

# A Curator's View: Ian Thom Selects



Jock Macdonald  
*Fall (Modality 16)* 1937  
Oil on canvas  
Vancouver Art Gallery  
Acquisition Fund

## TEACHER'S STUDY GUIDE FALL 2018

**Vancouver**  
Artgallery

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# Vancouver Art Gallery

## Teacher's Guide for School Programs

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The exhibition *A Curator's View: Ian Thom Selects* unites approximately ninety historical and contemporary works selected by Ian Thom, former Senior Curator-Historical, from the permanent collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery. The exhibition presents his deliberately personal take on what is important in the Gallery's holdings and features works in a variety of media including installation, painting, photography, sculpture and prints.

This guide will assist you in preparing for your class tour of the exhibition *A Curator's View: Ian Thom Selects*. It also provides follow-up activities to facilitate discussion after your visit to the Gallery. Engaging in the suggested activities before and after your visit will reinforce ideas generated by the tour and build continuity between the Gallery experience and your ongoing work in the classroom. Most activities require few materials and can be adapted easily to the age, grade level and needs of your students. Underlined words in this guide are defined in the Vocabulary section.

The tour of *A Curator's View: Ian Thom Selects* has three main goals:

- to consider the role of a curator in the exhibition process and gallery setting,
- to consider diverse artistic traditions and disciplines,
- to explore individual artworks in terms of ideas, materials, techniques and inspiration.

## THE EXHIBITION: *A Curator's View: Ian Thom Selects*

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The exhibition *A Curator's View: Ian Thom Selects* unites historical and contemporary works as selected by Ian M. Thom, former Senior Curator–Historical, from the permanent collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Over his thirty-year tenure at the Gallery as Senior Curator, Thom has curated more than eighty exhibitions and stewarded hundreds of acquisitions. Thom's journey at the Gallery began when he held the positions of Cataloguer and Registrar between 1976 and 1978—during which time he was the first to catalogue the Emily Carr works in the gallery's collection. Not only has Thom contributed greatly to research on the life and work of Carr, he also has published more than forty essays on other eminent Canadian artists and has written thirteen published books. In 2008, Thom was appointed to the Order of Canada, and in 2012 he received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal.

Deliberately personal, this exhibition focuses on Thom's selection of highlights from the more than 12,000 works in the Gallery's collection, offering an individual take on what is important in the Gallery's holdings and why. This exhibition openly examines both the personal meaning and the larger institutional importance of the works on view and will provide insight into a curator's thought process in bringing works into the Gallery's collection. *A Curator's View* includes an impressive range of works by local, national and international artists in a wide variety of media including installation, painting, photography, sculpture and works on paper, and highlights the breadth and depth of the Gallery's collection. Artists featured in the exhibition include Emily Carr, Robert Davidson, Gathie Falk, Andy Warhol and members of the Group of Seven, among others.

Organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Ian M. Thom, former Senior Curator–Historical

## ARTIST BACKGROUNDS

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The following background information highlights some of the artists whose work may be explored in the school tour.

### **B.C. Binning (1909–1976)**

B.C. Binning was born in Alberta and lived in Vancouver for most of his life. As a boy he spent much of his time visiting his grandfather's architectural offices, and when he moved to the West Coast he was on the water much of the time, boating and fishing. Both pastimes influenced him as an artist. He had planned to become an architect, but during an extended illness he began to draw and turned his attention to the study of art instead. After attending the Vancouver School of Art, he travelled with his wife to England and the USA to pursue his studies in art. In 1955 he became head of the Department of Fine Arts at the University of British Columbia and curator of its gallery, a position he held for many years.

Binning's subject matter was clearly influenced by his passions. Over the years, even as his work became increasingly abstract, he returned repeatedly to images of the sea and marine life. His lyrical compositions, informed by his love of architecture, always retained balance, harmony and order. He is represented by several paintings in the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. He lived in Vancouver until his death.

### **Emily Carr (1871–1945)**

Born in 1871, Emily Carr is one of the most important British Columbia artists of her generation, best known for her work documenting the villages and totem poles of the Indigenous peoples of BC, and for her paintings of the forests of Vancouver Island.

Carr studied art in San Francisco, London and then France, where she was introduced to outdoor sketching along with new approaches to art making. In 1912, after her return to Canada, she travelled north, visiting Indigenous villages on the Skeena River and Haida Gwaii, and she produced her first major canvases of Indigenous subject matter. In these works, influenced by her explorations of Modernism in Europe, she used bright colours and broken brushwork. Carr offered these works for sale to the provincial government, which rejected the work on the grounds that it was not “documentary”—it was, in essence, too abstract, too specifically an artist's vision. Dejected, she returned to Victoria to make a living by running a boarding house, raising sheepdogs, making pottery and giving art lessons. Between 1913 and 1927, Carr produced very little painting.

In 1927, Carr's work was included in the exhibition *West Coast Art: Native and Modern* at the National Gallery in Ottawa. This event was her introduction to other artists, particularly members of the Group of Seven, who recognized the quality of her work. In the 1930s, Carr began devoting most of her attention to landscape, particularly the forest, as her subject. These paintings express her strong identification with the British Columbia landscape and her belief that a profound expression of spirituality could be found in nature. They are among her strongest and most forceful works, in which she developed her own Modernist style of rich, layered coloration and increasing abstraction.

In the late 1930s, as her health worsened, Carr began to focus more energy on writing, producing an important series of books. They included *Klee Wyck*, a book of stories based on her experiences with Indigenous people, which won the Governor General's Award for Literature in 1941. She died in 1945 in Victoria at the age of seventy-four, recognized as an artist and writer of major importance.

**Robert Davidson (b. 1946)**

Robert Davidson is one of Canada's most important contemporary artists and a leading figure in the renaissance of Haida culture. Born in Hydaburg, Alaska, in 1946, Davidson spent his early years in the Haida community of Old Massett. The great-grandson of the acclaimed Haida artist Charles Edenshaw, Davidson learned to carve from his father and grandfather and was already an accomplished carver in his twenties. After apprenticing with the renowned Haida artist Bill Reid for eighteen months, Davidson went on to study at the Emily Carr College of Art and Design. In 1969, he carved a 12-metre totem pole for the village of Old Massett that was said to be the first significant pole raised on Haida Gwaii in more than ninety years.

Davidson expanded his skills to become a printmaker and to work in gold and silver. While remaining true to precise technical traditions of Haida art and to the legacy of Haida stories, Davidson has also established a distinct personal style, pushing and changing the classic Haida formline in innovative ways. A significant part of his life's work has been to pass on Haida traditional knowledge, and he devotes himself to reclaiming and teaching Haida songs, stories and visual art forms.

In 1995 he received the National Aboriginal Achievement Award for his contribution to First Nations art and culture. He holds numerous honorary degrees. In 1995 he received the Order of British Columbia, and in 1996 he was appointed to the prestigious Order of Canada. In 2010 he received both the Governor General's Award for Visual Arts and the Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts.

**Gathie Falk (b. 1928)**

Born in Manitoba, Gathie (short for Agatha) Falk moved to Vancouver in 1947 and taught elementary school. She studied art in her spare time and became a full-time artist in 1965. In the 1970s, she gained recognition for her ceramic sculpture and performance art. Falk works with a variety of media including painting, installation and papier mâché.

As Falk's career progressed, she utilized a variety of media to continue her exploration of the "veneration of the ordinary." She has stated that although her work is removed from reality, it does have roots in her daily living. Her neighbourhood, friends, sense of community, pets, furniture, home, garden, English Bay, the night sky and rituals relating to food and drink all have provided and continue to supply sources for her imagery.

In 1990, Falk was awarded the prestigious Gershon Iskowitz Prize for "the extraordinary range of her work and the substantial contribution she has made" through her artistic achievements. In 1997 she was appointed to the Order of Canada in recognition of her contribution to the history of contemporary Canadian art.

**Lawren Harris (1885–1970)**

Lawren Stewart Harris is one of the most important figures in the history of Canadian art. His long career took him from his birthplace of Brantford, Ontario, to Europe, the United States and throughout Canada. After settling in Vancouver in 1940, he was a central figure in the artistic life of British Columbia. Through both his life and his work, Harris helped establish an identity for Canadian art and was a driving force in the development of Modernist painting.

Visionary in his art, Harris was also a great supporter of art, and of artists who were interested in exploring Canada's rugged northern landscape. A founder of the Group of Seven and the Canadian Group of Painters, he collected the work of younger artists and encouraged others to support it as well. As the only wealthy person amongst his fellow painters, he provided financial support that made early sketching trips into wilderness areas possible. Harris not only saw the

artistic and cultural potential of his country, but also made works that have helped to define the very identity of Canada.

After the dissolution of the Group of Seven in 1933, Harris had the courage to take his own art into the realm of abstraction at a time when most of the public was unwilling to follow. His abstract work reflected his interest and search for deeper spiritual meaning. In 1940 he moved to Vancouver, where he remained until his death in 1970. During these later years he became a major figure in the community and an important leader in the life of the Vancouver Art Gallery, in particular for encouraging the development of its Emily Carr Trust collection.

### **Jock Macdonald (1897–1960)**

A painter, watercolourist, teacher, printmaker, illustrator and commercial artist, Jock Macdonald was a significant figure in the development of abstract art in Canada. A contemporary of the Group of Seven, and a close friend of Emily Carr, he was inspired early on by the Western landscape and spirituality. Macdonald was a highly respected, influential teacher and a member of Painters Eleven, Toronto's first abstract art society.

Macdonald was born in Scotland into an artistic family and apprenticed as an architectural draughtsman. He studied at Edinburgh College of Art, specializing in textiles and commercial advertising, and qualifying to teach art. After graduating in 1922, he moved to England, working first as a fabric designer, and then as a design teacher at Lincoln School of Art. In 1926, Macdonald moved to Vancouver to join the faculty at the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts (VSDAA).

In 1933, Macdonald left the VSDAA and co-founded the British Columbia College of Arts. When the school went bankrupt after only two years, Macdonald moved to isolated Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island, where he found great inspiration in the natural landscape and Indigenous culture. Ill health forced him back to Vancouver in 1936, and he took up teaching again. Macdonald moved briefly to Calgary in 1946, to take a position at the Provincial Institute of Technology, but in the following year went on to the Ontario College of Art in Toronto, where he spent the remainder of his career. The following year, he went to France on a fellowship and spent several months painting in Venice.

Macdonald's first stylized, linear landscapes were influenced by his design background. Over time, he became increasingly confident in oil and colour, creating bolder forms. By the mid-1930s, he was already painting his first semi-abstract works, which he later called *modalities*, and sought a spiritual and symbolic interpretation of nature.

Macdonald exhibited his work widely both nationally and internationally, and held his first solo show in 1941 at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Affiliated with many artist societies, he was a founding member of the Canadian Group of Painters and Federation of Canadian Artists, and was instrumental in founding the Calgary Group. He was an Associate of the Royal Canadian Academy and a recipient of the Queen's Coronation Medal (1953). Macdonald died in Toronto in December 1960.

### **Jack Shadbolt (1909–1998)**

Jack Shadbolt moved from England to Canada as a young child and responded enthusiastically to the natural setting of British Columbia. A prolific artist, he exhibited his work frequently, often surprising his followers by taking unexpected new directions in his work.

Shadbolt studied art in Vancouver, learning from many of the important artists of the time. Passionate about art education, he taught many generations of students at Kitsilano High School, the Vancouver School of Art and the University of British Columbia. Shadbolt met Emily

Carr, who in his words “overwhelmed” him as a young artist. He continued to be deeply affected by her art for much of his artistic career.

Over his lifetime, Shadbolt used many diverse media, working with charcoal, oil, watercolour, print, acrylic, ink and collage. He created single images as well as multiple panels and large-scale murals and tapestries. He wrote and published three books containing his art and his writings. With his wife, Doris Shadbolt (Emily Carr’s foremost scholar and biographer), he travelled widely and was enormously inspired as an artist by these journeys. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, from Tokyo to Mexico to the Guggenheim in New York. He won numerous major international art awards, represented Canada in the 1956 Venice Biennale and was awarded the Order of Canada.

### **Andy Warhol (1928–1987)**

Andy Warhol is considered the creator of the Pop art movement in the United States in the 1960s. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, he studied as a commercial artist. On graduation in 1949 he went to New York, where he worked as an illustrator for *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar* and other magazines. He soon became one of New York’s most successful commercial illustrators. In 1962 he started making brightly coloured multiple silkscreen prints of widely familiar figures such as Marilyn Monroe. He also explored disturbing mass-viewed images such as a newspaper photo of an electric chair, and a graphic recording of the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Warhol was renowned for blurring the lines between fine art and the commercial arts applied in producing magazine illustrations, comic books, record albums and advertising campaigns. He mass-produced his own art in a warehouse space that he named The Factory in 1962. In this art and filmmaking studio, he employed “art workers” to mass-produce prints, posters and shoes that he had designed, and to create more than 300 films. At a time when fine art was seen as separate from commercial pursuits, Warhol challenged the art world to consider the relationship between art, everyday life and the mass production of commercial images. Some of his best-known works are the brightly coloured multiple silkscreen prints of products such as celebrities and Campbell’s soup cans. These works were the subject of much debate in the art world, bringing both Warhol and Pop art into the national spotlight for the first time. Warhol died in New York City in 1987.



## PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: About the Artists (intermediate and secondary students)

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### **Objective:**

Students read, research and share information about some of the artists represented in *A Curator's View: Ian Thom Selects*.

### **Materials:**

- writing materials
- access to the Internet
- Artist Information Sheet (page 10), Student Worksheet (page 12)

### **Process:**

1. Divide the students into seven groups. Cut up the Artist Information Sheet (page 10) and assign one artist to each group.
2. Give each group a copy of the Student Worksheet (page 12), and ask them to transfer the information about their artist to the appropriate box.
3. Have students figure out what they need to know to complete the section on their artist, and find it on the Internet, either at home or at school. Older students can find more information; younger students, just the basics.
4. Ask each group to find/copy/sketch a piece of work by their artist on a separate piece of paper. Do not label the sketches with the artist's name or any other information.
5. Have each group present the information on their artist while the rest of the class adds the information to their worksheets.
6. After the presentations, lay out the images and have the class guess which image is by which artist.

### **Conclusion:**

Discuss the following:

- What were some of the most interesting things that the students learned or discovered?
- Which artists and/or kinds of artwork made the students curious about seeing the actual work in the exhibition?
- Are there any artists, ways of working or ideas that the students would like to know more about?

# Artist Information Sheet

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## **B.C. Binning (1909–1976)**

- Born in Alberta, lived in Vancouver most of his life, died in Vancouver
- Planned on becoming an architect, but began to draw during an extended illness
- Travelled to England and the USA to study art
- Artwork was influenced by his interest in sea and marine life, as well as architecture
- Worked in an abstract style

## **Emily Carr (1871–1945)**

- Born and died in Victoria, British Columbia
- Studied art in San Francisco, England and France, travelled through British Columbia
- Painted mainly forest landscapes
- Lived mostly alone, kept lots of animals
- Paintings were influenced by her spiritual beliefs
- Toward the end of her life wrote many books, which were well received
- Sketched outdoors using charcoal or thinned oil paint on paper
- Made final paintings in her studio using oil paint on canvas

## **Robert Davidson (b. 1946)**

- Born in Alaska, lived early years in Haida Gwaii
- Is the great-grandson of the acclaimed Haida artist Charles Edenshaw
- Learned to carve from his father, grandfather and Bill Reid
- Studied at Emily Carr College of Art and Design
- Is a master carver of totem poles and masks, printmaker, painter and jeweller
- Holds numerous honorary degrees and has received many awards, including induction into the Order of Canada in 1996 and the Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts in 2010

## **Gathie Falk (b. 1928)**

- Born in Manitoba, had a hard childhood
- Studied, lives and works in Vancouver
- Work includes paintings, sculpture, installations and performance art
- Is inspired by the everyday, the ordinary, and her community to make her art

## **Lawren Harris 1885–1970)**

- Born in Ontario, died in Vancouver
- Best known as a member of the Group of Seven who started a distinctly Canadian painting style in the early twentieth century
- Known for painting the urban landscape of Ontario, Quebec, the Rockies and the Arctic
- Was a Modernist painter who experimented with colour, form and shapes
- Preferred to sketch his landscapes outdoors; often made final works in his studio
- In later years continued to simplify and abstract elements in his landscapes until his work became completely abstract

## **Jock Macdonald (1897–1960)**

- Born in Scotland, died in Toronto
- A significant figure in the development of abstract art in Canada
- Was inspired by the Western landscape and spirituality
- Primarily a painter of linear and semi-abstract landscapes, but also a watercolourist, teacher, printmaker, illustrator and commercial artist
- Exhibited his work widely both nationally and internationally, and held his first solo show in 1941 at the Vancouver Art Gallery

**Jack Shadbolt (1909–1998)**

- Born in England, died in Vancouver
- Passionate about teaching, prolific as an artist, exhibited frequently
- Travelled extensively both to study art in Europe and to experience life abroad as an artist
- Experimented with many different artistic styles, techniques and materials
- Worked mostly in his studio, sometimes outdoors
- Wrote and published three books, which were well received

**Andy Warhol (1928–1987)**

- Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1928, died in New York City in 1987
- Considered the creator of the Pop art movement in the United States in the 1960s
- Mass-produced images from everyday life in a warehouse studio he called The Factory
- Was renowned for blurring the lines between fine art and the commercial arts
- Best-known works are the brightly coloured multiple silkscreen prints of commercial products and celebrities such as Marilyn Monroe

## Student Worksheet

	Personal Information	Type of Art	Materials Used	An Artwork
B.C. Binning				
Emily Carr				
Robert Davidson				
Gathie Falk				
Lawren Harris				
Jock Macdonald				
Jack Shadbolt				
Andy Warhol				

## PRE- or POST VISIT ACTIVITY: Abstracted Landscapes (all levels)

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### **Objective:**

Students create abstract landscapes focusing on geometric shapes and bold colours.

### **Discussion:**

Artists such as Emily Carr and Jock Macdonald were Modernists, exploring various processes to portray the landscape. They did not want to show a realistic or even idealized version of the landscape, but were experimenting with new techniques such as spontaneous brushstrokes, bold colours and geometric forms. Abstraction was a tool that they sometimes used to help express ideas of the landscape and their experiences with it. For example, by the mid-1930s Macdonald was working in a semi-abstract style, creating works he called “modalities,” in which he sought a symbolic interpretation of the natural world.

### **Materials:**

- magazines that can be cut up, coloured scrap paper
- white paper for background
- scissors, glue

### **Process:**

1. Discuss how artists such as Emily Carr and Jock Macdonald change landscapes to make them look less realistic. Show the class images of their work (see examples on page 14).
2. Discuss how artists such as Jock Macdonald create purely abstract paintings of spaces that do not exist in reality. Show the class images of Macdonald’s abstract work (see example on page 14).
3. Ask the students to think of ways to construct a landscape to make it an abstract image.
4. Have the students work individually or in small groups to create an abstract collaged landscape focusing on bold lines and geometric forms.
5. Have the students cut out images from magazines and coloured paper to construct their landscape.
6. Encourage them to fill the page, layering images as they work.
7. Display the students’ work.

### **Conclusion:**

- Have the class discuss the process and materials.
- Have the students look at the works and talk about similarities and differences in styles, perspectives, colours and composition.
- Ask the students what choices they made about space, depth and perspective.
- What shapes were most frequently used to reflect nature?

Paintings by Emily Carr



Painting by Jock Macdonald



## Examples of Student Work



Image sources:

<http://emilyafox.blogspot.com/2011/05/geometric-forest.html>

<http://juliasanderl.com/category/kms-student-work/visual-art/>

## PRE- or POST VISIT ACTIVITY: Popular Picture Prints (all levels)

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### Objective:

Students change the context of everyday objects in advertising by creating an artwork.

### Background:

Ordinary everyday objects and images inspired artists such as Andy Warhol and Greg Curnoe (1936–1992, a prodigious writer, painter, printmaker and a prominent member of the London, Ontario Regionalism Movement.) Commonplace things, commercial images and mass-produced products became their subject matter, and both artists found meaning in popular culture. They often appropriated or borrowed images from commercial products and used design elements such as line, contrasting colour and repetition of image for visual effect.

### Materials:

- magazines and newspapers
- access to a photocopier
- scissors
- glue sticks
- 2–4 sheets of 8.5x11 blank white paper per student (can be cut in half)
- large sheet of construction paper or cardstock for each student
- paint, pastels and/or markers

### Process:

1. Discuss the use of popular images in art. Show students the examples of Andy Warhol and Greg Curnoe's work on page 18. Andy Warhol has transformed multiple images of Marilyn Monroe, and Greg Curnoe the image of a ten-speed bicycle and taped hockey stick blades.
2. Ask students how the artists have changed the images to make them unique.
3. Have the students look through magazines and newspapers and collect advertisements that grab their attention.
4. Spread out everyone's choices and have them discuss why they chose those images.
  - a. What design choices have the advertisers used to make their ads stand out?
  - b. How have they used colours? Texture? Patterning? Repetition?
  - c. Is there an appealing background or setting?
  - d. Is a celebrity or model being used to sell the product?
  - e. What other design elements are used to sell the product?
5. Have each student select one image of an object, product or person and cut it out.
6. Provide each student with three black and white photocopies of their chosen cut-out image.
7. Have the students cut out their photocopied images as well.
8. Have them take the cut-out image and photocopies and place them on the sheets of blank white paper but not glue them down yet—they may want to rearrange the composition as they add more elements.
9. Have the students use the art supplies to draw overtop of their photocopied images to enhance or change aspects of the image.
10. Have the students glue their cut-outs to the blank white paper once they are sure about their composition.
11. Students can use additional magazine and newspaper cut-outs, or markers and pastels, to create a background or a new context for their images.
12. Encourage students to use the formal elements of art (line, shape, colour, texture, pattern) and the other design elements discussed to enhance the image and make the central objects stand out.



13. Once they have completed all images, have the students glue them to a background piece of construction paper or cardstock.
14. Display finished works.

**Conclusion:**

Questions for discussion:

- What are the most important things to consider when creating an advertisement? An artwork?
- Is there—or should there be—a difference between the two? What? Why?
- Discuss how the image changed in moving from its original context to the new one.

Works by Andy Warhol



Works by Greg Curnoe



## Examples of Student Work



Image sources:  
www.pinterest.com

[www.springshoots.co.uk/pop-art-icons-nowphotocopy-and-students-decoratea-great-warm-up-into-a-pop-art-unit-tekenen-bov-tvardp-196.html](http://www.springshoots.co.uk/pop-art-icons-nowphotocopy-and-students-decoratea-great-warm-up-into-a-pop-art-unit-tekenen-bov-tvardp-196.html)

## PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: Working in the Open Air (all levels)

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### Objective:

Students are introduced to the artist's process of working by sketching outdoors and then, back in the classroom, creating a painting based on the sketch.

### Discussion:

Emily Carr—and many of the artists represented in this exhibition—often created sketches for their landscapes out in nature, where they could study the colours and textures of the trees, foliage, lakes and sky, and observe the way light, wind and weather affected their subjects. Artists such as Emily Carr and members of the Group of Seven began sketching in charcoal, pen, pencil or paint, and did the final work later, back in the studio. There they would make oil paintings based on—but not exactly the same as—their sketches.

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

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

### Materials:

For Part 1:

- drawing pads, or clipboards and sheets of paper
- pencil crayons, crayons or pastels

For Part 2:

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

### Process:

Part 1:

1. Discuss Carr's two-step approach to her paintings, and tell the students they are going to go outdoors and make a colour sketch as a precursor to a painting. Read them the above excerpt from Emily Carr's *Growing Pains*.
2. Choose an outdoor area with some greenery and one or more trees. Have the students decide on a starting perspective; for example:
  - close up, with tree trunk or branches filling the page,
  - from a distance, including grass, trees and sky,
  - looking up into a single tree, including the top of the tree and an expanse of sky.
3. Have them look closely at the greens and yellows of the leaves, the browns and greys of the trunk and branches, and the blues and greys of the sky. Remind them that landscape painters like Carr didn't use just one colour, but mixed and blended colours and shades to create rich, dense surfaces.

4. Have the students make a few colour sketches from different perspectives or angles, from close up and far away. Encourage them to fill the page with quick detail—broad strokes of colours, lines and shapes that include all the elements in their line of vision.

**Part 2:**

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

**Conclusion:**

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

## PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: Curator's Choice (all grades)

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### **Objective:**

Students choose an artwork and a personal object and present their collection to the class.

### **Background:**

It is the curator's job to choose, arrange and display the artwork in a gallery exhibition. In this exhibition, the curator, Ian Thom, presents a personal selection of works that, in his view, play an important role in the gallery's collection. This perspective influences and focuses our looking and understanding of the exhibition as a whole. The subsequent meanings that arise are not inherent in the artwork. Points of connection created by the curator give rise to new meanings and interpretations. In this classroom activity, students consider such consciously created connections and further their understanding of the curator's role in creating meaning.

### **Materials:**

- ❑ images of artworks from books or the Internet
- ❑ large sheets of paper, markers

### **Process:**

1. Have each student find an image of an artwork they like, from books, the Internet, the classroom or home. Have them make a copy of it and bring it to class.
2. Have the students choose an object or artwork that they have made in the past.
3. On a large sheet of paper, have each student draw two large overlapping circles—essentially a Venn diagram.
4. Have them write the title of the first artwork in the centre of one circle, and the title of their own work in the second circle.
5. Ask students to write words and/or sentences, make notes or draw diagrams in each circle, to describe, explain, interpret or respond to each work. In the overlapping area, have them note similarities or points of connection between the two works.
6. Along with the representations of both their chosen artworks, have each student interpret and explain their diagram to the class, focusing on the connections, intersections and new meanings that arise by connecting and comparing the two artworks.

### **Conclusion:**

Questions for discussion:

- Did students learn new things about each piece by considering the second work?
- What new and unexpected connections emerged? Was anything particularly surprising?
- If students could curate an exhibition of some of these works, how would they choose which ones, based on connecting themes and ideas?

# VOCABULARY

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

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

**contemporary:** art of today, produced in the second half of the 20th century or in the 21st century, often challenging traditional boundaries of materials, methods, accepted art forms and concepts. Contemporary artists use a limitless range of materials and ideas to reflect, explore and comment on the world around them.

**curator:** the person who is responsible for an exhibition—including selecting and displaying works, writing labels and organizing support materials.

**First Nations:** Indigenous people of Canada other than Inuit and Métis people.

**Group of Seven:** a group of Toronto-centred Canadian painters devoted to landscape painting (especially of northern Ontario subjects) and the creation of a national style. The group was active from 1920 to 1933. In 1933 the name was changed to the Canadian Group of Painters.

**Indigenous:** having to do with the first inhabitants of Canada: First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. There are currently 634 recognized Indigenous governments or bands across Canada, roughly half of which are in Ontario and British Columbia.

**installation:** art that is created from a wide range of materials and installed in a specific environment designed to transform the perception of a space. An installation may be temporary or permanent, and may be constructed in exhibition spaces such as museums and galleries, as well as in public and private spaces.

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

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

**performance art:** a work in any of a variety of media that is performed before a live audience. The performance itself, rather than a specific object, constitutes the artwork. Documentation is an important aspect of how performance art circulates after the fact.

**Pop art:** a term first used in the late 1950s to refer to the work of artists who took both their art forms and their subjects from popular consumer culture. Using photography, printmaking and found objects, Pop artists brought the techniques and aesthetics of advertising, comic strips, movie stardom and product packaging to fine art, generating new modes of music, architecture, visual art, design, film and literature, and taking art out of the museum and into everyday life.

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