapling wood, wild cherry bark, grass, string
Private Collection

The baskets on display are made by women from the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), including Sewi̲nchelwet (Sophie Frank) and her younger sister Sut'elut (Monica Williams). Here they are brought into dialogue with Emily Carr's late landscapes, specifically those made in oil on paper after 1934. Art historian Kristina Huneault suggests that "there is a sense in which the better-known artist's heavily metaphorical depictions of trees find a literal counterpart in the basket's coiled arboreal fibres."

Frank was both technically adept and individually creative in her work. In this she was not alone: the number of skilled Sḵwx̱wú7mesh weavers working in the early 20th century was extensive, and yet their names and practices are largely unrecorded within the art history written by institutions and collectors. These weavers include Chucháwlut (Mary Anne August, c. 1881–c. 1971), P'elawk'wia (Margaret Baker, c. 1885–1972), Kw'exiliya (Madeline Deighton, c. 1858–1948), Skwétsiya or Hak̲stn (Harriet Johnny, c. 1843–1940), Sut'elut (Monica Williams, c. 1875–1972), Swenámiya (Mary Anne Khatsahlano, c. 1881–1970), Sxwelhcháliya (Mary Anne John, c. 1845/50–c. 1942), Annie Jack (c. 1886–1973), Molly John (c. 1880–1955), Agatha Moody (c. 1887–1967) and Mary Natrall (d. 1959).

Emily Carr

Old Village of Gwayusdoms (Gwa'yasdams), 1912

oil on paperboard
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Emily Carr Trust

VAG 42.3.52

In 1912, Emily Carr travelled to several Northwest Coast islands to paint in Haida, Kwakwa̲ka̲'wakw and Gitxsan villages, intent on documenting Indigenous cultural material in "its original environment." She was by no means an early explorer—contact with European traders and ethnographers began in the mid-1700s. Based on Carr's inscription, this image is believed to depict a cedar plank house on Gwa'yasdams (Gilford Island) belonging to Chief Sewid, who continued to Potlatch even though it had been prohibited by federal law since 1881. Atop its entrance is Sisiutl, a transformative creature of great symbolic power. As a crest figure, Sisiutl connects lineages to land bases, making literal and symbolic reference to territorial rights.

In 1858, smallpox had devastating effects on Indigenous Peoples from Victoria to Haida Gwaii, reducing population from approximately 60,000 to 28,000 by 1885. Gwa'yasdams was also the site of ongoing conflicts between residents and the neighbouring Nuxalk Nation, who were marginalized by the closing of Fort McLoughlin. Abandoned and then overtime revitalized as the (present) home of the Gwawa'enuxw, Ha̲xwa'mis, Dzawada̲'enu̲x̲w and Kwikwasut'inuxw Nations, during Carr's visit she described it as "absent some months," yet depicted it with a flurry of human activity. Art historian Gerta Moray describes Carr's approach as envisioning "that the fragments of native culture still in place were parts of a greater and still active whole."

Emily Carr

From left to right:

Young Pines and Old Maple, 1937–38

Forest Sketch, c. 1935

Forest Fancy, 1935–36

Deep Woods, 1938–39

oil on paper
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Emily Carr Trust

VAG 42.3.76, 68, 70, 67

The art historian Kristina Huneault argues that Emily Carr's mature works (made after 1934) convey an intensity of feeling and expression of movement and vitality that "remind[s] viewers of unseen lines of force and movement that carry all of existence, including the artist herself, along in its flow." Huneault connects Carr's desire for oneness with the natural world to the "web of relatedness" that Salish basket makers participate in, suggesting that the process of basket making entwines "land, spirit, and skilled creative practice work together."

Carr's continuous pursuit of the divine within nature was not unique but shared by many of her teachers and correspondents, who referenced various philosophies focused on mystical and spiritual transcendence through direct contact with the outdoors. Carr first formalized and then rejected some of these ideas in her later works, developing the swirling and powerfully physical technique evident in the works on display here. Huneault suggests that, "For Carr, the chief insight—and it was one only fitfully attained—came in the moments when she was able to shift from longing for some 'nameless thing' that the woods contained, to recognizing the ways in which she was always already connected to the world."

Sesemiya (Tracy Williams)

dance apron and head band, c. 2017

yellow cedar, sheep's wool, deer grease
Courtesy of the Artist

Basketry and weaving encompass a set of skills and specialized knowledge that is passed down from one generation to the next. Tracy Williams is a fifth-generation cedar weaver from the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) who has studied a variety of weaving styles and techniques with multiple teachers. Teachings about the land figure prominently within weaving, as Williams describes: “The knowledge of the materials aligns you with the landscape, and the ancestors know what the plants and animals and language of the place are about… You have to go to the plant, to watch and learn from the plant over the course of the seasons. The plants are our teachers.” The practice of weaving can thus be seen as a point of access into a worldview in which the maker is enmeshed within a creative, spiritual and land-based lineage. A sense of continuity across species arises from this perspective, wherein subjectivity extends well beyond human beings.

Emily Carr (1871-1945)

Emily Carr was born in Victoria, British Columbia, to Richard and Emily Carr (née Saunders), as one of five siblings. Richard Carr was a well-travelled British immigrant who found success in Alviso, California, selling supplies to miners during the gold rush. There he met Emily Saunders who he married in England, and in 1863 moved his young family to Victoria where he established a wholesale grocery and liquor store.

Raised within the strict conventions of Victorian-era England, Emily Carr is described as rebellious even as a child. She attended school only briefly, but produced promising sketches at a young age, leading her parents to arrange for private lessons with teachers who introduced her to the English landscape tradition. Carr would go on to study internationally, and in her lifetime come into contact with the ideas of vitalism, an understanding of a life force infused in all organisms; theosophy, a semi-religious philosophy comprising the belief that nature is a manifestation of the divine; and abstract representation, concerned with depicting different viewpoints at the same time and simplified or schematized forms. For Carr, these ideas primarily took shape in her favourite subjects: the West Coast forest and Indigenous cultural material.

Carr spent most of her working life supporting herself by teaching art, running a boarding house and breeding dogs. When she could, she travelled, and her visits to Indigenous territories throughout British Columbia had a profound effect on her early work. However, her intentions to document these cultures and places received very little support from European settler audiences.

It wasn't until 1927, when Carr was included in the National Gallery of Canada's *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Mode*rn that she discovered a sense of belonging among artists in the Group of Seven and began to achieve professional recognition for her work. The exhibition was part of a political endeavour to develop a unique "national style," within which Carr's work was positioned as a bridge between European modernism and Indigenous design.

Sewinchelwet, Sophie Frank (1872-1939)

Born Sewinchelwet, Sophie Frank was the maternal granddaughter of Chief Siamcun, from the village of Íkwikws, and one of seven children of Syem'att (Mary) and Kwelkwalxelacha (Old William), from Ch'ékch'ékts. Like her younger sister Sut'elut (Monica Williams), who learned to weave from her mother at the age of five, Frank was introduced to basketry as a traditional skill, integral to the daily and seasonal activities of Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) life: picking berries and clams, hauling water, preparing and serving food, and storing household goods. By the time of Frank's birth, however, these traditions were being dramatically disrupted. New possibilities for trade with prospectors and settlers altered the seasonal migration patterns of her family, which gradually abandoned its winter village of Ch'ékch'ékts in the upper reaches of the Squamish River Valley and came to reside year-round at its summer village of Sen:ákw, on the south shore of False Creek, near modern-day Vancouver's Burrard Street Bridge. Here, on the False Creek Indian Reserve (later known as the Kitsilano Indian Reserve), Frank grew up a ward of the state under the terms of the *Indian Act*, which was passed when she was four years old.

In her teens, Frank married Kwetsím (Jimmy Frank) and the couple moved to Eslhá7an, recognized by the Canadian government as Mission Indian Reserve No. 1. The church administered the reserve, located on the north shore of Burrard Inlet, as a strict tribal theocracy. Repressive control was enacted through domestic inspections by priests and clandestine observation by the village watchmen—who reported anyone heard singing Skwxwú7mesh songs or speaking of traditional ways. Living conditions declined during the first decades of the 20th century and mortality rates remained higher than the national average; Frank lost all of her 21 children. Employment on the reserve was inconsistent, and in this context basketry assumed new social functions for Skwxwú7mesh women. By 1906, when Frank knocked on Emily Carr's door in search of another customer, it had become her primary means of income.

This panel paraphrases excerpts from Kristina Huneault's, *I'm Not Myself at All: Woman, Art, and Subjectivity in Canada, 2018*

From left to right:

Emily Carr

Klee Wyck, 1941

book
Published by Oxford University Press, Toronto, ON

The chapter entitled “Sophie” in *Klee Wyck* is reproduced on the adjacent iPad.

Emily Carr

Sophie Frank, 1914

watercolour on paper
Private Collection

EL2018.1.1

Emily Carr’s watercolour portrait of Sewin chelwet (Sophie Frank) hung in the artist’s studio until Carr’s death in 1945—a testament to the intimate nature of the women’s relationship. In an inscription on the reverse of the painting, Carr bequeathed the work to Ira Dilworth: “the original Portrait of Sophie done probably in Vancouver around 1907 or 1908, at my death the property of Ira Dilworth of CBC from his love, Emily, because the life of Sophie meant so much to him. He understood her womanliness & my love for her. To him she was more than just an Indian, she was a symbol.” Dilworth had replaced Lawren Harris as Carr’s regular confidant after her first heart attack in 1937; a bag of his letters sat by her bed as a cherished comfort. The two had worked on the edit of Carr’s first published work, *Klee Wyck* (1941), which recounts memories from her first visits to Indigenous villages on the West Coast as well as her exchanges with Frank. Carr’s portrait of Frank was included as the title page of the original edition.

From left to right:

Sophie Frank letters to Emily Carr, March 19, 1915; August 6, 1915; and March 7, 1929

Emily Carr papers (MS 2763.273) and
Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher fonds
(MS 2792.2.2)

Jimmy Frank letter to Emily Carr, December 8, 1939

Emily Carr papers (MS 2763.C)
Reproductions courtesy of the Royal BC Museum and Archives

The art historian Kristina Huneault suggests that, to Emily Carr, Sewin chelwet (Sophie Frank) symbolized "Indianness," maternity, and "something good and pure that had been made to suffer." This view is reiterated in Carr's journal entries as well as in the chapter entitled "Sophie" in the artist's 1941 memoir, *Klee Wyck*, which can be read on the nearby iPad. Three letters from Frank to Carr, and one from Frank's husband, Jimmy, written after his wife's passing, are also presented here. This combination of texts creates a complex picture of two women who both used the word "love" to name their relationship, yet, as the writers Shirley Bear and Susan Crean assert, "To spend time piecing together Sophie's story from Emily's fairly extensive record (only Carr's sisters got more journal space) is to be forced to contemplate the way Carr altered and obfuscated both Sophie and her history." Frank's descendants continue to live in North Vancouver and the Squamish Valley, including her great-grandnephew, Chief Bill Williams, who you can listen to in the adjacent audio station.

Jeff Wall

The Pine on the Corner, 1990

transparency in light box
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund

VAG 93.44 a-e

Jeff Wall's single pine both pays homage to and critiques Emily Carr's *Scorned as Timber, Beloved of the Sky* (1935), which presents the lone tree as an autobiographical symbol, a metaphor for the social outcast who remains rooted in nature. The lyrical romanticism associated with the single tree is undercut in Wall's image. Located in a characteristic Vancouver residential neighbourhood, Wall's tree calls up the progression of history, as the pine clearly preceded the city and is a remnant of a displaced wilderness.

Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun

Burying Another Face of Racism on First Nations Soil, 1997

acrylic on canvas
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of Michael Audain and Yoshiko Karasawa

VAG 2012.5.1

In Paul Yuxweluptun's work, there is a sense that the trees are enduring witnesses to their surroundings. Yuxweluptun's painting presents a powerful image of First Nations figures quite literally putting racism to rest. The trees' monumental size and the Northwest Coast formline design that composes them marks the trees as being as significant as the figures. In his approach to depicting the land, Yuxweluptun visualizes Indigenous claims to sovereignty while drawing attention to the vitality, or perhaps personhood, of the trees themselves.

Liz Magor

Beaver Man, 1977/2010

wood, bitumen, metal, rubber, found objects
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of the Artist

VAG 2010.30.1 a-d

Throughout her career, Vancouver-based sculptor Liz Magor has rigorously explored the relationship of the real to the representational and of the natural to the fabricated. With careful attention to material properties, her work frequently investigates ideas of authenticity and the myth of the wilderness as the ultimate refuge.

Magor's *Beaver Man* evokes notions of such escape, as well as points to the industrious storage and subsistence strategies of creatures—both animal and human—in the wild. Created at an early point in Magor's career, this sculpture was influenced both by her readings of Samuel Beckett's existential novels and by a strong political conviction in self-sufficiency.

The work also responds to the life of Emily Carr, including her self-characterization as a solitary nonconformist, her love of nature and animals, and her struggle to subsist as an artist—qualities that Magor finds parallels with in her own life. Reflecting on Carr, Magor has stated, "She was very solitary and she had to fashion her own version of society. I was interested in how she concocted her own existence, and how much aloneness she required."

Mark Ruwedel

From left to right:

Hell's Gate, Fraser River Canyon, British Columbia, 1998
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of the Artist through the Friends of the
Vancouver Art Gallery

VAG 2007.19.1

Devil's Canyon #5 – Channeled Scablands, Washington, 1998

Devil's Golf Course, 1996

Hell Roaring Canyon, 1997

Devil's Lookout, 1997
silver gelatin prints
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Purchased with the Financial Support of the Canada Council
for the Arts and the Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund

VAG 2007.14.1, 3, 7, 5

Hells Gate is a narrow rocky gorge of the Fraser River Canyon, located immediately downstream of Boston Bar, British Columbia. The name was derived from the journal of the explorer Simon Fraser, who in 1808 described this narrow passage as "a place where no human should venture, for surely these are the gates of hell". Long before the arrival of Fraser, and as early as the end of the last ice age, this area was used for dwelling and fishing by First Nations communities whose movements followed the seasonal migration patterns of Pacific salmon.

The photographs in this series by Mark Ruwedel were taken in locations that explorers and pioneers forging into the unknown of the North American west had named after "the devil" and "hell". None of the images depict figures, but there is evidence of human contact with the land.
Of his documentary and conceptual landscape photography, Ruwedel has said, "I have come to think of the earth as being an enormous historical archive. I am interested in revealing the narratives contained within the landscape, especially those places where the land reveals itself as being both an agent of change and the field of human endeavour."

Julie Duschenes

From left to right:

Coulee folly moderne: Sombre 1 and *2*, 1993

Coulee folly moderne: Sere 1 and *2*, 1993

printing ink on paper
Prior Editions, Vancouver, BC
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund

VAG 93.25.2.1–4

On adjacent wall:

Ed Pien

from the series *Invisible Sightings (Taiwan) Suite*, 1996–97

ink, watercolour on paper
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of Gareth Sirotnik

VAG 2013.13.1–9

These works by Julie Duschenes and Ed Pien deal with both conscious and unconscious experience, drawing upon the motifs of nature and culture. However, they diverge in ways that are indicative of their personal experiences and cultural backgrounds.

Ed Pien's *Invisible Sightings* series comprises 300 drawings inspired by his first visit back to Taipei since immigrating to Canada at eleven years old. Eight of the paintings are of imaginary flowers and the central ninth image is a representation of the enlightened man from Taiwanese legend, 千里眼 (Qian Li Yan) [Thousand Li Eyes], who is "all-seeing". Expressing the feeling of alienation from his native environment, these works convey the artist's perception of the "exotic" cultures he witnessed there, embodied in plant life and folk tales.

Julie Duschenes foregrounds her cultural association of the coffee cup and creamer with sustenance and the ritual of break time as "a metaphor for the conscious/unconscious." She explains, "A coffee break while being a rest from another activity, is a socially-ritualized form of communication with one-self or another." This meaning is amplified, in her mind, by the backdrop of a wide-open landscape, symbolizing freedom, peace and communion.

From left to right:

Bill Reid

Portrait Mask, 1962

cedar, paint
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of Takao Tanabe
VAG 98.51

Christos Dikeakos

Naikoon Park, Haida Gwaii, 2014

inkjet print
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of BMO Financial Group

VAG 2018.11.1

Centre of the room:

Bill Reid

Phyllidula – The Shape of Frogs to Come, 1984–85

red cedar, stain
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund

VAG 86.16

Bill Reid's *Portrait Mask* is one of his earliest professional works. The design doesn't appear to be based on any traditional Haida subjects and may in fact be a self-portrait. Resulting from the sensuous engagement between material and maker—between cedar and carver—the work exists within a history of practice while also communicating something of the individual. Regarding the viewer with its enlarged black eyes, the mask is both seeing and not seeing, revealing and concealing.

This effect is not unlike Christos Dikeakos' photograph of a tree to whom a man holds up a microphone, as though trying to record or access the inscrutable information that it might contain. This action suggests the futility of the human impulse to somehow capture the natural world. Shot near Masset, Haida Gwaii, on Traditional Territory of the Haida that comprises a number of culturally significant sites, the image also speaks to the tacit understanding that aspects of Indigenous culture are inaccessible and purposefully withheld, reinforcing the idea that one's cultural identity does not inhere in objects, but rather exists within the context of community-based knowledge and social practices.

Robert Davidson

From left to right:

Marriage Announcement, 1969

Sara's Birth Announcement, 1973

Change of Address, 1985

Eagle: Oliver Adam's Potlatch Gift, 1976

Mother's Memorial, 1973

screenprints on paper
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
The Gordon McKee Collection,
Gift of Mrs. Margaret McKee

VAG 95.49.3, 32, 84, 54, 37

On adjacent wall:

Michael Drebert

To Cumshewa, 2010

ink on paper
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of the artist

VAG 2011.4.1

Intervening with Emily Carr merchandise sold in the Vancouver Art Gallery Store, Michael Drebert took a puzzle piece from a representation of *Big Raven* (1931), painted following Carr's visit to the village of Cumshewa on Haida Gwaii in 1912, to begin his performance work *To Cumshewa*. Driven by a desire to infuse the mass-produced commodity with a similar energy to that which inspired the original painting—or further, with the energy of the village itself—Drebert travelled with the piece to Cumshewa and back, returning it to the same box on the Gallery Store shelf to be purchased. The poster seen here documents this action in text.

The development of a market for Northwest Coast art and the introduction of screenprinting within Indigenous communities in the 1960s occurred simultaneously, due to the medium's accessibility and capability of affirming presence through the mass dissemination of prints. The Robert Davidson prints displayed here were originally produced to be offered as Potlatch gifts, to be given at funerals, and to be distributed as personal announcements. Their non-market purpose has consequently made them more appealing on the market.

In both works, intentionally or unintentionally, it is the exchange with place and community that charges the object with the connection and meaning that gives it value.

Mike MacDonald

Secret Flowers, 1993

16-channel video installation, silent
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund and
purchased with the support of the Canada Council
Acquisition Assistance Program

VAG 96.4 a-p

On adjacent wall:

Edward Burtynsky

From left to right:

Oil Spill #10, Oil Slick, Gulf of Mexico, June 24, 2010

Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Reservation/Suburb, Scottsdale, Arizona, USA, 2011

Mount Edziza Provincial Park #4, Northern British Columbia, Canada, 2012

chromogenic prints
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of the Artist

VAG 2013.30.23, 29, 33

Mike MacDonald and Edward Burtynsky's image-based works share an investment in looking at the environment through humanity's footprint, although they differ in the relative scale or intimacy with which they approach their subject.

Mike MacDonald was an artist of Mi'kmaq and European ancestry whose works often conceptually link environmental issues with the status of Indigenous Nations in Canada. *Secret Flowers* quilts together videos of flowers in British Columbia that attract butterflies and bees, and are used in traditional plant medicines. These images are contrasted with a shot of an airplane spraying insecticide over the city of Vancouver. This planned control, destruction and encapsulation of nature is used as a metaphor for a history of European relations with First Nations.

Edward Burtynsky's *Water* series (2009–13) documents the waterways that have been diverted or transformed during the last century. Curator Russell Lord has noted that water in this series "is intermittently introduced as a victim, a partner, a protagonist, a lure, a source, an end, a threat and a pleasure…the visual and physical effects of the lack of water [give] its absence an even more powerful presence."

Jin-me Yoon

A Group of 67, 1997

134 chromogenic prints
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund

VAG 97.2 a-eeeeee

To produce this work, Jin-me Yoon arranged for 67 members of Vancouver's Korean Canadian community to be individually photographed in two different settings at the Vancouver Art Gallery. In one set of photographs, the sitter gazes directly back at the camera, with *Maligne Lake, Jasper Park* (1924) by Group of Seven painter Lawren Harris in the background. In the other set, the sitter has turned their back to the viewer to survey Emily Carr's painting *Old Time Coast Village* (c. 1929).

For many viewers, the initial effect of the work is to point toward an apparent disjunction between the identity of the sitters and the national identity constructed around the work of Carr and the Group of Seven. This raises questions regarding the exclusions that underlie a conception of Canadianness that is naturalized, in part, through specific imaging of the landscape. The title of the work, however, points to the year 1967, the centennial of Canada's confederation and also the year in which changes to the Immigration Act ended an inherent ethnic and racial bias that had prohibited Korean nationals and other East Asians from immigrating to Canada. Yoon's work is not a simplistic critique of the legacy of Harris and Carr. Rather, it engages with the pictorial traditions of Canadian landscape painting and the Vancouver Art Gallery as an institution through which those traditions have been disseminated, raising complex questions in regard to audience, community and site.

呂壽琨 (Lui Shou Kwan)

From left to right:

Taiwan Landscape-Ali Shan, 1971

Untitled, 1962
ink, pigment on paper
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Alice, Helen and Anne Lui

VAG 2018.20.1, 2

呂壽琨 (Lui Shou Kwan) frequently looked to the scenery of Hong Kong and its surrounding islands for his subject matter. He returned from a trip to Taiwan in 1971 with several sketches that resulted in a series of landscapes, including the one seen here. Amid his abstract gestures, he would often add a boat or a tiny figure to situate the image in reality and illustrate his belief that nature and abstraction are not in opposition, but rather comprise one another.

In Lui's view, abstraction was not a Western conceit but a practice that had already been mastered by ancient Chinese painters who sought to express rhythm, emotion and atmosphere in their work. In the 1960s, the artist began experimenting with a gestural style known as xeiyi, introducing concepts of abstraction into his landscape paintings. In *Untitled*, dry, black brushstrokes are layered over wet washes and visually organize as mountains, set against dotted brushstrokes and fine black lines resembling trees.

From left to right:

Kenojuak Ashevak

Bird Humans, 1969

stonecut on paper
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of Ian Davidson

VAG 75.25

Kenojuak Ashevak was the first internationally known artist of Inuit descent. Born in 1927 in Ikirisaq on the south coast of Qikiqtaaluk (Baffin Island), she was raised in a traditional hunting lifestyle, travelling from camp to camp on the south end of Qikiqtaaluk and in Nunavik (Arctic Québec). One of the original members of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative, now known as Kinngait Studios, Ashevak and her husband, Johnniebo, began experimenting with the graphic arts in 1959.

Ashevak's work reflects her imagination and her memories of the camps her family travelled to, portraying animals, humans and spirits of her surrounding environment. Ashevak described her artistic practice as a way for her to financially support her family; however, what became an international career also made her an ambassador of an Inuit worldview deeply entangled in ideas of the Arctic landscape. She states, "There is no word for art. We say it is to transfer something from the real to the unreal. I am an owl, and I am a happy owl. I like to make people happy and everything happy. I am the light of happiness and I am a dancing owl."

Simon Tookoome

Untitled, 1997

metal
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of J. Ron and Jacqueline Longstaffe

VAG 2003.4.61

Carl Beam

From left to right:

Fragile Skies, 1995
Two Kinds of Power, 1995

screenprints on paper
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of Judy Winberg and Andrew Pollack

VAG 95.34.1, 2

2000, 1998

screenprint on paper
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of Florence Winberg

VAG 2002.26

Carl Beam was born in 1943 in M'Chigeeng First Nation, Ontario, to Barbara Migwans, daughter of West Bay Ojibwe Chief Dominic Migwans, and Edward Cooper, an American soldier who died in Germany during World War II. Beam was raised primarily by his grandparents on his mother's side and was sent to Garnier Residential School in Ontario, later graduating from the University of Victoria and doing graduate work at the University of Alberta. His practice extends from lived contradictions, dualism, and the inside/outside realities of a successful Indigenous artist working at a time when that was unprecedented in Canada.

In Beam's work, complicated histories are spun out through archival and found images, which set up associations such as the perilous juncture between nature and industry, only to be undone, rebuffed or further complicated by another image. *Fragile Skies* shows the image of a shy and benevolent woman atop a rural stone wall, which may represent inferred familial relations or draw on gendered ideas of power in relation to the work's industrial and animal imagery. These are speculations; however, ambiguity is a signature of Beam's, who once referred to his work as "the memory of an incomplete poetry."

Zacharias Kunuk

Qaggiq, 1989

video
58:23 min.
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund

VAG 94.16.1

Screenings every hour on the hour.

Television arrived late in Igloolik, Nunavut, as the community voted against television service until the founding of the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC) in 1981. After coming into contact with television that year, Zacharias Kunuk took several soapstone carvings to Montréal and sold them in order to purchase a video camera. In 1988, he teamed up with Norman Cohn and Pauloosie Qulitalik to found an independent production company called Igloolik Isuma Productions, with the intention of preserving Inuit culture and transmitting information between generations in a manner that continues oral traditions. Isuma produces videos that depict detailed recreations of traditional life using local people as actors and shot in a style that melds documentary and fiction. *Qaggiq* was the first of a series of such productions depicting different seasonal activities. It shows four families in a late-winter camp in the 1930s, building a qaggiq, a large communal igloo, in which to celebrate the coming of spring with games, singing and drum dancing. The pace of the video is unhurried and the action unfolds with the temporality of lives lived on the land, emphasizing the rhythm of shared activity.

Patricia Deadman

From left to right:

Almost to the Far Side, 1991

Where the Trees Meet the Mountains, 1991

From a Distance You Can See the Trees, 1991

In the Midst of Shadow Play, 1991

azo dye prints
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund

VAG 96.26.1–4

Listen

Chief Bill Williams of the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), Sewi̱nchelwet (Sophie Frank's) great-grandnephew, speaks about his great aunt's relationship with Emily Carr, her critique of Carr's early representations of the landscape and the land-based teachings that his community holds.

Listen

Tarah Hogue, Senior Curatorial Fellow, Indigenous Art, at the Vancouver Art Gallery, ties key dates in Carr's and Frank's lifetimes to the larger context of two World Wars, the Indian Act and industrial development in Vancouver.

Arnold Shives

From left to right:

Mt. Orpheus, 1990–91

Lake Louise, 1990–91

Broken Spectre, The Lions, 1990–91

Seven Sisters Mountains, 1990–91

Mt. Meager, 1990–91

Carmanah Creek, 1990–91

Rainbow over the Taiya, 1990–91

colour aquatint on paper
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund

VAG 91.57.1.2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 5

Karin Bubaš

Woman with Scorched Redwood, 2007

chromogenic print
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of the Artist

VAG 2009.39.5

Marian Penner Bancroft

Xa:ytem (formerly HOLDING (property)), 1991

metal, wood, silver gelatin print, graphite on paper
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Purchased with the support of the Canada Council
for the Arts Acquisition Assistance Program
and the Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 2013.8.2 a-p

In 1990, title to property just east of the town of Mission, British Columbia, was in the name of Utzic Holdings and clearing of the site for development began with the removal of some of its surface. Plans were also underway to blow up a large glacial erratic boulder, known as Hatzic Rock, located near the centre of the site. Gordon Mohs, an archaeologist for the Stó:lo Nation, the Indigenous people of the Fraser River, noticed this activity and immediately went to Mr. Utzic, the developer, to request time to excavate the site. He knew that near any large erratics of this type one was likely to find evidence of human habitation, given that the boulders known as "transformer stones" were considered to be sources of spiritual power. Mr. Utzic understood the importance of the research and suspended his plans for building. The Stó:lo archaeologists were right. They found evidence of a village and the remains of the oldest house ever discovered in British Columbia, remains said to be over 9,000 years old.

Many people joined to save the site now known as Xá:ytem, among them the Stó:lo Nation and the Friends of Hatzic Rock. The property was acquired in 1992 by the provincial government and is now managed by both the Stó:lo Nation and the Province and is considered a National Historic Site. If you go there now you will find the Xá:ytem Longhouse Interpretive Centre, a cedar structure within which is presented information about the traditional and contemporary culture of the Stó:lo people.

My set of four photographs and four graphite rubbings was made in the summer of 1991 at a time when the fate of Xá:ytem (Hatzic Rock) was unknown. I travelled to the site to offer respect to a place that contained such a long history of habitation, and that contained stories I would never know. I walked in a circle around the transformer stone and made photographs from diagonal coordinates. I then made graphite rubbings from the surfaces on the north/south/east/west axes surrounding my own house in Vancouver, a place I could know only a little better, given the short duration of non-native settlement in this part of the world.

Landon Mackenzie

From left to right:

Tracking Athabasca (Space Station)... Falls Said To Be The Largest in the Known World So Far, 1999

acrylic, collage on canvas

Woodchopper and Paradigm, 1990

acrylic, beeswax, varnish on canvas
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of the Artist

VAG 2004.5.1 and 2015.13.1

Al McWilliams

Worms 1, 2002–15

dye sublimation print
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of the Artist

VAG 2015.31.2

This work was featured in *Slow Dirt*, a project produced by Other Sights for Artists' Projects in 2015 as part of the Western Front's *Urgent Imagination: Art and Urban Development*, a multi-site public art exhibition and conference that focused on development in the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood.

Jochen Gerz

White Ghost #4 and *#6*, 1998

inkjet print
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of the Artist

VAG 2007.3.4 a-b, 3.6 a-b

Lorraine Gilbert

From left to right:

Shaping the New Forest, Part 1 - The Landscapes; Helicopter planting camp, Moh Creek, Butte Inlet, B.C, 1988–1994

Shaping the New Forest, Part 2 - The Portraits; Family of three, Invermere, B.C., 1988–1994

chromogenic prints
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of the Artist

2003.26.19 a-c, 39

Brian Jungen

Cetology, 2002

plastic Monobloc chairs
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Purchased with the financial support of the Canada Council for the Arts Acquisition Assistance Program and the Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund

VAG 2003.8 a-z

Kenojuak Ashevak

From left to right:

Arctic Scene, 1967

Two Spirits, 1967

engraving on paper
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Longstaffe

VAG 1986.41.6, 3

Press play to listen to Vancouver-based artist Jin-me Yoon

Her work, *A Group of 67* (1997), can be found in the east high-wall gallery, located behind the introductory text.

Photo: Steve Farmer

Press play to listen to Vancouver-based artist Landon Mackenzie

Her works on canvas, *Tracking Athabasca (Space Station)...Falls Said To Be The Largest in the Known World So Far* (1999) and *Woodchopper and Paradigm* (1990), can be found on the right side of the gallery immediately following this room.

Press play to listen to BC-based artist G̲uud San Glans Robert Davidson

His screenprints on paper, *Marriage Announcement* (1969), *Sara's Birth Announcement* (1973), *Change of Address* (1985), *Eagle: Oliver Adam's Potlatch Gift* (1976) and *Mother's Memorial* (1973), can be found on the right side of the gallery immediately following the green gallery.