

FROM THE FOREST TO THE SEA
EMILY CARR
1 NOV - 8 MAR IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

LARGE PRINT GUIDE

Please note that there is no additional information in this guide, everything published herein is available in the galleries.

Please return the guide before leaving the exhibition. Thank you.



Introduction

Emily Carr (1871-1945) is one of Canada's most loved artists, known for her stirring evocations of the British Columbia landscape and her pioneering encounters with the indigenous cultures of the Northwest Coast. Her art leaves a monumental legacy, embodying the Canadian colonial experience in which cultural indebtedness to Europe is counterbalanced by the intrepid exploration of the new.

Her life was an extraordinary journey. The child of conservative British parents, she grew up in colonial Victoria, BC, where her father was a prosperous merchant. Following the early death of both her mother and father, she struck out in search of artistic training. Her journeys took her first to San Francisco (1890-1893), then to England (1899-1904), where she studied at the Westminster School of Art in London, and in St Ives with Julius Olsson and Algernon Talmage. Her final period of study was in Paris and Brittany (1910-1911), where she received further instruction from the British artist Harry Phelan Gibb, Scottish artist J.D. Fergusson and the New Zealander Frances Hodgkins. These adventures, however, only sharpened her feelings of attachment to the BC coast.

Carr's many travels to remote native villages are the stuff of Canadian legend, and she wrote about these experiences in her book *Klee Wyck* (1941). Her sense of artistic adventure brought her into contact, too, with the Group of Seven painters in eastern Canada, also spurring her encounters with the modernism of Pablo Picasso, Georgia O'Keeffe and Wassily Kandinsky, whose work she saw at first hand in New York in 1930. The poems of Walt Whitman and the British Romantics provided her with additional inspiration and solace, particularly in her later years. Determined and solitary by inclination, Carr was a loner who navigated her own course, always inspired by a sense of fellowship with the native cultures of her home province.

The historic objects made by indigenous peoples presented in these galleries are offered for view in the spirit of communion and diplomacy with the First Nations people of British Columbia, whose cultures and customs were threatened to near-extinction by colonialism. Our hope is to allow the viewer's perception of Carr's paintings to be grounded in the first-hand experience of the Northwest Coast art and culture that she admired so deeply.

Emily Carr's idiosyncratic spelling, period diction and grammar have been maintained throughout this exhibition.

From the Forest to the Sea: Emily Carr in British Columbia has been organised by Dulwich Picture Gallery and the Art Gallery of Ontario with the generous collaboration of the National Gallery of Canada, Vancouver Art Gallery and the Royal BC Museum, BC Archives.

In the Forest

The coastal environment of British Columbia is one of the most lush and biodiverse in the world, and Carr's mature works, gathered here, express that fecundity with great sensuality and force, exploring the deeper rhythms of both nature and human emotion.

For millennia, this same abundance had made the region a hospitable home for the indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast, with ample food supply and temperate climate supporting the development of a sophisticated material culture. A rich tradition of winter feasting and ceremonial gift giving developed (the potlatch), a practice which served to mark important events, assert entitlements, and distribute wealth among communities. This tradition encouraged the production of finely-made objects, a selection of which are presented in this gallery, where they appear alongside others intended for ritual use in healing.

In the late 1700s, Europeans were attracted to the region's natural resources, and a period of colonisation and forced assimilation ensued throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with indigenous people struggling hard to hold firm to their traditions. That struggle continues today, as native peoples pursue the vibrant regeneration of their cultures. Long held in UK collections, these historic objects from the Northwest Coast were collected by British missionaries, traders and explorers throughout the late eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and include some of the finest examples in museum collections.

Deep in the Forest, 1930s

Oil on paper laid down on canvas

Private collection

Tree (spiralling upward), 1932-1933

Oil on paper

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

In her mature period, movement became one of Carr's central concerns, a preoccupation inspired both by her first-hand experience of the natural world and by the European and American art she had recently encountered on a visit to New York. This work seems influenced by many painterly antecedents, among them the lashing lines of Wassily Kandinsky and the stuttering, faceted forms of Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*, which she saw in 1930. "Direction, that's what I'm after," Carr wrote, "everything moving together... flowing, liquid, universal movement, all directions summing up in one grand direction, leading the eye forward, and satisfying."

01

Wood Interior, 1929-1930

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Robert McLaughlin Gallery. Gift of Isabel McLaughlin, 1987

Red Tree, c.1938

Oil on paper mounted on hardboard

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Gift from the J.S. McLean Collection, by Canada Packers Inc., 1990

Cedar Sanctuary, c.1942

Oil on paper

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

In *Cedar Sanctuary*, Carr achieved a remarkable sense of rhythm and sway. "Movement is the essence of being," she wrote. "When a thing stands still and says, 'Finished,' then it dies. There isn't such a thing as completion in this world, for that would mean Stop. Painting is a striving to express life. If there is no movement in the painting, then it is dead paint."

Cedar, 1942

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

Totem and Forest, 1931

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

Carr saw this pole in Prince Rupert, where she made a quick sketch for later reworking. The resulting painting would be Carr's consummate attempt to infuse modern painting with the formal lessons and spiritual force of indigenous monumental carving.

02

Indian Church, 1929

Oil on canvas

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, bequest of Charles S. Band, Toronto 1970

Carr's *Indian Church* is a modern Canadian masterwork, embodying both the fledgling colonial presence on the Northwest Coast and Carr's own personal curiosity about spiritual life, which fuelled her explorations of Christianity, Theosophy, and the traditional beliefs of Northwest Coast indigenous people. In a striking contrast, Carr sets rectilinear geometry against the vortices of natural form.



In the Forest, B.C., c.1935

Oil on paper mounted on multi-ply paperboard
Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, bequest of Professor
Kathleen Coburn, 2004

For Carr, trees were animate beings, exemplary in their vitality and drive. She wrote: "Listen, this perhaps is the way to find that thing I long for: go into the woods alone and look at the earth crowded with growth, new and old bursting from their strong roots hidden in the silent, live ground, each seed according to its own kind expanding, bursting, pushing its way upward towards the light and air, each one knowing what to do, each one demanding its own rights on the earth."

Tree Study, c.1930

Oil on paper
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver Art
Gallery Acquisition Fund

Tree Trunk, 1931

Oil on canvas
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

Carr was deeply attuned to the rhythms of nature, which she expressed in her paintings of trees. "Feel their protecting spread, their uplifting rise, their solid immovable strength," she wrote. "Regard the warm red earth beneath them nurtured by their myriads of fallen needles, softly fallen, slowly

disintegrating through long processes, always living, changing, expanding round and around.”

∩ 4

In the Woods of British Columbia, 1942

Oil on paper

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Canadian Artworks Acquisition Fund

Dead Tree in the Forest, c.1932

Oil on paper

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Purchased 1946

Feasting Display Case

The ceremony of the potlatch has always been of central importance to the economic, spiritual and political life of indigenous Northwest Coast peoples, and continues to this day. These feasts can last for several days, marking memorials, coming of age and the transfer of entitlements, and involve lavish displays of hospitality between peoples as well as the performance of dance cycles featuring hereditary owned regalia and songs. Bowls, ladles and spoons with animal crests denote the clan identification, status and entitlements of the hosts, at times celebrating ancestral encounters with mythic creatures. In the designs, form is built up from interlocking ovoid and u-forms to evoke the features of humans, birds, fish, mammals, and supernatural beings, often generating a meaningful ambiguity. In the Northwest Coast worldview, everything is interconnected, and human and animal realms intermingle. Metamorphosis between species and states is the only predictable feature of the cosmos.

1 Northern Northwest Coast

Octopus Spoon, 19th century

Mountain-goat horn with copper rivets

British Museum, London

Am1930,1025.2

Like totem poles, the spoons carved by Northwest Coast peoples were adorned with crest figures denoting the status and entitlements of the hosts, their forms integrated with great ingenuity and elegance. These sequential designs could also be narrative in nature.

2 Haida

Raven Ladle, 19th century

Bighorn-sheep horn and abalone shell

British Museum, London

Am,+ .5345



3 Haida

Spoon/Ladle, 19th century

Mountain-goat horn and copper/brass

British Museum, London, Am1976,03.48

4 Haida

Ladle, 19th century

Mountain-goat horn, bighorn-sheep horn, abalone shell and iron/copper

British Museum, London

Am1939,11.7

To create this voluptuous shape, an indigenous maker would steam and then bend animal horn to achieve a graceful form before adorning it with crest designs and abalone shell.

5 Haida

Feast Dish, 19th century

Alder wood, operculum shell and pigment

Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

1891.49.106

This generous, masterfully carved bowl embodies the value placed on ceremonial hospitality in Northwest Coast cultures. Shells decorate the rim, and exquisite designs cover the surface, denoting creatures whose identities remain ambiguous. Animals and humans were often depicted in states of transformation, as may be the case here.

6 Haida

Beaver Feast Bowl, 19th century

Wood

Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

1884.68.48

7 Northern Northwest Coast (Haida)

Duck Bowl, 19th century

Elk horn

Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

1884.68.60

8 Tlingit or Tsimshian

Wolf or Marmot Crest Feast Dish, 19th

Mountain-sheep horn and abalone shell

Horniman Museum and Gardens

20.99

Some see the carving on this bowl as representing a wolf (complete with snarling nose) while others have interpreted it as depicting a marmot. Interlocking ovoid and u-shapes generate a compelling ambiguity, as creatures transform and move between different states of being.

9 Haida

Woman of High Rank Mask, c.1830

Alder wood and paint

British Museum, London

Am1986,18.13

This mask was likely made for trade with European visitors to the coast, and portrays a woman of high status, as denoted by the prominent labret in her lower lip – an adornment of noblewomen in some Northwest Coast societies. Power and entitlements in these cultures were passed down through the mother's family line, and women sometimes inherited chiefly status.

10 Haida

Seal Grease Bowl, 19th century

Alder wood

Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

1891.49.101

Eulachon grease was made from rendered and aged fish oil, serving as both a delicacy and a currency on the coast. The spring arrival of the eulachon run marked an important point in the seasonal calendar, offering cause for celebration. Here, more than a century after its making, this seal bowl still continues to express its bounty.

11 Haida

Raven Grease Bowl, 19th century

Wood

Horniman Museum and Gardens, 1978.163

Raven is a powerful crest figure in the cosmology of many Northwest Coast peoples: highly intelligent, mischievous, but also wise. Here, Raven is represented holding the sun or moon in his beak. Raven stole the sun, moon and stars from a hoarding chief in order to bring light to the world.

12 Northern Northwest Coast (Haida)

Raven Handled Ladle, 19th century

Mountain-sheep horn

Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

1910.70.1

13 Haida
Small Box with Sea Mammal Design,
19th century
Yellow and red cedar, sinew and lead
British Museum, London
Am1896,-.1210

This box may depict one or possibly two sea monster figures, and close study reveals forms suggesting flukes, flippers and eyes. Some have also described these forms as evoking bears, or wolves. Such boxes were made by steaming and then bending the pliable cedar wood, stitching the ends together to form a unified whole.

14 Haida
Bentwood Feast Bowl, 19th century
Wood, cedar bark fibre, animal sinew and textile
Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford
1891.49.96

Ritual Display Case

Shamanism is not a religion but rather a way of understanding the world, and is particularly prevalent among people who rely upon animals for their survival, through hunting and fishing. The shamanic healing practices of Northwest Coast peoples revolve around rectifying disorder in the soul and body of the afflicted, furthering communications between the human and non-human worlds. There are many stories which tell of shamans transforming into animals, fish or birds in order to travel swiftly across the world, to enter other realms, or to recover the wandering souls of the sick or dying. The spirit catcher, for example, was an instrument used to restore the dissociated soul to the body, while other objects used in ceremony might call down the assistance of ancestral animal spirits. Masked performances at potlatches are accompanied by songs and speeches in which the speaker uses a rattle to accompany his or her words.

1 Haida

Raven Mask, 19th century

Wood, pigment, animal skin and fur

Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, 1891.49.101

Worn in ceremonial dances, this Raven mask was lightweight, and would have been worn on the forehead of the dancer. At one time, fur was appended to the top and sides, completing the transformational effect.

2 Tlingit

Shaman's Amulet, 19th century

Deer antler

British Museum, London

Am.5403

3 Haida

Carved Bone Ornament of a Killer Whale,

19th century

Animal bone and abalone shell

Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

1884.58.4

The highly compact design of this amulet marks it as a masterpiece of Northwest Coast design, with the classic integration of human and animal forms combined together into a powerful whole. Small openings on either side of the dorsal fin suggest this object was made to be worn at the waist or around the neck.

4 Northern Northwest Coast

Soul Catcher, 19th century

Bone, string and abalone shell

Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

1898.36.1

In healing sickness, the shaman used the soul catcher to hold the spirit of the sick person for safekeeping before restoring it to the body. The motif of the double-headed serpent can be

found in the cultures of China, Mongolia and throughout the Americas, and is associated with shamanic practises.

5 Haida

Raven and Man Dagger Pommel, Handle for Wand, 19th century

Sea-mammal ivory and abalone shell

Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

1884.58.5

The function of this object is a mystery, yet it powerfully expresses man's place in the cosmos, with Raven seeming to offer protection, comfort and kinship to a vulnerable and dependent humankind. Here, as in the other objects in this case, abalone shell was used as embellishment, its surface reflecting firelight to dramatic effect during ceremonial use.

6 Northwest Coast (Tlingit)

Raven Frontlet, Late 19th century

Maple wood, paint, abalone shell and sea-mammal whiskers

Murderme Collection

DHC 5897

This ceremonial headdress would have served as part of a chief's regalia for ceremonial occasions, and features a rich display of abalone shell, a commodity commonly traded up and down the coast from its source in California. Holes in the shells suggest that these sections of abalone were once strung on a necklace before being repurposed. Sea lion whiskers adorn the top.

7 Haida

Club or Dance Paddle/Wand with Crest Design, 19th century

Baleen

British Museum, London

Am1949,22.49

The purpose of this object is unknown. Carved from a single piece of whale baleen, it was incised with crest designs but later amended with the insertion of a hole that seems to have served as a handle. Scholars speculate that it may have ultimately been used as a wand in ceremonial ritual.

8 Haida (attributed to Simeon Stilthda)

Frog Mask, 19th century

Alder wood, paint, animal skin and textile

Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, 1891.49.10.2

This lively mask is thought to be the handiwork of the noted Haida carver Simeon Stilthda. A device in its jaw hinge creates a croaking sound when the lower portion is manipulated.

9 Northern Northwest Coast

Heron Rattle, 19th century

Cedar wood, animal sinew, puffin bills, pigment and fishing line

Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

1884.110.8

This elegant rattle would have been used in ritual, where its beauty was both visual and auditory. Puffin beaks were gathered from the cliffs after being shed by the birds, and were used for embellishment, and for the subtle, sighing sound they make as they resonate together.

10 Northern Northwest Coast

Raven Rattle, Early 19th century

Maple wood, paint, animal skin, stone and animal sinew

Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

1884.110.16

11 Tlingit or Northern Haida

Oyster Catcher Rattle, 19th century

Maple wood, sea-mammal ivory, animal skin, stone, paint, iron and cockle shell

Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, 1884.110.15

Trying to Understand

Emily Carr made her art during one of the most profound periods of social change in the region. Her childhood unfolded in the decade following the devastating epidemics of the 1860s, in which more than half of British Columbia's indigenous people perished. With unusual sensitivity and urgency, Carr strived to create a record of a way of life that she saw as imperilled, producing a body of work that documented the old native village sites and their poles, carved from giant cedar trees.

Carr's curiosity about indigenous people is reflected in her earliest works, intimate watercolours of the native canoes in and around Victoria, made following her art training in San Francisco. After her studies in England (1899-1904), Carr returned to British Columbia, making a living by teaching art. Her curiosity about indigenous culture was again aroused by a trip to Sitka, Alaska, which she took with her sister in 1907. It was here that she first encountered totem poles; her recently rediscovered diary of that journey is included in this gallery. It was during this voyage that she resolved to devote her life to recording native sites up and down the coast, exploring the villages with the assistance of native guides.

Carr's subsequent studies in France (1910-1911) exposed her to current artistic ideas on the Continent, in particular the loose brushwork and lush colour of the Post-Impressionists. This influence would be reflected in Carr's oil paintings of 1912 and 1913, made after her final return to the coast, works that often revisit content from her earlier watercolours. "I glory in our wonderful west, and hope to leave behind me some of the relics of its first primitive greatness" she stated, speaking in the parlance of her day. "These things should be to Canadians what the Ancient Britons' relics are to the English."

Carr was now back in Canada to stay, but the discouraging reception of her work in Vancouver and Victoria in 1913,

coupled with hardening financial circumstances, overwhelmed her spirits, and she withdrew from active artistic pursuits

Above the display case:

Untitled, c.1907

Watercolour and graphite on paper

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Muriel Bodie, Rob and Don Bodie

Arbutus Tree, c.1909

Watercolour on paper

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, In memory of Jennet and Louise Davies, Edith and Oswald Parker and James R. Davies, with thanks to Emily Carr, these works are donated by N.E. Davies, Brian, Bruce and Kevin Davies.

In the display case:

View in Victoria Harbour, c.1895

Watercolour on paper mounted on card

Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. Walter C. Koerner Collection

View Near Plumbers Pass, 1895

Watercolour on paper mounted on card

Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. Walter C. Koerner Collection

A Beautiful Sabbath, 1895

Pen and black ink on wove paper

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Purchased 2008

Victoria Sketchbook, 1898

Bound sketchbook containing graphite sketches on paper

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, gift of Dr. John Parnell

Carr's paintings of the canoes in and around Victoria are among her earliest works, expressing her fascination with indigenous people. "The government allowed the Indians to use the beaches when they were travelling," she remembered many years later, reflecting the inter-racial tensions of the day, "so they made camp and slept wherever the night happened to fall." The small book also in this case was made as a gift for Carr's sister, Alice, and depicts her favoured spots for rambling near her Victoria home.

Sister and I in Alaska, 1907

Bound sketchbook with watercolour and ink on paper

Private collection

Carr's 1907 boat trip to Sitka, Alaska, with her sister, Alice, marked a turning point in her life. Seeing the totem poles and villages for the first time, she resolved to devote her life to recording them. The journal was made to amuse her sister, and often strikes a note of giddy hilarity peppered with sharp self-parody, as she presents a caricature of herself in the role of the witless tourist. The works that followed, though, revealed her soulful response to this subject matter.

The journal was thought to be lost forever but was discovered last year in the basement of a Montreal collector and is shown here for the first time.

On display:

Sun and Thunderbird, Alert Bay, c.1912

Watercolour on paper

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Kitsegukla Totem Pole, 1912

Watercolour on paper

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

"The Indian totem pole is not easy to draw," Carr wrote.

"Some of them are very high, they are elaborately carved... as much or more attention paid to the attributes of the creature as to its form. The Indian used distortion, sometimes to fill spaces but mostly for more powerful expressing than would have been possible had he depicted actualities – gaining strength, weight, power by accentuation."

Often Carr would display her watercolours in the villages at the day's end, sharing her work with any interested locals.

Skidegate, 1912

Oil on paperboard

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

Skidegate, 1912

Oil on card mounted on hardboard

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

Tanoo, Q.C.I., 1913

Oil on canvas

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Carr's oil painting of Tanu, on Haida Gwaii, reveals her exposure to Post-Impressionist paint handling during her period of artistic training in France. Here, Carr's flair for capturing expressive skies and verdant foliage brushed by wind was married to her documentary urge to record these monumental sites for posterity. By the time of Carr's visit, the village had been standing empty for several decades, its former native inhabitants having died in the virulent epidemics of the 19th century or been moved on to the communities of Skidegate and Old Massett.

06

Skidegate, 1912

Oil on card mounted on hardboard

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

Tanoo, c.1912

Watercolour on paper

McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg.

Gift of Dr Max Stern, Dominion Gallery, Montreal

Cumshewa, 1912

Watercolour and graphite on paper mounted on cardboard

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Purchased 1953

In the abandoned village of Cumshewa, Carr encountered a pole that would become one of her most beloved subjects.

“Not far from the house sat a great wooden raven mounted on a rather low pole; his wings were flattened to his sides,” she later wrote. “A few feet from him stuck up an empty pole. His mate had sat there but she had rotted away long ago, leaving him moss-grown, dilapidated and alone...”

Tanoo Q.C.I., 1912

Watercolour on paper

Collection of Hank Swartout, Canada

Skedans, c.1912

Watercolour on paper lined on cardboard

The Power Corporation of Canada Art Collection /

La Collection d'art de Power Corporation du Canada

Cumshewa, 1912

Watercolour with graphite and gouache mounted on hardboard

Collection of Alan Wilkinson

Skedans Poles (In Rain), c.1912

Watercolour on paper

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

“Wind raced across the breast-high growth around the meagre ruins more poignantly desolate for having once known man,” Carr wrote, remembering her visit to this Haida Gwaii village.

"A row of crazily tipped totem poles straggled along the low bank skirting Skedans Bay. The poles were deeply planted to defy storms. In their bleached and hollow upper ends stood coffin-boxes, boarded endwise into the pole by heavy cedar planks boldly carved with the crest of the little huddle of bones inside the box, bones which had once been a chief of Eagle, Bear or Whale clan".

Raindrops spatter the surface of this delicate work.



House Posts, Tsatsinuchomi, B.C., 1912

Watercolour and graphite on paper

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Purchased 1928

Tsatsisnukomi, Tribe Klawatsis, 1912

Watercolour and graphite on paper

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

Top of the Totem, 1908-1912

Watercolour on paper

Private collection, Canada

"Totem poles take different forms and serve different purposes," writes contemporary Nuu-chah-nulth cultural consultant, Dawn Foxcroft. "Some are emblems of families or clans. Others are special event memorials, territorial markers and monuments to honour the dead. In some communities, poles are large-scale human welcome figures; in others, they are part of a house's structure in which carved posts serve as doorways or beams. Poles represent family lineage, animals or mythical beings, and all preserve history and honour our ancestors".

Chatle, 1912

Watercolour on paper

Private collection, Canada

Writing of the monumental Haida poles she encountered in Cha-atl, Carr noted: "The wood in them was bleached out, but looked green from the mosses which grew in the chinks, and the tufts of grass on the heads of the figures stuck up like coarse hair. The human faces carved on the totem poles were stern and grim, the animal faces fierce and strong... Everything about Cha-atl was so vast and deep you shrivelled up".

A Moment in the Spotlight

After a fifteen year hiatus from art making – during which she occupied herself with her tasks as a landlady and dog breeder – Carr was included in the 1927 landmark exhibition *Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern*, staged at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa and touring on to Toronto and Montreal. This exposure brought Carr sudden national attention, and a new sense of community. While visiting eastern Canada to attend the show's opening, Carr met the members of the Group of Seven, who embraced her vision, offering her the experience of artistic fellowship for the first time in her life. Her ensuing friendship with leading Group of Seven painter and Theosophist Lawren Harris would be a source of enormous encouragement, deepening her understanding of modern painting and her commitment to art's spiritual aspirations. "I know they are building an art worthy of our great country," she wrote of her new eastern Canadian colleagues, "and I want to have my share, to put in a little spoke for the West, one woman, holding up my end."

Grizzly Bear Totem, Angidah, Nass River, c.1930

Oil on canvas

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. C.S. Band, Toronto, 1968

Kispiox, 1928

Watercolour and graphite on paper

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

Three Totems, 1929-1930

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

Carr's initial study for *Three Totems* was made in Kispiox, and showed a village under open skies. In this finished work, however, the scene is reimagined as a claustrophobic quasi-interior, with the bold modelling of sculptural form heightening the presence of the figures to theatrical effect.

09

The Raven, 1928-1929

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of Dr. Abraham and Mrs. Naomi Greenberg

Big Eagle, Skidigate, B.C., c.1930

Watercolour on paper

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, donated in memory of Dorothy
Plaunt Dyde

Silhouette No. 2, 1930-1931

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

"Indian Art broadened my seeing, loosened the formal tightness I had learned in England's schools," Carr wrote, describing the multiple influences that were shaping her vision. "Its bigness and stark reality baffled my white man's understanding. I was as Canadian-born as the Indian but behind me were the Old World heredity and ancestry... I had been trained to see outsides only, not struggle to pierce."

Totem Mother, Kitwancool, 1928

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

Carr sketched this pole during a visit to the village of Gitanyow (Kitwancool), on the Kitwanga River in Northern BC; you will find that sketch in the display case in this gallery. Once back in the studio, she quickly worked it up into a full-scale oil on canvas, finding in it a figure of maternal strength.

Remembering the Gitanyow poles years later, she wrote: "Several times the figure of a woman that held a child was represented... The mothers expressed all womanhood – the big wooden hands holding the child were so full of tenderness they had to be distorted enormously in order to contain it all. Womanhood was strong in Kitwancool..."

08

Totemic Figure in the Forest, Date unknown

Watercolour on paper

Private collection, Canada

"She appeared to be neither wooden nor stationary, but a singing spirit, young and fresh, passing through the jungle," Carr wrote of a carving like this one discovered on her journeys. "No violence coarsened her; no power domineered to wither her. She was graciously feminine. Across her forehead her creator had fashioned the Sistheutl, or mystical two-headed sea-serpent. One of its heads fell to either shoulder..."

Blunden Harbour, c.1930

Oil on canvas

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Purchased 1937

Notwithstanding her assertions to the contrary, Carr at times worked from photographs, in this case a picture of Blunden Harbour taken by the anthropologist Charles Newcombe. Using this source material, she transformed it in curious ways - by removing the village's native inhabitants, stripping away incidental detail and creating a feel of melancholy elegy. The picture is typical of Carr's works from the period following her

eastern exposure, having a more dramatic a mood and a silken paint handling.

Zunoqua, 1930

Watercolour and graphite on paper

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

The Dzunoqua, or Wild Woman of the Woods, held a fascination for Carr, and she was intrigued by what she took to be a figure of female force. (In fact, the Dzunoqua could present itself in either male or female form.) Later in life, Carr recalled her encounter with a carving of this fearsome being: "The power that I felt was not in the thing itself, but in some tremendous force behind it, that the carver believed in."

Terrible Totem, Koskimo, c.1930

Watercolour and graphite on paper

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Kitwancool Totems, 1928

Oil on canvas

Hart House Art Collection, University of Toronto. Donated by the graduating class of 1929

Kitwancool Totems is one of Carr's best loved works, featuring the same pole (on the right) that appears in *Totem Mother*, *Kitwancool* - also on view in this gallery. The original study she made of this scene reveals a village in the background, while her final oil on canvas rendering of the view is shorn of detail and infused with the glow of twilight, with particular emphasis placed on the sensuality of the sculptural forms.

Display case:

Carr studied indigenous art and culture throughout her life.

During her journeys of exploration on the coast she sketched in the villages, making notes for later canvases, but Carr also took advantage of her travels to examine objects in museum

collections in eastern Canada and the US. As well, she studied the leading anthropology texts of the day, gleaning what she could from those writings and visual records.

Canoes, c.1908

Graphite on paper

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Seattle Sketchbook (Nuu-Chah-Nulth Canoe), c.1930-1939

Graphite on paper

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

The Canadian Blank Drawing Book #1 (Haida pole in front of village),

c.1928

Graphite on paper

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Seattle Sketchbook (Naa-Chah-Nulth Canoe), c.1930-1939

Graphite on paper

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Ottawa Sketchbook #1 - "Frog Hat", Charles and Isabella Edenshaw, Ottawa, 1927

Graphite on paper

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Kitwancool Sketchbook, "Group of Kitwancool Poles", 1928

Graphite on paper

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Kitwancool Sketchbook - Kitwancool poles, 1928

Graphite on paper

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Kitwancool Sketchbook, Base figure of Kitwancool pole, 1928

Graphite on paper

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Kitwancool Sketchbook - Kitwancool, 1928

Graphite on paper

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Swanton Haida Figures: 16 and 17, N135, 1914-1917

Graphite on paper

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Ottawa Sketchbook #1 – Great Haida Canoe, Ottawa, c.1927

Graphite on paper

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Swanton Haida Plate III, (poles), 1914-1917

Graphite and ink on paper on beige inlay

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Drawing and Experimentation

Drawing was a constant in Carr's artistic life, and a look at her works on paper gathered in this gallery reveals the wide range of her experimentation in the media of graphite, ink and charcoal. Some of these works were studies in preparation for paintings; others were ends in themselves. Never content to settle, Carr pushed the boundaries of composition and form, responding to such diverse influences as Chinese landscape painting and the Cubism of Seattle-based artist Mark Tobey, who conducted master classes in her Victoria studio in 1928. Though she took in the artistic currents around her, in the end she always went her own way. Carr's striking Self-Portrait (1938-39) is a fitting companion to these edgy experiments, depicting a moment of rigorous self-encounter in the looking glass. Often alone and riddled with anxious self-questioning, Carr was her own toughest critic.

Interior of the Forest, Vancouver Island, c.1933

Oil on canvas

The Power Corporation of Canada Art Collection /

La Collection d'art de Power Corporation du Canada

Untitled, 1929-1930

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

Port Renfrew, 1929

Charcoal on paper

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

Untitled, 1929-1930

Charcoal on paper

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

Untitled (formalized tree forms with totemic details), 1929-1930

Charcoal on paper

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

Carr was curious about international experiments in art, including Cubism, which she had been exposed to through her friendship with Seattle-based artist Mark Tobey. Carr also saw the work of Picasso and Braque during a visit to New York in 1930. Though she eventually rejected Cubism, it was not before exploring its expressive possibilities.

Display case:

Carr used sketching to refine her expression. "When I had discovered my subject, I sat before it some while before I touched a brush, feeling my way into it," she wrote, "asking myself these questions. 'What attracted you to this particular subject? Why do you want to paint it? What is its core, the thing you are trying to express?'" The sketches reveal Carr's search for her subjects, and the wide range of her stylistic approaches.

Emily Carr in "the elephant", Esquimalt Lagoon, May 1934

Collection of Richard and Nancy Self

Ontario Blank Drawing Book #6 - (forest abstract), c.1930-1939
Watercolour on paper
Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Ontario Blank Drawing Book #6 - (forest abstract), c.1930-1939
Watercolour on paper
Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Ontario Blank Drawing Book #7 - "Tree", c.1930-1939
Graphite on paper
Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Mr. Be Sketchbook, "Tree", c.1930-1939
Graphite on paper
Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Untitled Sketchbook - (tree and upwards branches), c.1929
Graphite on paper
Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Ontario Blank Drawing Book #7 - (forest abstract), c.1930-1939
Graphite on paper
Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

On display:

Self-Portrait, 1938-1939
Oil on paper mounted on hardwood
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Gift of Peter Bronfman,
1990

Carr's *Self-Portrait* expresses her often lonely and defiant nature, calling us to attention with her challenging stare. "I don't fit anywhere, so I'm out of everything and I ache and ache," she wrote a few years before she made this picture. "I don't fit in the family and I don't fit in the church and I don't fit in my own house as a landlady. It's dreadful - like a game of

musical chairs. I'm always out, never get a seat in time; the music always stops first."

Carr's frustration with her own expressive capacities was another source of suffering, though it was one she knew she shared with others. "Every creative individual despairs, always has since the beginning of time," she wrote. "No matter how fine the things are, there are always finer things to be done and still finer ad infinitum... "

Old Growth Cedar, c.1930
Charcoal on paper
Private collection, Vancouver

Solitary Tree, c.1931-1933
Charcoal on wove paper
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Purchased 1946

The Tree, c.1931-1933
Charcoal on buff wove paper
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Purchased 1956

British Columbia Forest, c.1930
Oil on paper
McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg.
Gift of Dr and Mrs Max Stern, Dominion Gallery, Montreal

Forest Scene, c.1938-1945
Brush drawing on paper
Private collection

Trees, c.1938-1945
Brush drawing on paper
Private collection

These ink sketches reveal Carr's interest in Asian art. A champion of the local Victoria artist Lee Nan, whom she befriended, Carr was fascinated by Chinese brushwork and its

expressive fluidity. This was an interest she shared with her colleague and Group of Seven painter Frederick Varley, then teaching at the Vancouver School of Art.

Untitled, 1929-1930

Charcoal on paper

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

A New Freedom

At the suggestion of her mentors, Lawren Harris and Mark Tobey, Carr abandoned her exclusive attention to indigenous Northwest Coast subject matter, striking out in a fresh direction: landscape. Here, in her new signature medium of oil and petrol, Carr unleashed her creative energies with unprecedented boldness, capturing her vivid experience of trees and skies with loose, fluid brushstrokes that seem to dance and sway. Walt Whitman was one of Carr's favourite poets, as he was to many Canadian artists and writers of the day, and the British Romantic poets were also a source of inspiration. In these consummate works, poetic rapture seems to take on painterly flesh in feathery, lashing lines and vibrant washes of colour. "To gain freedom I must use broad surfaces, not stint material nor space," Carr wrote, describing her transition to landscape painting. "I bought cheap paper by the quire. Carrying a light, folding cedar-wood drawing board, a bottle of gasoline [petrol], large bristle brushes and oil paints, I spent all the time I could in the woods."

Sunlight in the Woods, c.1934

Oil on paper

Collection of A.K. Prakash

Forest, c.1935

Oil on canvas

The Power Corporation of Canada Art Collection / La

Collection d'art de Power Corporation du Canada

Sunshine and Tumult, 1939

Oil on paper mounted on hardboard

Art Gallery of Hamilton. Bequest of H.S. Southam, CMG, LL.D.,
1966

Happiness, 1939

Oil on paper

Collection of the University of Victoria Legacy Art Galleries. Gift
of Nikolai and Myfanwy Pavelic

“The trees are so inexplicably beautiful! I’ve been thinking about them, how in a way they are better than we humans,” Carr wrote towards the end of her life. “They are more obedient to God and recognize him clearer. They go straight ahead doing what God tells them; they never pause or question; they grow, always moving in growth, always unfolding, never in a hurry, never behind, doing things in their season. God did not give them the right to choose good and evil like He did us so they don’t make a big mess of things.”

↪10

Windswept Trees, c.1937-1938

Oil on paper

Collection of the University of Victoria Legacy Art Galleries; Gift
of John and Katharine Maltwood

While other artists might have sought out only the monumental, old growth trees, Carr was equally fascinated by the landscape in scruffy transition. “The other woods, just across the way, is different in type”, Carr wrote in her journals, describing a landscape such as this one. “It has been liberally logged and a few giants are left, but there are lots of little frivolous pines, very bright and green as to tips. The wind passes over them gaily, ruffling their merry, fluffy tops and sticking-out petticoats.”

Forest Interior, c.1936
Oil on paper on hardboard
Private collection, Canada

Carr's experiments at times brought her into the realm of the hallucinatory, territory she explores in this vivid work on paper. "Rhythm and space, space and rhythm, how can I learn more about these?" Carr asked herself in one journal entry. "Well, old girl, you'll have to get down and dig."



Spring, c.1936-1937
Oil on paper
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Ruth Humphrey Estate

"Sketching in the big woods is wonderful," Carr wrote. "You go, find a space wide enough to sit in and clear enough so that the undergrowth is not drowning you. Then being elderly, you spread your camp stool and sit and look round. 'Don't see much here.' 'Wait.' Out comes a cigarette. The mosquitoes back away from the smoke. 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 that you had not noticed come out, timidly or boldly."

The Old Fir Tree, c.1936-1937
Oil on paper mounted on plywood
Art Gallery of Alberta Collection, gift of H.S. Southam Esq.,
Ottawa, 1945

Carr often saw human attributes in trees, and related to them as fellow beings. Here, she pictures the spiky remnants of a stout old survivor. Perhaps she saw in this tree an echo of herself, battered by life but still standing firm against a swirling sky.

Glade, c.1940

Oil on paper mounted on hardboard

Collection Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Gift of Max and Iris Stern Foundation

Leading international artist Peter Doig spent his formative years in Canada, and has remained an astute observer of Canadian art. Of Carr's experiments in oil and petrol, he says: "These paintings by Carr go beyond just description - it's about the feeling of what's being painted... You can really sense her feeling her subject through the brush." Doig adds: "If these had been her early paintings, you'd have to wonder what would have happened. They are travelling toward real abstraction."

Undergrowth, 1941

Oil on Manila paper

University of Alberta Art Collection, University of Alberta Museums, 1950.58. Gift of Emma Read Newton (1894 - 1980)

Forest, 1932-33

Oil on Paper

McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg. Gift of Dr and Mrs Max Stern, Dominion Gallery, Montreal

Forest (Tree Trunks), c.1938-1939

Oil on wove paper mounted on Masonite

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Gift of Campbell Merrett, Westmount, Quebec, 1991

Forest Interior, BC, c.1939

Oil on paper mounted on plywood

Collection of Larry and Sherry Killam

Out to the Sea, Up to the Sky

The ocean has always been the source of life and sustenance for British Columbia's indigenous peoples, a teeming world of sea mammals, fish and birds forever flowing and changing through the seasons. In her later years, Carr responded to this

maritime world with ecstatic images of summer seas and skies, paintings that surge with cosmic energy and joy. For Carr, nature was an expression of God, infused with the divine. With visionary insight, she saw the devastation of old growth forests as transgressions of the sacred, referring in her writings to the cut tree stumps as "screamers", and decrying the mercantilism of her colonial culture, in which landscape was reduced to mere commodity. In this, she felt herself in sympathy with the native peoples of the coast, whose harvesting and use of natural resources was marked by gratitude and reverence for the bounty of the natural world.

Broom, Beacon Hill, 1937

Oil on paper mounted on hardboard

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, The Thomas Gardiner Keir Bequest

As Carr entered old age, she found her epiphanies closer at hand, on the windswept bluffs near her Victoria home. "What I am struggling for is movement and expanse - liveness," she wrote in her diary. "By George, it's living out there on the Beacon Hill cliffs." Today, Carr is buried near Beacon Hill Park, her body at one with the landscape that had inspired her so profoundly.

Arbutus Tree, 1922

Oil on canvas

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Thomas Gardiner Keir Bequest, 1990

Young Pines and Sky, c.1935

Oil on paper

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

Scorned as Timber, Beloved of the Sky, 1935

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust

One of Carr's most iconic works, *Scorned as Timber, Beloved of the Sky* celebrates the striving, singular spirit, as well as nature's regenerative vitality. Here, a lone tree is stranded in a clear-cut landscape, a willowy survivor reaching for the heavens. "There is nothing so strong as growing", Carr wrote. "No killing nor stamping down can destroy it. Life is in the soil. Touch it with air and light and it bursts forth like a struck match".

012

Fir Tree and Sky, c.1935-1936

Oil on canvas

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Bequest of Mrs.

J.P.Barwick (From the Douglas M. Duncan Collection) 1985

Carr often expressed her horror at the industrial logging practices of the day. "There's a torn and splintered ridge across the stumps I call the 'screamers'," she wrote. "These are the unsawn last bits, the cry of the tree's heart, wrenching and tearing apart just before she gives that sway and the dreadful groan of falling, that dreadful pause while her executioners step back with their saws and axes resting and watch. It's a horrible sight to see a tree felled, even now, though the stumps are grey and rotting".

War Canoes, Alert Bay, c.1908

Watercolour on paper

Private collection, Vancouver

War Canoes, Alert Bay, 1912

Oil on canvas

Collection of Michael Audain and Yoshiko Karasawa

Carr explored the carved canoe as a subject throughout her career, its dramatic, sweeping shape inspiring her efforts in a variety of media. These paintings of traditional Kwakwaka'wakw canoes depict the same vessels that appeared in Edward S. Curtis' sensational silent film *In the Land of the Head Hunters*

(1914). Using photography and film, Curtis documented the coast at roughly the same time as Carr, capturing the likenesses of native subjects attired in deliberately antiquated clothing and regalia. By comparison, Carr's depictions seem downright homey, with village adults and children in contemporary attire depicted in the background, gathering on the beach.

013

Indian War Canoe (Alert Bay), 1912

Oil on cardboard

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, gift of A. Sidney Dawes

014

Strait of Juan de Fuca, c.1936

Oil on paper

McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg. Gift of Dr and Mrs Max Stern, Dominion Gallery, Montreal

"Now it seems to me the first thing to seize on in your layout is the direction of your main movement, the sweep of the whole thing as a unit", Carr wrote. "One must be very careful about the transition of one curve of direction into the next, vary the length of the wave of space but keep it going, a pathway for the eye and the mind to travel through and into the thought..."

Landscape, 1935-1936

Oil on canvas

Collection Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Gift of Dr and Mrs Max Stern

Untitled (Seascape), 1935

Oil on paper mounted on hardboard

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, anonymous gift

Carr's studies of ocean and sky surge with vitality, recalling the work of other modern visionaries who sought to capture the life force in their art. "People often connect my work with Van

Gogh – compare it,” Carr wrote in her journal, revealing her awareness of European art. With characteristic bluntness, she added: “Van Gogh was crazy, poor chap, but he felt the ‘go’ and movement of life; his things ‘shimmered’”.

Sea and Sky, c.1936

Oil on paper

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, anonymous gift

“Out on the cliffs sketching for the first time this year. It was unbelievably good, snug and warm”, Carr confided in her diary. “Protected by the bank from the north wind, I put my ‘whole’ into it – sky and sea. Came home and built a big paper sketch from the small, got quite a sweep and swirl to the thing and lost it again. Will whack again tomorrow. Very happy all day”.

Sky, 1935-1936

Oil on paper

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Purchased 1937

In this masterful study of light, reflection and heavenly movement, Carr captures the ineffable, a feat achieved through no end of striving. “I brought my thought sketch home and thrilled acutely, putting it on a large sheet”, she wrote, describing the making of one such work. “It seems as if those shimmering seas can scarcely bear a hand’s touch. That which moves across the water is scarcely a happening, hardly even as solid a thing as a thought, for you can follow a thought. It’s more like a breath, involuntary and alive, coming, going, always there but impossible to hang on to. Oh! I want to get that thing. It can’t be done with hands of flesh and pigments. Only spirit can touch this”.

Clover Point, Victoria, BC, c.1936

Oil on paper

Collection of Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta.

Carr admired the poetry of Walt Whitman, and had several editions of his verse in her possession at the time of her death. The passage below, from *Perfect Miracles*, was one of her favourites, highlighted in pencil in her various copies now held at the Royal BC Museum, BC Archives:

To me, every hour of the light and dark is a
 miracle,
Every inch of space is a miracle,
Every square yard of the surface of the earth is
spread with the same,
Every cubic foot of the interior swarms with the
 same...
To me the sea is a continual miracle,
The fishes that swim—the rocks—the motion
of the waves...

Sketchbook display case

Carr declares her pictorial concerns in this small sketch to the left - Rhythm, Weight, Space, Force - attributes of the natural world that she explores on a larger scale in the sweeping oceanscapes gathered in this gallery. Now older and unable to travel, Carr turned her attention to the coves and bluffs near her Victoria home, wringing fresh perception and inspiration from each encounter.

Ontario Blank Drawing Book #1 - (Shoreline landscape), 1930-1939

Watercolour on paper

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Seattle Sketchbook - (sketch - shoreline), c.1930-1939

Graphite on paper

Royal BC Museum, British Columbia Archives

Out to the Sea Display case

1 Northwest Coast

Helmet with Octopus/Bear, 19th century

Wood and paint

Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

1884.68.51

Helmets were often worn in battle, where they deflected arrows and clubs during hand to hand combat. This helmet, however, appears to have been made for ceremonial use in war dances. The carving depicts an octopus, possibly in the process of transforming into a sealion or a bear.

015

2 Nuu-chah-nulth

Gull Mask, 18th century

Alder wood, spruce gum, mica, feathers, paint, limpet shells and sinew

British Museum, London

Am,NWC.55

Collected by Captain James Cook during his expedition to the North Pacific (1776-1779), the Gull Mask brims with the vitality and jocularly of this mischievous scavenger. The eyes and other details were painted with mica, to produce a glittering effect when danced in firelight. Limpet shells concealed in a compartment within made a sound as it was danced.

For thousands of years, the indigenous people of the Northwest Coast have maintained a vibrant maritime culture. Historically, and still today, birds, fish and sea mammals are featured in ceremonial regalia, and in the stories and songs performed at potlatches. In the past, designs carved on utilitarian objects like hooks and clubs assisted in aligning the communion between the hunter and the hunted. The ocean was the leading source for food, but it was also the backdrop

for daily life. Some have speculated that the interlocking lozenge-like shapes in Northwest Coast design arose from the visual qualities of this watery world, where always-moving reflections of light and form generate an endless dance of visual variation and sinuous line.

1 Tlingit

Basket, 19th century

Spruce root and pigment

Horniman Museum and Gardens, 9.734

Split spruce root was used in the making of this finely woven basket, with its distinctively Tlingit step design. The basket may have been made for use on important occasions like the potlatch, but fine weaving of this quality was also used in making objects for trade.

2 Nuu-chah-nulth or Makah

Canoe Basket with Wave Motif, 19th century

Vegetable fibre and pigment

Horniman Museum and Gardens

30.297i/ii

3 Nuu-chah-nulth or Makah

Basket with Bird Design, 19th century

Vegetable fibre and pigment

Horniman Museum and Gardens

NN5020i/ii

4 Northwest Coast

Seal or Salmon Club, Date unknown

Whale bone

British Museum, London

Am1949,22.48

The curatorial records on this object denote only that it is an object of "great antiquity", and the simplicity of the engraved design is consistent with that assessment. Having taken on the

patina of time, this solid piece of whale bone has seen much use, as its smoothly worn handle attests.

5 Haida (crest painting attributed to Charles Edenshaw)
Hat, 19th century
Spruce root and paint
Murderme Collection
DHC 6530

6 Haida
Hat with Large Bird Design (Raven),
19th century
Spruce root and paint
Horniman Museum and Gardens
NN6473

Weavers made hats such as this by charring, stripping, broiling, splitting, soaking and then weaving the fibres of the spruce root, with each part of the hat requiring a different pattern. These hats protected wearers from both the sun and the rain, and were in constant use on the coast. This hat depicts the profile of a raven, seen from either side, with its tail feathers behind. A whale adorns the front.

7 Haida
Hat with Bird Design, 19th century
Spruce root, cedar bark and paint
Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford
1884.91.19

Spruce root hats were decorated with crest designs that declared the clan identity of the wearer, but also invoked the protection of the guardian ancestor. This hat bears the image of a large bird – likely an eagle or raven.

8 Nuu-chah-nulth
Fish Hook, 18th century

Root, bone/antler, bark and sinew
British Museum, London
Am.2354

The design of fish hooks reveals the ingenuity with materials characteristic of Northwest Coast cultures. Here, a root is stripped, steamed and bent to achieve this shape, ideal for catching fish.

016

9 Tlingit
Halibut hook with Crest Designs,
18th century
Wood, bone, split root and cherry bark
Horniman Museum and Gardens
27.4.61/31

10 Haida or Tlingit
Halibut Hook, 18th century
Alder wood, bone/antler and cherry bark
British Museum, London
Am.9860

Halibut hooks were often carved with crest figures, which served to mediate the natural world and ensure a plentiful catch. Here, a halibut/human is captured in the moment of transformation. The bone barb suggests a date prior to 1830. After that time, metal barbs became widely available through trade with the Europeans.