CONVOLUTED BEAUTY

In the Company of

Emily Carr
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Curated by Lisa Baldissera

With essays by Lisa Baldissera, Vinciane Despret and Erika Dyck

MENDEL ART GALLERY
SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN
CANADA
Foreword

Convoluted Beauty: In the Company of Emily Carr features the work of Emily Carr as a key inspiration and point of departure and is the first significant presentation of Carr’s work in Saskatchewan in almost twenty years. Emily Carr (1871–1945) is internationally respected for her pioneering of modernity in Western Canada. This exhibition provides a rare international context for Carr’s work within Canada by inviting the work of key contemporary and historical artists from the United Kingdom, United States, and Germany, building on her growing international profile with exhibitions such as Documenta(13) in Kassel, Germany, in 2012 and Painting Canada: Emily Carr in British Columbia, curated by Sarah Milroy, at the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London, United Kingdom, in 2014.

Without the support of colleagues across the world, we could not have presented this exhibition. We are grateful for the collaboration of our Canadian museum partners, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection and the Vancouver Art Gallery, who have generously loaned key Carr works to us, drawn from across her career. We are also grateful for the collaboration of the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam, Studio Wallinger (London), Hauser & Wirth (London), Galerie Guido Baudach (Berlin), Metro Pictures (New York), the LeWitt Collection (Chester, Connecticut) and Galerie Hugues Charbonneau (Montreal), for their generous assistance in the presentation of works by artists Charlotte Salomon, Mark Wallinger, Thomas Zipp, Louise Lawler, and Karen Tam, respectively. The exhibition also features new commissions by Canadians Cedric and Nathan Bomford, Joanne Bristol, Karen Tam, and Kwakwaka’wakw artist Marianne Nicolson that explore the transformational themes elicited by Carr’s brief stay in England: the sense of exile and illness, the comfort of her ongoing relationship with the natural world and with animals, as well as the formulation of her own artistic identity. As always, our gratitude rests with the artists, whose artistic vision compels us, as Carr’s did those many years ago. And we gratefully acknowledge the significant efforts and insights of the collections, curatorial, and communications team, as well as those of the public program team led by Laura Kinzel, which have contributed to the success of the project.

We are grateful to our publication contributors, Erika Dyck, Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair in History of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan, and Vinciane Despret, Associate Professor in Philosophy at the University of Liège, Belgium. Despret’s text for the publication explores what she calls the peculiar Sartrean genius of Emily Carr, and her speculation on Carr’s understanding of animals and their ability to “organize” the world, while Dyck’s text focuses on clinical architecture, affect, and modernity in relation to Carr. We also thank the staff at the British Columbia Archives for their assistance with the presentation of key archival and support materials to the exhibition.

We are especially grateful to B’nai B’rith Lodge 739 and the Congregation Agudas Israel, as well as Tourism Saskatoon, for their support of this important exhibition. As always, we thank our funders, the Saskatchewan Arts Board, SaskLotteries, the Canada Council for the Arts, and the City of Saskatoon, for their ongoing support of our activities.

Gregory Burke
Executive Director and CEO
Escapology is always about escaping from those forms of bondage of which we are unaware. This is the question of the inquirer. Raising questions of things we are determined by unbeknownst to ourselves.

In 1899, at the age of 27, Emily Carr left her home in Victoria, British Columbia, and travelled to London, England, to study art, following in the footsteps of her artistic peers, the West Coast artists Sophie Pemberton and Theresa Wylde, who had attended the Westminster School of Art (fig. 1, 7). It was not the first time Carr sought to escape the limits, both literal and psychic, imposed by Victoria. In 1890, when she was eighteen, Carr had approached the family trustee, James Lawson, and asked permission to go to the California School of Design in San Francisco. He agreed, allowing Carr to extract herself from the authoritarian discipline of her elder sister, Edith, who had taken charge of her young siblings after the death of their parents. Edith’s rigidity and her lack of interest in Carr’s art had made it impossible for Emily to stay at home. But after a downturn in the family’s fortunes, Carr was forced to return to Victoria from San Francisco. It took nearly ten years for her to save enough money to finally book her passage to England. Her experiences in the United Kingdom, however, revealed a more complex layering of strategy, impulse, and purpose.

Escapology has been described as a method of escaping literal and psychic conditions of constraint. Its practitioners range from Houdini and those within the world of creative work and theory, to those occupying the liminal spaces of belonging and status, whether refugee, immigrant, or exile—and the citizen or indigenous person who, willfully or unknowingly, resists belonging or is not offered it. In the relatively conservative milieu of inter-war France, French philosopher Michel Foucault developed a tripartite strategy of escapology: exile, resistance, and transgression. Emily Carr, while embodying the Victorian sensibilities of nineteenth-century Canada, enacted a set of behaviours that parallel Foucault’s, including exiling herself from her family’s social and cultural environment, resisting its norms and expectations, and transgressing codes of conduct for a middle-class woman.
Carr did when she left Canada to pursue studies in the UK. provides a psychic portal to the idea of “crossing over” into unknown territory, as Mark Wallinger’s 2001 Venice Biennale piece, Threshold to the Kingdom, and Nathan Bomford in their commissioned installation project, Down by the River (2014), a newspaper and “composition” for birds. Carr’s relationship to animals and has created for this exhibition Le Vol Quotidien reflecting a critique of the structures of the art world. Joanne Bristol also reflects on acknowledging Carr’s special relationship to animals, particularly birds, while of...

Every aspect of every event that has happened in the course of human history, all the pain as well as all the love, is ours. This is our greatest treasure... And if one concretizes this in art, if one renders it visible, tangible to experience, one can travel through these forms—opening rather than closing the doors to the past. 3

Convoluted Beauty considers the legacy of Carr and the conditions of her production in order to examine the forces of historicization on her life and work. The exhibition explores the possibility that events—in this case of biography, knowledge production, art, and exhibition—are at once historical figurations and immediate, synchronous occurrences, openings for the possibility of encounters that are both mediated by the past and fully present.

Lauren Berlant argues that “the present is what makes itself present to us before it becomes anything else, such as an orchestrated collective event or an epoch on which we can look back... If the present is not at first an object but a mediated affect, it is also a thing that is sensed and under constant revision, a temporal genre whose conventions emerge from the personal and public filtering of the situations and events that are happening in an extended now whose very parameters (when did the present begin?) are also always there for debate.” 4

It is in considering these ephemeral parameters that this project attempts to reconsider key features of Carr’s “aura” —the signatures that have become traditional understandings of her legacy, her life, and her work—and to instead consider her within terms that Jacques Rancière has suggested, as a subject whose very parameters (when did the present begin?) are also always there for debate.

The exhibition uses as its starting point Emily Carr’s London Student Sojourn: Reunion After the Holidays, 1901, and her sketchbook for Pause, produced during her internship at the East Anglia Sanatorium in Suffol, UK. In the company of Carr are German artists Thomas Zipp and Charlotte Salomon, UK artist Mark Wallinger, and American artist Louise Lawler. New commissions by Canadians Cedric and Nathan Bomford, Joanne Bristol, and Karen Tam, and by Kwak’waka’wakw artist Marianne Nicolson, explore the transformational notions elicited by Carr’s brief stay in Britain: a sense of exile and illness, an empathetic relationship to the natural world and to animals, and the formulation of her own artistic identity.

Figure-Ground Specification in Terms of Structural Information. The Rivalry between Different Pattern Codings (2013) is an example of Thomas Zipp’s long-standing interest in psychology, psychoanalysis, and natural sciences, work that has led him to a consideration of the generative qualities of trauma and mental illness, as well as the idea of the artist as self-healer. Karen Tam explores Carr’s friendship with Chinese artist Lee Nam and the conditions of his life in colonial Victoria in her commissioned project Flying Cormorant Studio (For Lee Nam); and Marianne Nicolson reflects on issues of ecology and neo-colonialism in her painting Carnival/Carnivore (2014) and in an off-site billboard project titled Whose Land Is This Anyways? in downtown Saskatoon.

In a special collaboration with the Civic Conservatory, Birdcalls (1972–81), an installation by American artist Louise Lawler, is presented in the conservatory adjoining the Mendel Art Gallery. The inclusion of Lawler’s classic project acknowledges Carr’s special relationship to animals, particularly birds, while offering a critique of the structures of the art world. Joanne Bristol also reflects on Carr’s relationship to animals and has created for this exhibition Le Vol Quotidien (2014), a newspaper and “composition” for birds. A response to the architecture of the sanatorium has been invited by Cedric and Nathan Bomford in their commissioned installation project Down by the River, while Mark Wallinger’s 2001 Venice Biennale piece, Threshold to the Kingdom, provides a psychic portal to the idea of “crossing over” into unknown territory, as Carr did when she left Canada to pursue studies in the UK.
were also personal tragedies during this time: the death of her younger brother from TB; the end of the courtship of her last suitor, William (Mayo) Paddon; the amputation of her toe as a result of an injury that would not heal. After the first year, she attempted to stabilize herself by going to St. Ives to study **plein air** painting with the seascape painter Julius Olsson at the Porthmeor Studios (fig. 2, 3). His gruff patriarchal ways and insistence that she paint out on the beach—the acceptable vista for landscape painters of the day—where her migraines were triggered, resulted in further discomfort and tension. Only when he left for vacation was she permitted by his associate, Algernon Talmadge, to go up to the Treganna Wood to paint in the shady forest, a more unusual subject matter but one that had resonance with her British Columbia forest scenes. Olsson rejected these works, and Carr returned once more to London. She left her studies a second time and went to Bushey (fig. 4), in the rural area of Hertfordshire, to work with John Whitely at the Meadows Studios—her age being too great to study with the more well known Herbert von Herkomer, whose artist colony had attracted many young students to the area. In the small village of Bushey, Carr found some solace, but eventually her growing sense of displacement and, in Carr’s own estimation, her overwork, led to her worsening health. In 1902, after she continued to suffer migraines and illness, her friends at Belgravia called on her sister Alice, who travelled to London from Canada to help. It was finally James Lawson who, on a visit to England, met with the Belgravia family and arranged for Emily to see a doctor, who recommended her internment at East Anglia Sanatorium, where she was accepted with a diagnosis of “hysteria.” Carr’s formulation of her own subjectivity, her sense of herself, was marked by this experience. Throughout her life she worked in relative isolation on the West Coast of Canada, outside the core circles of modern art practices, which were particularly dominated by patriarchal and Eurocentric values of society and culture. Carr’s own writings reflect her difficulty in understanding the forces that came to bear on her. She vacillates between a kind of shame at her resistant behavior and a resolve that there is no other avenue available to her to express her dissent with the conditions of her life and work. Carr’s responses to these conditions may also be read through sociologist Kathleen Stewart’s concept of the body as both the “persistent site of self-recognition and the thing that always betrays us.” Despite these enormous obstacles, she went on to become one of Canada’s most eminent modern artists. As the contemporary Canadian artist Jeff Wall indicates, Carr was an originary force of modern art in the West.

**Convoluted Beauty: In the Company of Emily Carr** explores the way in which Carr’s UK experience provokes discussions of exile, interspecies relations, and the affective force of institutional architectures. The exhibition also troubles readings of mental illness, instead seeking generative and open-ended ways to consider illness, unproductivity, and ideas of the artist as self-healer.

* Space, like time, engenders forgetfulness; but it does so by setting us bodily free from our surroundings and giving us back our primitive, unattached state. Yes, it can even, in the twinkling of an eye, make something like a vagabond of the pedant and Philistine. Time, we say, is Lethe; but change of air is a similar draught, and, if it works less thoroughly, does so more quickly.

The Berghof sanatorium featured in Thomas Mann’s 1924 novel *The Magic Mountain* caters to “all the best people.” The middle classes were interred not just for tuberculosis but for mental illnesses as well, as they were in the sanatoriums of the Victorian era. In his story, Mann reflects on the decline of European civilization, marked for the author by the atrocities and end of the First World War. The sanatorium may be considered a crucial space of modernity, with its inherent reconfiguration of the patient, a shift from a sense of collectivity and community to a state of isolation and privation. One can imagine that Carr, on her way by coach to the clinic in Suffolk, felt as Mann’s character Hans Castorp does as he ascends by train to the mountaintop sanatorium to visit his cousin:

This being carried upward into regions where he had never before drawn breath, and where he knew that unusual living conditions prevailed, such as could only be described as spare or scanty—it began to work upon him, to fill him with a certain concern. Home and regular living lay not only far behind, they lay fathoms deep beneath him, and he continued to mount above them. Poised between them and the unknown, he asked himself how he was going to fare.
The clinic where Carr stayed was designed, built, and overseen by Dr. Jane Walker in 1892. Among the first sanatoria used to treat TB patients in England, it provided an alternative to being sent away to “the desert of Egypt, the high plains of California, the high table-land of South Africa, or the, perhaps, more volcanic mountains of Switzerland” for treatment. Walker was herself remarkable, one of the first female physicians in the UK. She modeled her clinic after what she considered to be a successful centre in Nordrach, located in the Black Forest in Germany, where overfeeding and frigid open-air conditions were considered keys to the restoration of health. Documents found in the Wellcome Collection in London attest to her design, financing, and oversight of the building process. In a pamphlet produced for fellow medical specialists, Walker offered a template for the “ideal sanatorium”:

My idea of such a place would be a long slope (not too steep, otherwise no grass would grow there), of a hill facing south. A southern aspect is not only advisable because of sunshine and warmth, but also because a due south wind is one of the least common and moreover it is a damp wind and not likely to cause dust. If there were some protection from the east by a fairly thick belt of pine trees so much the better...

The soil on which the sanatorium is built should be non-waterlogged, and gravel or sand is perhaps preferable to any other. In the immediate neighbourhood of the sanatorium should be non-cultivated ground; grassy slopes all round the house are the best, because they obviate dust... As to the building itself, it should be one room thick from front to back, with a corridor running the entire length of the building, from east to west, with windows to the north and a door to east and west. How many storeys the building should have must be decided by the length of the slope behind. The lower storeys the better, probably two is the best for working and practical purposes. The building may be made of stone or brick or wood, or indeed any material outside provided it is everywhere lined with bone-dry pitch pine...

Where space will allow, and space should be particularly abundant in any ideal sanatorium, there should be a covered shelter of the nature of a verandah, either quite away from the house or built as an extension of the ground floor corridor.

Windows should be numerous, and French windows in two divisions opening into the room are the best. The ordinary sash window is not advisable, because at best only half of the window space is available... The lighting should be by electric light, and the heating by some system of hot water or hot air in pipes so arranged that they can be easily kept clean.

The feeding room of the sanatorium is an important point. Many sanatoria err by not recognizing the need of continuous fresh air, and consequently the feeding room is stuffy and the air at the end of a meal might be almost cut with a knife! The feeding room, like every other part of the building, should be flooded with fresh air, and it goes without saying that it should never strike anyone coming in as close at any time.

In contrast to Walker’s enthusiasm, Carr wrote of her first impression of the clinic, “Sunhill Sanatorium stood on a grassy bump hardly worth the name of a hill. It had a chunky body and two long, long wings, spread, drooped slightly forward so that every window could catch its share of sun during the day. It was now covered in a drape of snow, not a sign of life anywhere; it lay in horizontal deadly flatness, having the cover and spread of a white bird pausing, crouching for flight!” and noted that “the great dining room was open to the weather on all sides... All those red noses and purple hands must have looked pitiful.”

During her internment, Carr kept a sketchbook, a limited activity permitted within the confines of the “rest cure,” in which she documented the routines of the sanatorium, its staff and patients—including her assessment of Dr. Walker, called Dr. Sally Bottle in Pause—and descriptions of nature on the grounds and surrounding area. Carr’s own report of the effect of the treatments contradicts that of Dr. Walker and speaks to the oppressive quality of the treatment on her psyche and creativity. Carr wrote, “Doctor McIntyre’s office had a window opening onto the Circular Porch so that serious patients were always under her eye. From her room she could only look down the right and left terrace, see the long rows of reclining chairs... From her window the Doctor could time the coming back of each patient from his walk, note if he had over-hurried or dawdled, by timing his arrival on the porch. Everything was horrible clockwork, tick tock, tick tock. You felt like a mechanical toy.”

Elaine Showalter wrote in 1993 that to consider the diagnosis of hysteria, one must remember that the term itself emerged “during an era when patriarchal culture felt itself to be under attack by its rebellious daughters,” and “one obvious defense was to label women campaigning for access to the universities, the professions, and the vote as mentally disturbed. Whether or not women who were labeled ‘hysterical’ were associated with the women’s movement, they were often seen by doctors as resistant to or critical of marriage, and as strangely independent and assertive.” Carr was most certainly a rebellious daughter.

In this exhibition, rather than consider hysteria within the psychoanalytic critiques of the 1990s, German artist Thomas Zipp explores the boundaries between normacy and deviance to discover its stimulating qualities, and is interested in historical figures from art and science who tread the borders between them. For recent projects, Zipp has examined the origins of hysteria, which he considers to be a “quasi-artistic” phenomenon. In his exhibition Comparative Investigation about the Disposition of the Width of a Circle, produced as a collateral project of the Venice Biennale in 2013, Zipp set up a fictive psychiatric clinic within the rooms of a Venetian palazzo, which in part examined French psychoanalyst and neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot’s experiments at Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris.

In 1928, the term “convulsive beauty” was coined by André Breton in his novel Nadja; earlier that year, Breton had published an article in the French Surrealist magazine La Révolution surrealiste that had announced the fiftieth anniversary of hysteria, and called it “the greatest poetic discovery of the late nineteenth century.” A series of photographs taken in the 1890s by Charcot at Salpêtrière had prompted an imaginative fascination with the hysterical body by the Surrealists, who felt that the gestures of hysteria depicted were revolutionary in their transgression.

Zipp questions the process of diagnosis and the aestheticization of hysteria that took place as a result of these widely circulated photographs. Zipp also plays in a band, titled DA (“Dicks arsch” or “fatass”), and music often plays a central role in his installations. Music, for Zipp, is present for its therapeutic and sometimes delirious effect. For Convoluted Beauty, his installation Figure-Ground Speciﬁcation in Terms of Structural Information, The Rivalry between Different Pattern Codings (2013) explores the idea of artist as self-healer or therapist. Here, the viewer/performer is invited to consider the generative possibilities of altering states—whether drug-induced or prompted by mental illness. Zipp provides an opportunity for audiences to experience a haptic condition in both the installation and accompanying musical performance. Zipp’s installation also includes a vintage Italian instrument, the Binson Echorec, an echo machine designed in the 1960s and used in the production of “psychedelic music.” For Zipp, the altered state of psychosis, schizophrenia, or hysteria is a
generative hallucinatory experience that approximates the psychedelic, a term invented as a result of research done in Saskatchewan by British-trained psychiatrist Humphrey Osmond. Osmond and his colleagues felt that LSD provided an opportunity to experience the world through the eyes of the mentally ill, and suggested its use by nurses and doctors involved in their treatment to create a more empathetic understanding in the caregivers. Zigo’s provocative artistic experiences as well as those of mental illness—psychotic, schizophrenic, hysteric—as necessary transgressions. As literary critic Shara Hutchinson notes: “By artistically presenting social perversions as failed sublimations or desublimations, Surrealists provided audiences with images depicting the restricted nature of social norms. The representation of such socializing failures provided a window of opportunity for artists to shock audiences into being more critical of the social systems that influence human behavior…. That is, for a transgression to occur, a social law restricting individual freedoms must be broken; In this context it is fair to say that convulsive beauty emerged as an art of desublimation.”

In A History of Sexuality, Michel Foucault discusses what he terms the “hysterization” of the female body beginning in the eighteenth century as a means of disciplining women by pathologizing behavior that deviated from accepted norms of femininity within familial, social, and political institutions and structures, especially within bourgeois homes. British Columbia-born artists Cedric and Nathan Bomford further examine the structure of the clinic through its architecture, cannily combining issues of power similar to those that Foucault debates in his interrogations of sexuality and of penal and clinical institutional structures. Much as Carr predicts in her descriptions of the oppressive watchfulness of the clinic. For Convoluted Beauty, the Bomfords consider the haptic architecture of the sanatorium to create their installation Down by the River, a built environment within the gallery, drawing on Carr’s internment at East Anglia—the piece houses Carr’s original sketchbook from the period of her hospitalization—they investigate how spaces produce psychic, behavioural, and phenomenological responses in their inhabitants. In the Bomfords’ installation, the viewer is also the animateur of their built environments, one who experiences the clinic. For their project, in addition to elements of Carr’s experience, the Bomfords considered Dr. Walker’s 1898 essay on the building of an ideal clinic, “A Contribution to the Hygienic Treatment of Tuberculosis,” as well as the history of mental asylums in Saskatchewan. The story of architect Kyoshi Izumi and his revolutionary socio-petal design concept for a new Saskatchewan asylum was key. On the urging of Osmond, Izumi had been invited to visit the existing Weyburn Mental Hospital under the influence of LSD to approximate the experience of psychosis in order to develop a more empathetic design for a new clinic. The socio-petal design was one element of a future clinic developed as a result of this experience. The Bomfords incorporate elements of Kyoshi’s own proposed “ideal” architecture (which were ultimately referenced minimally in aspects of their clinic built in the province).

The Bomfords’ resulting structure invites us to climb high above the modernist space of the gallery and facilitates a view of the exhibition and office spaces from above. The weathered boards and insulated tarps, winding staircase, ramp and “widow’s walk” lead to both a vista and a dead end. In previous works exploring ecological, industrial, and social histories through architecture, the Bomfords’ provisional style reflects a re-use/re-purpose vernacular common to the islands of the British Columbia coast—provisional or temporary architectures that were also familiar to Carr, most especially in the form of her caravan, which she affectionately called “The Elephant,” a vehicle and temporary home she had carted to Goldstream Park and the surrounding areas outside Victoria to enable her to work en plein air within the surrounding forests on Vancouver Island. The Bomfords’ strategy of “thinking through building” ultimately reveals their power structures—whether a tower, a viewing arena, or, in this case, elements of “an ideal sanatorium”—within the built environment of the gallery.

The Bomfords’ playful and sometimes haphazard assemblage style of construction, using found materials and working without premeditated design, in response to the site and the materials available, offers a creative pairing with Carr’s experience of internment—that of adaptation and survival but also of permeability. The Bomfords’ combining of research with a responsive and intuitive process results in architectural designs that are nuanced, witty, and oddly authoritative, and that adapt themselves symbiotically to the existing gallery space. This destabilization provides an opportunity to understand the ways in which architectural spaces are constantly enacting themselves, both performatively and collaboratively, revealing their lack of neutrality. As Peter Sloterdijk writes, “On a metaphysical level,….human beings never live outside of nature but always create a kind of existential space around themselves.” The Bomfords’ installations “look back” at the spaces that house them, mimicking and unraveling their histories, aspirations, and failures to create an architectural metaphysics for those that experience them.

Seeking: long-term relationships. Our relationships with birds are so often short-term: momentary sightings of a single specimen, sky-based appreciation of flock formations, pictures of fluffy owls circulating the internet. Long-term bird relations seem to require some kind of food or architecture to nourish them. We are seeking information on how to eat and build in proximity to birds, including terns.

Throughout her life, Carr’s relationship to animals has been presented as a form of eccentricity, which has burdened tellings of her biography. In a sense, Carr’s relation to the natural world could be considered a form of escape, a means of creating an assemblage of relations while quietly eluding the prescriptive ties and enclosures of life for a Victorian woman. Carr proscribed a space of freedom within these relations that foreshadowed contemporary interspecies theory. Informed by feminist, queer, and postcolonial theories, interspecies theories question the exceptional status of humans among the planet’s species, reformulate human relationships with other forms of biosocial life, and reveal how taxonomies determine the political, economic, and social conditions of human life.

During Carr’s initial miserable days at East Anglia, an English songbird found its way through the window. She says, “I heard a screeching sound over by the bureau. Prickly with nerves, I darted for the light switch. There, perched on top of the mirror was a tiny brown bird. At the light click she took her head from under her wing and looked at me…. The little bird in my room made all the difference…. her coming unasked was so friendly, so warming.” Carr later proposed...
to Dr. Walker that she be allowed to collect English songbirds to bring home to Canada. The doctor, surprisingly, agreed, and the birds Carr collected, whom she called "the soldiers," provided spiritual sustenance for both patients and staff. Carr’s project became a way to introduce nature into the sterile proceedings of the hospital, thereby capturing some sense of her connection to the world outside the walls of the clinic.

Canadian artist Joanne Bristol has created a "composition for birds" in response to Carr’s initiative during her hospitalization. Bristol’s work is informed by her sense of "internal architectures" or "architectures of wellness"—acts of spatialization that bring together psychic processes and physical, external ones. She is influenced by feminist insights on interspecies ethology, especially the term agencement, coined by Deleuze and Guattari, which she considers a form of "planning" or "layout" that resonates in terms of "internal architectures." For Deleuze and Guattari, agencement embraces the sense that philosophical concepts exist within a related constellation of other concepts, and it is their arrangement that gives them their meaning. Not only do they avoid operating in isolation but they coexist and connect in specific, creative, and myriad ways. Both what exists and our statements about these structures are correlative, and neither is prioritized, a property that is comparable to Bristol’s nuanced and poetic layering of associated texts within Le Vol Quotidien and their allusion to concrete poetry and the vernacular of the everyday.

Bristol is also influenced by philosopher Raymond Williams’s concept of "structures of feeling," which suppose that by understanding events as lived structures, one can retrace the lines from the past to the present, and by so doing release unrealized possibilities and latent narratives in order to come to an understanding of the present. Williams’ contentions, like those of Ben Fleckner, and Zabunyan, offer hopeful ruptures within the forces of historicization. Bristol tempers this impulse within her project by "referring to something more collective and site specific."

She says, "My greatest pleasure in making this newspaper is the kinds of poetic writing I can bring to it addressing nature, culture, mind, body, bird, woman, modes of flight. By thinking of the text as a score, perhaps there is a way of poetic writing I can bring to it addressing nature, culture, mind, body, bird, woman, modes of flight. By thinking of the text as a score, perhaps there is a way of poetic writing I can bring to it addressing nature, culture, mind, body, bird, woman, modes of flight. By thinking of the text as a score, perhaps there is a way of poetic writing I can bring to it addressing nature, culture, mind, body, bird, woman, modes of flight. By thinking of the text as a score, perhaps there is a way of poetic writing I can bring to it addressing nature, culture, mind, body, bird, woman, modes of flight." 25

Bristol’s performance on the opening evening of the exhibition involved the reading of Le Vol Quotidien with two performers. The performance combined silence, breath, and layered and individual voices, stopping and starting in unison or separately, to produce a murmurous iteration of her text: at once verbose, communicative, and open, as well as a closed space of nurturance and nesting. It ignited a sensorium of sounds, whose architecture resonated—anxiously, in repose, in awareness—within the space and within the bodies of witnesses to the piece. Afterwards, Bristol’s newspaper was hung in the exhibition space in a quiet reading area; viewers are invited to sit or to take the newspapers home for their reading pleasure.

Louise Lawler’s Birdcalls further addresses issues of representation and witnessing, examining the exclusion of women artists from the key art discourses of the twentieth century, at the same time deriding/decrying the history of this exclusion. Lawler’s sound and text installation, presented in the Civic Conservatory of the Mendel Art Gallery, is both a trope of and a companion to Carr’s own empowered relation to nature. Lawler’s work is a critique of the systemized set of procedures that reinforce dominant models of power relations within institutional settings. In Birdcalls, the artist mimics the cry of a bird to create a literal “shout-out” to male artists of the twentieth century favoured by their representation in museums through exhibitions and collections. The work thereby literally “calls” attention to the decentralizing and displacement of women artists within art world structures. The piece began when the artist and her friend were walking home late one evening in New York, after working as part of a team of women on an art installation featuring primarily male artists. The women began sounding out the name of the impresario of the project, Willoughby Sharp, using his first name to ward off potential attackers in the slightly dangerous area they were walking in, but also to acknowledge the deeply imbalanced nature of their gendered work.

The potential stored in ordinary things is a network of transfers and relay. Fleeting and amorphous, it lives as a residue or resonance in an emergent assemblage of disparate forms and realms of life. Yet it can be as palpable as a physical trace. Potentiality is a thing imminent to fragments of sensory experience and dreams of presence, a layer, or layering to the ordinary, it engenders attachments or systems of investment in the unfolding of things.26

As part of the exhibition’s exploration of exile, Whose Land Is This Anyways? (2014), a commissioned billboard work by Kwakwaka’wakw artist Marianne Nicolson, responds directly to a specific work by Carr included in the exhibition, a depiction of the sail of the sea monster boat at Berta Village on Gribal Island that belonged to Chief Johnny Scow, Nicolson’s great-uncle. Carr’s unknowing “family portrait” gives Nicolson an opportunity to critique and consider the ways in which displacement impacts contemporary economies and indigenous peoples, and creates divisions that produce and reproduce conditions of contemporary exile—a continuous colonial moment. Nicolson says, “This work is a cautionary tale. It takes the image of stars and configures them in reference to the national flag of China. The main star is a visual reference to Texaco Oil which was bought out by Chevron, which was then bought out by Shell; a major player in the Canadian Tar Sands; economically, a case of ever bigger entities consuming smaller ones....2014 is the 100 year anniversary of the 1914 McKenna-McBride Land Commission which was portrayed at the time as protecting Indigenous lands in B.C. What it really did was allocate the smallest of reserves possible while opening up the majority of B.C. Lands for development. Today Canada is in the process of approving a highly controversial trade deal with China which is being opposed by a small B.C. based First Nations band...the China-Canada FIPA promises not only that Aboriginal lands will continue to be infringed upon but that through international economic power brokering and multinational corporate interests “Canadian” lands and resources are also “up for grabs”. The Raven turns and looks at the stars, questioning both the intact and the principles behind Canadian political brokering of “Canadian” lands...27

Nicolson’s work, like Carr’s, questions the future of the natural world under ecological duress. She compares the representation of the Pacific coastal landscape, and the general population’s love for Carr’s work, to the current political reality of pipelines, fracking, and global warming on the West Coast. Nicolson further probes the exile of traditional First Nations from their lands and traditions, which valued long-term community-based and land-based relationships that upheld ecological imperatives of stewardship. She notes that “Chief Scow’s
authority and the rights of the Kwikwasut’inuxw are currently being challenged by a rogue family who claims they are the real Kwikwasut’inuxw," and who have negotiated a cash settlement for the lands. “This family has made profits off fish-farms and are pro-industry… They have no desire to live within our lands (nor have they ever lived in them) but they would sell our aboriginal title to those lands from beneath the legitimate people who live there for profit. … I have been researching their claims for years and they are a falsified fabrication of history.”

Involved in a political struggle that has been both consuming and stressful, Nicolson’s family has had to address federal and provincial policies structured to gain land through divide-and-conquer tactics. Nicolson says, “The BC Treaty process is corrupt and there will always be individual opportunists who are willing to sacrifice the nation for independent profits usually attached to resource-based extractions. People then align themselves with government and industry over community.” As a result, “it is the external government now who is dictating our histories.”

Nicolson’s art practice and political activism resist the approach of the provincial and federal governments, who, the artist asserts, see the land as an object to be exploited. “We are being exiled from our lands, ideologically, politically, and economically. Rural-based living on the land is economically discouraged. … lands must be cleared, populations must be urbanized in order to continue with a mandate driven by oil and gas. Only with many voices can we put social justice back into the construction of Canadian policies… but people don’t realize that we are on the front line on an agenda that would exile the common person from the Canadian landscape.”

As Berlant has stated in an interview, “A situation usually gets its shape from the way that it resonates strongly with previous episodes. … In contrast, if a situation arises that feels like a massively genre-breaking one, then the situation can become the kind of event whose enigmatic shape repels being governed by the fore-closure of what has happened before.”

Nicolson’s work in the exhibition, Carnival/Carnivore, references the Canadian flag and “previous episodes” of the federal government’s relationship with foreign investors—specifically, how it has negotiated with international marketplaces as investors in and consumers of the tar sands. The date 1911 inscribed on the work refers to the year the sea otter hunt ended because fur trade had slaughtered the species, bringing it almost to extinction. Alongside it is another date, 1928, the turning point when from decimating losses of population (70 to 90 percent were recorded, attributed to disease brought by European contact), First Nations populations began to recover and grow. Nicolson’s billboard project, sponsored by the Arts and Crafts, did not show. As I read her curt, last-minute withdrawal, a young Chinese came to my door carrying a roll of paintings. He had heard about the exhibition, and had come to show his work to me—beautiful water colours done in Oriental style. He was very anxious to carry his work further. He had asked admittance to the Arts and Crafts Sketching Class, and had been curtly refused because of his nationality. I invited him to show in place of the flower painter and he hung a beautiful exhibit.

As art historian Gerta Moray points out, “Lee Nam, as an historical figure, has remained invisible, just as his artistic output, lying outside his Euro-Canadian contemporaries’ definitions of artistic significance, has been lost from view.” In 1907, the Chinese community in Vancouver had been subject to a brutal attack after a parade organized by the Asiatic Exclusion League, comprised of primarily white, working-class Canadians who believed that the cheap labour provided by the exploited Chinese was responsible for the economic slump affecting them. An estimated 15,000 people moved through Chinatown, assaulting residents and destroying property. Even before this, the Chinese community had been subjected to a Head Tax since 1884, which limited immigration and regulated the Chinese population of British Columbia, and had been criticized for their apparent resistance to cultural assimilation—this despite the fact of their forced exclusion from English Canadian society and their regular political and social disenfranchisement.
Lee Nam’s engagement in artistic production may be seen as a form of escapology from these repressive conditions. Karen Tam’s installation, which relies in part on Carr’s descriptions of his studio, acknowledges that space as a site of resistance. Tam’s installation includes the work of her collaborator, Professor Lui Luk Chun, a Montreal-based artist (fig. 5, 6). Trained at the China Academy of Fine Art in Hangzhou in 1959, Professor Lui is invited by his former classmates regularly to participate in exhibitions throughout China (fig. 12), and he was invited by Tam to collaborate on this project by reflecting on the Canadian landscape. He produced a series of paintings of the Canadian Rockies from memory, exhibited within the installation. Also exhibited is Carr’s 1934 work, Pine Forest, from the Mendel Collection; Tam notes that Carr and Lee Nam exchanged art works, and it is possible that Carr’s work did indeed appear in his studio at the time.

During her research, Tam reviewed early-twentieth-century phone books in an attempt to trace Lee Nam’s address, known only to be on Cormorant Street in Victoria; she discovered that some Chinese families were simply referred to as “orientals,” their family names eschewed for the generalized category that parallels the use of Chinese labour in Canada, while at the same time racist policies forbade the enjoyment of true citizenship and belonging.

The Flying Cormorant title contains a visual pun in the traditional Chinese characters: it incorporates the story of the semi-domesticated cormorant, captured and used by fisherman to catch fish. The cormorant would be free to dive and chase the catch, but a leash around its throat would forbid it to entirely swallow the fish. The story is a poignant reflection on captivity, with layers of resonance, not the least of which parallels the use of Chinese labour in Canada, while at the same time racist policies forbade the enjoyment of true citizenship and belonging.

Charlotte Salomon’s work has been celebrated internationally for its complexity and its courage in addressing personal history under the Fascist regime that shaped the cataclysmic events of the Second World War. Cited by feminist theorist Griselda Pollock as “one of [the twentieth] century’s most challenging artworks,” these reproductions of Life? Or Theatre? A Play with Music constitute the first time elements of her project have been represented in Western Canada.

Salomon’s work, like Carr’s, reveals how artists may navigate situations of trauma or physical and psychological infirmity and their impact on the artistic imaginary and sense of artistic identity. During the eighteen months in which she was hospitalized, Carr produced only a small series of drawings (represented in the exhibition digitally) that documented her experience of deep displacement, grief at the loss of her brother, and a sense of social, psychological, and artistic isolation.

Salomon’s work was produced in the aftermath of new family knowledge: her discovery of a family history of suicide, especially among its women. Salomon was faced with the bleak dilemma of following in their footsteps or of choosing to embrace life for herself. Beginning in 1940, when she was twenty-three and in exile on the French Riviera, until her deportation to Auschwitz, where she and her unborn child were gassed in 1943, Salomon created 1,325 gouache paintings using the three primary colours—red, yellow, and blue—as well as white, and descriptive texts with musical and cinematic references. From this group, she selected nearly 800 paintings to create an autobiographical work she titled Life? Or Theatre? A Play with Music. The work is informed by Salomon’s experience as an educated and cultured young woman living under the shadow of Nazi persecution. The tone of the gouaches becomes increasingly urgent as Salomon is further enmeshed in ominous personal as well as political events. In its use of art to resolve her pain and confusion, as well as to express her hope and belief in the future, Salomon’s project stands as a testament to endurance.

Formally, the piece is structured in three acts: a prologue, depicting the artist’s early life in Berlin until 1937; a main section; and an epilogue, which covers Salomon’s years in exile from 1939 to 1942. Within the piece, the influence of Italian Renaissance artists such as Michelangelo, as well as of modern artists, including Expressionists declared “degenerate” by the Nazi regime (Amedeo Modigliani, George Grosz, and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner), are evident.

Salomon further divided the piece into themes and subthemes: her parents’ marriage, her mother’s childhood, and her grandmother’s family history before Charlotte’s birth. Key narrative threads are signalled by her use of one of the primary colours. Charlotte depicts her mother’s suicide, her own tempestuous early childhood, including the series of governesses that tried to raise her after her mother’s death and ending with the introduction of her stepmother, the opera singer Paula Salomon-Lindberg, here named “Paulinka.” The impact of Fascist Germany on Salomon’s father and the family’s circle of friends and acquaintances is also addressed. The main figures depicted are given pseudonyms and framed as characters within the overall masterwork of the play, which has the cinematic semblance of a director’s storyboard, including multiple points of view, conversations, or simultaneous scenes within one painting.

Ultimately, in Life? Or Theatre? Salomon refuses the narrative that others would have written for her. In a final act of self-determination that reveals the core agency and restorative value of the text, she rewrites the “sentence” of her own history. As art historian Michael Steinberg states, “This is both a ‘work’ in the sense of a work of art and ‘work’ in the sense of psychological work. It is long and intricate in its engagement of self and history, of the over-determination of and fissures in collective and personal claims of identity; of trauma and recovery at the level of collective and personal historical experience. As such, it
The French one is neoclassical. The Hungarian one is art nouveau meets Hansel Biennale are like caricatures. The German one looks like Albert Speer made it. Pavilion at the end of a broad avenue at the top of a hill. All the pavilions at the that I was going to have to remark on national identity. So I looked at the British Wallinger commented, “I knew in 1997, Wallinger replaced the blue and red of the Union Jack with the orange and green of the Irish Tricolour. Wallinger commented, “I knew that I was going to have to remark on national identity. So I looked at the British Pavilion at the end of a broad avenue at the top of a hill. All the pavilions at the Biennale are like caricatures. The German one looks like Albert Speer made it. The French one is neoclassical. The Hungarian one is art nouveau meets Hansel and Gretel. And the English one has pompous echoes of empire. It’s not the sort of space that one can pretend is neutral, so I decided to use its position to undermine any residual sense of nationalism.” Wallinger’s work has, from the outset, been preoccupied with how politics are represented, and he has focused throughout his career on a critique of British society, citing the influence of James Joyce’s Ulysses and the author’s transformation of the everyday into the extraordinary. Threshold to the Kingdom’s latent references to settler colonialism and the British empire create an essential interrogation in the realm of nationhood and ideas of identity, particularly in relation to issues of modernity.

Carr, the daughter of British immigrants, expected to feel some resonance with her parents’ homeland during this first “return to the Empire.” Instead, her formulation of her own subjectivity was crystallized by her sense of not belonging in England.

We put the orchid in a vase by itself. In my room I had other flowers but this one stood aloof like a stranger in a crowd whose language he does not understand. It grew a little larger; its pouch bulged poucheimer, it poised its crown a little more erect. When it was mature, entirely completed, it stayed so, not altering, not fading week by week till six were past. A tremendously dignified, regal bloom. Everyone who looked at it seemed impelled to reverence, as though the orchid was a little more than flower. In the dark one night the orchid abruptly died. Died completely as it had lived. Died like the finish of a bird’s song. In the morning it was shrivelled into a wisp... There was a blank, forlorn miss on my bedside table.

Suddenly I imagined that I understood what had been the link between the strange flower and me. Both of us were thoroughly un-English.

As Papastergiadis writes, “Exile . . . is not measured by the distance of or by the type of location to which one has been expelled, but in the disruption of the mechanisms for cultural and political formation. . . . this process of naming the stranger and the phenomenon of estrangement are integral to the cultural dynamics of modernity, the ways in which modern exile is not exclusively confined to the massive displacement of peoples from their homelands but can also be located in the specific forms of silencing opposition without expulsion.”

With the exception of her early art studies in San Francisco, London, and Paris, Carr remained isolated on the West Coast until the end of her life, amongst relatives who had little appreciation for her art, conservative middle-class society, and Sunday painters. Her intellectual inspiration came from a variety of global sources, including Walt Whitman, visiting Hindu priests, First Nations culture, and expatriate Chinese artists. Carr’s national recognition came in 1927, when, then in her fifties, she was invited to join the Group of Seven in a major exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada in the capital city of Ottawa. Her work thereafter received a grudging respect in the West, though its aesthetic modernity continued to be unpopular.

Carr was the first Modernist painter from the West Coast and the first female artist in Canada to achieve major national recognition. Her work occupies a specific juncture in the story of Canadian art history, when fraught colonial narratives intersected with a nation-building project in which tourism and the internationalization of culture were key to presenting Canada as a unique sovereign state. Her struggle with her British colonial roots put her at odds with the internal preoccupations that guided her work: the landscape of Western Canada where she had been born and raised, and the conceptual elegance and mysticism, as she perceived it, of coastal First Nations art and culture. Carr may also be understood as a post-colonial subject in this context, a figure who was performs what I would call the work of subjectivity. It performs this work, moreover, in the sense of a performative speech act. A performative act is by definition a transformative act.”

In the twenty-first century, Salomon has maintained her place as a remarkable figure, demonstrating the terrible cost of persecution and exile, as well as the courage and strength to formulate her own subjectivity and, by so doing, discover her own artistic voice.

Theorist Nikos Papastergiadis writes that “Exile does not connote the space outside society, but the process of crossing borders. If there is a productive and incisive side to this experience, it emerges from the attention to the consequences of shuffling from one position to another and results in an awareness of the unstable equilibrium that regulates both detachment and attachment.”

Mark Wallinger’s video installation Threshold to the Kingdom functions as a kind of celestial portal, extending the concept of “crossing over” into unknown territory from its physical, geographic sense to a spiritual movement. Transforming the ordinary into the transcendental, the artist surreptitiously filmed passengers arriving at London City Airport’s international arrivals gate, then slowed their gestures of exhaustion and greeting and set them to the score of Gregorio Allegri’s Miserere. Wallinger states that customs and passport controls, “the rigmarole that the State puts one through [is] a kind of secular equivalent of the confessional and absolution necessary before entering the promised land. I thought if we showed this very symmetrically and used slow motion, people’s gestures would assume a kind of gravitas and become almost like Renaissance paintings. . . . Obviously using Miserere helps; even the words seem to suit this appeal to a merciful God.”

Wallinger’s Threshold to the Kingdom, first shown in the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2001, was accompanied by the artist’s own challenge to colonial imperatives: the installation of an altered Union Jack outside the pavilion. In Oxymoron (1997), Wallinger replaced the blue and red of the Union Jack with the orange and green of the Irish Tricolour. Wallinger commented, “I knew that I was going to have to remark on national identity. So I looked at the British Pavilion at the end of a broad avenue at the top of a hill. All the pavilions at the Biennale are like caricatures. The German one looks like Albert Speer made it. The French one is neoclassical. The Hungarian one is art nouveau meets Hansel.

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In the thirties and forties, Wallinger performed what I would call the work of subjectivity. It performs this work, moreover, in the sense of a performative speech act. A performative act is by definition a transformative act.”

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a disenfranchised subject both as a woman artist working in relative isolation on the West Coast of Canada at the turn of the century, and as a British colonial subject who ultimately discovered that she lacked deep cultural and social resonance with the Empire.

* Settle there and be content,  
Suffice you then nor dream of home,  
Where for miles and miles you roam,  
Full of freedom, full of joy,  
Four good sisters to annoy,  
Bravely face another life  
Full of handskips, rubs, and strife,  
Thankful for our daily bread,  
Let our eyes look straight ahead;  
Onward then, nor turn you back,  
Reap not comforts that you lack,  
Know that what we here would gain  
Must be bought with tears and pain,  
For what's worth having we must fight —  
Be therefore strong and seek the right.

Carr lived in three major cities in her lifetime: San Francisco (1890–93), London (1899–1904), and Paris (1911–12). These were planned study periods in the cultural centres of the time, and on the latter two trips, particularly in England, she suffered from extended illness. The quote above is taken from London Student Sojourn, a sketchbook she kept during her first months in London, where her initial attempts to address her sense of dislocation are concealed in an energetic strategy, a kind of romantic purposeful sacrifice in which her artistic emancipation “must be bought with tears and pain.”

In Paris, she studied at the Academie Colarossi, but later wrote, “I could not stand the airlessness of the life rooms for long, the doctors stating, as they had done in London, that ‘there was something about these big cities that these Canadians from their big spaces couldn’t stand, it was like putting a pine tree in a pot.” This Eurocentric analogy is romantic and misleading but also fascinating and generative. All settlers like Carr were transplants, and on Canada’s West Coast, relatively new ones. But to the Parisian doctor, Carr had been naturalized and was now displaced in Europe. During the trip to London, Carr began to distance herself more resolutely from her familial association with England and its Empire, while retaining its internalized colonial gaze; the result of her “crossing borders,” in Papastergiadis’s terms, meant that her position in relation to Canada and the United Kingdom became visible to her.

What her illness did speak to was belonging, something Carr did not experience either abroad or at home prior to her London trip, and rarely anywhere within an atmosphere of sociality. Her experience of belonging took place during sojourns into the forest, beginning in her childhood, when Carr would leave the family property, which edged what later became Beacon Hill Park, the city’s major urban parkland, then a wild area bordering on the oceanfront. She writes extensively of this identification, in contrast to the state of displacement within her family and middle-class Victorian society that matched her displacement in the United Kingdom. Again quoting Papastergiadis,

Perhaps what is unique to modernity is not just the unprecedented scale of migrations, or even the nature of the imposition or the obligation to leave home, but rather the experience of estrangement that precedes departure. In modernity, foreignness is not commensurate with distance traveled.

The “failure” of Carr’s pilgrimage to England, therefore, may be read as an expression of this dilemma—a persistent and shared question of identity that speaks to issues of colonial subjectivity and settler-repatriate frameworks, a state of modernity. Deleuze examines this territory, suggesting a special relation between painting and “hysteria”—these ideas paralleling in turn an affective response or an immunological one, in Stewart’s and Sloterdijk’s terms. Tooling these three concepts, we can begin to consider how deeply strategic Carr’s response was:

Painting directly attempts to release the presences beneath representation, beyond representation. The colour system itself is a system of direct action on the nervous system. This is not an hysteria of the painter, but an hysteria of painting. With painting hysteria becomes art. Or rather, with the painter, hysteria becomes painting. What the hysteric is incapable of doing—a little art—is accomplished in painting. It must also be said that the painter is not hysterical, in the sense of a negation, in negative theology. Abjection becomes splendour, the horror of life becomes a very pure and very intense life.

Carr’s writings seem to parallel this concept of “intense life” in her conclusions on the 1927 exhibition Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern. In carving out a distinct identity as Canadian, at the same time she rejects settlers who do not have her special understanding of the landscape or its people, her idea of nation, and those she imagines belonging there: Canada and her sons cry out for a hearing but the people are blind and deaf. Their souls are dead. Dominated by dead England and English traditions, they are decorating their tombstones while living things clamour to be fed…Mine are not so good in workmanship. Only one point I give to mine. I loved the country and the people more than the others who paint her. It was my own country, part of the West and me.

Ultimately, Emily Carr’s particular form of escapology resulted in one of the most “productive” careers of any Canadian artist. Her sojourn and internment in England allowed her to discover that, within the terrain of acceptable options, institutions, political and social lives and subjectivities, there existed a labile force which offered a productive space, a generative rupture, that helps to reorganize experience. Her act of creative work under the silence and duress of the “rest cure” was, most crucially, the work of coming into a knowledge of her own deep resilience, a knowledge that would last her to the end of her life. As Thomas Mann’s Castorp observes,

The Valley would long since have filled with shadows, and while Hans Castorp ate it would grow discernibly darker in the white room. When he had finished he would sit there propped up against his pillows, his empty dishes and his magic table before him, and gaze out into the quickly falling dusk—today’s dusk which was hardly distinguishable from yesterday’s or the dusk of the day before yesterday or of a week ago. There was evening—and there had just been morning. The day, chopped into little pieces by all these synthetic diversions, had in fact crumbled in his hands, and turned to dust—and he would notice it now, either in cheerful amazement or, at worst, with a little pensiveness, since to shudder at the thought would have been in appropriate to his young years. It seemed to him that he was simply gazing, “on and on.”
1 “But Doctor, I am not T.B. I came to London to study Art. I’ve just worked too hard; that’s all.” Precariously. He rang for the maid to show me out. “But why?” I stumbled down the steps of the Specialist, made my way to Doctor Sally Bo threatening. Within twenty-four hours I was seated in the train, bound for Sunhill Sanatorium, sadly reclining at heart.” Emily Carr. 

2 Stephen Wright, “Emotions in Ecologies” (7)  


4 From the introduction to Sarkis Zabunyan and Miriam Brau Hansen, “Benjamin’s Aura,” Modern Forms of Self-Alienation.” For a further study at a collective and sensorial level, with potentials of perception and imagination that would enable human beings to engage productive new technological media could reactivate older critical lexicon, which I further adapt to include the hagiography of the artist, not simply the fictional lexicon, which I further adapt to include the hagiography of the artist, not simply the

5 Walter Benjamin’s efforts to reconceptualize-the hagiography of the artist, not simply the work. Miriam Brau Hansen comments that the “aura’s systemic structure, secularized and modernized … can … be said to work in [Walter] Benjamin’s efforts to reconceptualize experience through the very conditions of its implosibility, as the only chance to counter the banished (supposition imperient) adoption of technology.” At the same time, though, they resolved around the possibility that the new technological media could reactivate older potentials of perception and imagination that would enable human beings to engage productively, at a collective and personal level, with modern forms of self-alienation.” For a further discussion of Benjamin’s use of the term, see Miriam Brau Hansen, “Benjamin’s Aura,” Critical Enquiry 34 (Winter 2006), 335–375.


7 Carr, Influence has been recognized recently by her inclusion as a featured artist in the international exhibition, Documents (13) in 2013, and in the exhibition Painting Canada: Emily Carr in British Columbia at the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London, UK, in 2014.


11 Carr, Pause, 20.

12 Ibid., 32

13 Ibid., 33.

14 Elaine Showalter, “Hystera, Feminism and Gender,” in History and Beyond: Fraud, ed. Sander L. Gilman et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 305.

15 Louis Aragon and André Breton, “Le cinquante dix,” La Révolution Surréaliste, no. 11 (1926), 20.


18 See also Foucault’s The Birth of the Clinic (1975) and Discipline and Punish (1975).

19 The bowl sketchbook, from 1903, is comprised of 36 drawings in graphite and ink, and 26 pages of handwritten notations. In 1953, these were published posthumously under the title: Placer: An Emily Carr Sketchbook, together with a series of short stories on the experience of her hospitalization written by Carr from recollection in the final years of her life.

20 This is described in detail by Dr. Erik D. Ock. in her excellent essay, “Psychedelics, Architecture, and a History of Exile,” included in this publication.


22 Test from Le Vol Quotidien, Joanne Bratot, 2014.

23 This subject is further explored within this publication by Vincent Geepert, in her essay, “Emily Carr: Often the others…”

24 Carr, Pause, 27.

25 Fromemail correspondence with the artist, October 29, 2013.

26 Stewart, Ordinary Affects. 2.

27 Fromemail correspondence with the artist, June 16, 2014.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.


35 For the exhibition, twenty facsimiles have been generously loaned to the Mendel Art Gallery from the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam. The works for this presentation focus primarily on Salomon’s art school training the illness in her family, and her exile in the South of France, culminating in the death of her grandmother.


37 Nkosfasapangakazikakoldininakakolekile,Sionalonyenoninakakonekile, kholwenche. 


39 Overton, Mark Wallinger. 40 Carr, Pause, 59.

40 Papaspanakazikakoldininakakolekile,Sionalonyenoninakakonekile, kholwenche.

41 Emily Carr, London Student Diaries, 1901 from the British Columbia Archives collection, Royal BC Museum Corporation, Victoria (PSPDRS-6716), 1.

42 Emily Carr. Opposite Corners: The Unknown Journals of Emily Carr and Other Writings, ed. Susan Owen (Vancouver: Douglas & Mcintyre, 2003), 204.

43 Papaspanakazikakoldininakakolekile,Sionalonyenoninakakonekile, kholwenche.

44 Emily Carr, London Student Diaries, 1901 from the British Columbia Archives collection, Royal BC Museum Corporation, Victoria (PSPDRS-6716), 1.

45 Deleuze, FrancioBacon (London: Continuum, 2005), 37.


47 Mann, The Magic Mountain, 189.
When Mouche, my grandmother, was desolate because my mother was in the Congo in 1950, Mamy, my mother, had the good idea of sending Mouche a parrot. Mouche called it Coco! For thirty years she looked after it as she should, getting bitten from time to time and then cursing Coco as she bled. One day Mouche died and so Mona, the ex-mistress of Parrain, Mamy’s brother, adopted Coco. And so it is that recently, although Mona, Parrain and Mamy have themselves all died too, I had news of Coco from Mona’s son.

This story was sent to me nearly a year ago now by one of my very dear friends, Thierry Huygen. I know that he wrote it for me and sent it because it intertwines, with a restraint verging on stylistic acrobatics, the two forms of love that touch us, that transform us, that overwhelm us most deeply, most lastingly, and most deservedly – the love that animals reveal to us and the love that we discover for those who have departed and whom we continue to cherish, in one way or another. Often in another.

I don’t know if Emily Carr could have written this story. No doubt that is not the relevant question. But I cannot myself imagine writing about her, or rather writing as inspired by her, without acknowledging this strange feeling of familiarity that shines forth when considering this story side by side with her stories. Without beginning from this intuition of a fundamental complicity between these stories and trying to unravel the enigma therein. In one way or another. In one way and another in this case.

One might think, of course, that this complicity has something to do with the style, or rather with what its rhythm makes one feel – a result, no doubt, of their being blown through with, or perhaps bounded by, silences; the one and the other very near to a freehand sketch.¹

More obvious still, for those who are familiar with Emily’s bestiary, would be to focus on the parrot.² But let us admit that the link is tenuous: Coco came from
forging links between people – in one way or another, usually in another – all recognize one another through the description of her pranks. Because she sparked the meeting of her three successive owners, who came to read in the crossed threads of this web of transmission that wove itself out-the humans to create and maintain relationships. This is the first meaning I can read in the crossed threads of this web of transmission that wove itself outwards from Coco, and it is exactly what Jane did, in her mischievous way – if only because she sparked the meeting of her three successive owners, who came to recognize one another through the description of her pranks.

Having said that, one realizes that all Emily’s animals played this role of forging links between people – in one way or another, usually in another – all through her life. The seagull that Emily gave to the Native woman, Clara, upon returning from an island excursion adopted a role very near to that given to Coco. For “Clara taught her gull to go back and forth between Alliford Bay, where she worked in the cannery, and Skidegate Village. Her home was in Skidegate; her aged mother lived there. When the old woman saw the bird come it was like a greeting from her daughter.” As for Woo, the little monkey who for so long shared Emily’s life, he took this exercise to the farthest reaches of excellence. And the love Emily had for the Bobtails, those sheepdogs who were never so happy as when they could herd other beings together – no one can convince me for a second that this was by chance.

She was also, in an even more explicit manner, the role played by the “little soldiers,” as they were called in the sanatorium – the bullfinches Emily took from their nest and raised by hand, with the dream that she could take them back to Canada so their songs could fill the forests. Those little soldiers galvanized the patients of the sanatorium, victims of despair, of boredom and suffering. These little birds gave new life, new breath, I might even say new hope to the most hopeless; more than that, they ordered and reordered their relationships. The aimless walks of the patients now had a purpose: to find worms, insects, little morsels for the birds; and the great aviary that housed them became the central meeting place for the community.

“Life in the San did queer things to us. Was it our common troubles and discomforts? Or was it the open – birds, trees, space, sharing their world with us – that did it?” To this question Emily Carr replied in the same breath that she didn’t know. But all her stories translate into a resounding yes for the second hypothesis.

Because it is most certainly, unquestionably, what animates each of these stories. Herein lies the great talent, the sorceress’s wisdom, the shamanic intuition of Emily: she felt, she grasped that what animates the world has little to do with what we think of as the organizing forces. Her true genius – genius in the sense offered by Susan Musgrave, revising Sartre: not as a gift, but as the way one invents in desperate situations – was to have been able to break with our normal perception of things: our understanding of the causality of events, our belief in the inanimateness of the creatures of this world. We have the habit of thinking that events and life are of our own making, that our role is primary. Emily inverted this perspective. She knew how to open silences in order to listen, how to hold herself back so that other modes of being might blossom forth, how to let other perspectives reshape how the world lives its life.
Emily Carr was diagnosed with hysteria in 1903 when she was admitted to the East Anglia Sanatorium near Suffolk, England. She then exclaimed: “But Doctor, I am not TB. I came to London to study Art. I’ve just worked too hard, that’s all.” For what was likely considered an emotional and/or psychological breakdown, Carr was treated with a rest cure that involved months at a time in a bed in an institution. During the Victorian period, thousands of women who entered asylums were labelled with a diagnosis of hysteria, which literally means “wandering womb.” In England some of those women, like Carr, were sent to sanatoriums to avoid the humiliating stigma of the psychiatric asylum, which was often associated with pauper patients. A sanatorium was considered a more appropriate institution for middle-class women. Victorian women were often considered at risk of hysteria due to their inherent fragility—physical, emotional, and psychological. The dominant cure at the time was rest, which often meant confinement and regularized institutional schedules. Carr’s description of her time at East Anglia, which she calls Sunhill in her book of sketches, is a vivid reflection of her sense of alienation and homesick feelings for Canada, but also a time of rest, recovery, and, in unexpected ways, a connection with nature.

She often finds comfort in the presence of animals and nature, a theme that later becomes a prominent feature of her work, but in the sanatorium these connections are described by others as “queer” and “abnormal.” There is even some hinting from the staff that perhaps Carr has imagined or hallucinated her connections are described by others as “queer” and “abnormal.” There is even some hinting from the staff that perhaps Carr has imagined or hallucinated her interactions with animals, which further confirms their determination to keep her safe within the walls of the institution.

Emily Carr’s reflections on her diagnosis of hysteria are limited, and quite concealed at times. She more readily comments on the institutional

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1 “I did not know book rules,” she wrote in Growing Pains, “I made two for myself. They were about the same as the principles I used in painting. Get to the point as directly as you can, never use a big word if a little one will do.” (Quoted in Susan Musgrave’s Introduction to The House of All Sorts, Douglas & McIntyre, 2004, 11.)


3 “Two women and an Infant Gull,” in The Heart of a Peacock, 76.

4 “Scrap’s child,” in Pause (Douglas & McIntyre, 2007), 128.

5 Introduction to the House of All Sorts, 6.

6 She recounts how, on one of her walks far from the sanatorium, she arrived at a clearing and fell asleep. Upon waking, she discovered a paradisiacal scene: rabbits bolded everywhere, and hundreds of birds were singing. But when she went back with doctor (at the latter’s request), the miracle did not recur: “We sat down to rest. Silence fell between us. I could feel the Doctor was not in sympathy. The Warren would not do any of the things that it did for me the other day. It went stupid, made me feel a liar. The birds were quiet; no rabbits scuttled; not even a cricket gritted his wings.” (“A Rabbit Warren and a Piggery,” in Pause, 113.)

7 “Sis’s Ravens,” in The Heart of a Peacock, 94–95.

8 “Wild Geese,” in The Heart of a Peacock, 78.

9 I understand poetry in the double sense of what it makes: the poetic, poetry has its origins in the ancient Greek verb poias, “to make,” a creative action that continues and transforms the world; and as a technique, the art of moving bodies at a distance with words (and with silences). In the philosophical tradition of William James, and even more of Gustav Fechner, the reality of the world, its tangible being, its very stuff, is composed of the totality of consciousnesses that perceive it. Each disappearance of a way of being, therefore, leads to an ontological weakening of the world, a lessening of life. The poetry of Emily Carr is ecological as an outcome of this double meaning of “poetics”: she extends, by recreating an ontological insurrection—she transforms our ways of perceiving the world, leading us to “feel more.”

10 Many of her stories celebrate this obstinate outcry of life, whether that of the little cat named Mary Anne, the fight against death of the monkey Woo after being poisoned, or many other examples: “Life, persistent life! Always pushing, always going on” (from “Babies,” in The House of all Sorts, 117). 


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Emily Carr’s reflections on her diagnosis of hysteria are limited, and quite concealed at times. She more readily comments on the institutional
environment, nature, animals, and the overwhelming feelings of isolation that consumed her while she lived with little to no privacy in a crowded sanatorium. Her personal commentary provides one window into a strange world of institutional living, psychological insecurity, and emotional instability. Her intimate account is a sensitive portrayal of a woman struggling to resurrect her own identity while being surrounded by confounding figures—some sick, others authoritarian—who cause her to question her own way of being.

The institutionalized routines further depersonalized people like Carr, who found themselves moving to the rhythms of the clinic rather than establishing their own paths. The walls of the institution served as fixed reminders of the oppressive and unimaginative environment in which people were meant to heal, relax, and be rehabilitated. Patients were safely removed from the anxiety-producing mess of the urban landscape and plunged into a foreign but vaguely pastoral setting punctuated by the often-Gothic structures that served as mental hospitals.

In Canada, a prime example of this type of facility was the Saskatchewan Mental Hospital at Weyburn (fig. 9), which was the last mental health facility in Canada built according to nineteenth-century design principles (it had been modelled after asylums in eastern Canada). The result was stunning. The institution was an imposing structure on the bald Canadian prairie, complete with a bronze roof. It sat, pavilion style, with work farms nestled in its back quarters and three long wings jutting out from the central structure. The Weyburn Hospital was the largest building in the community and the largest employer. At the time of its opening in 1921, Saskatchewan’s Department of Public Health reported that over 1,500 individuals in the province required institutional care. Twenty-five years later this figure had nearly doubled, yet the capacity for accommodating patients remained the same. A national survey conducted in 1945 suggested that the conditions in the hospital at Weyburn were steady deteriorating and patients were suffering. The report cited it as one of the worst mental hospitals in the country.

Patients housed in these institutions were physically and psychologically cut off from the realities of society, stranded in a segregated and sterile space where they often surrendered their character and individuality at the door, lest they reveal pathologies that might further extend their incarceration. They were forced to conform to a new rhythm of life under hospital surveillance, often without privacy. As Emily Carr wrote,

Contemporary critics of asylum culture in the 1960s began to question whether madness was treated in these mausoleums or whether it was created under these strange conditions.

This liminal existence has often been credited, however, with stimulating new levels of consciousness. Artists, theologians, doctors, philosophers, and many others have long attempted to cultivate such a state of consciousness—described at times as mad—to stimulate creativity and in an effort to make that which is unstable, productive. One such experiment occurred in Saskatchewan with the aid of lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD). This drug helped users re-evaluate perceptions of space and also notions of sanity in ways that later altered how mental health services were being provided in the province.

British-trained psychiatrist Humphry Osmond was one of the chief proponents of this dynamic area of health research. He was curious about biochemical explanations for mental diseases, but he felt this approach was pushed aside in England by colleagues clinging to Freudian psychodynamic views of mental illness. When Saskatchewan premier Tommy Douglas advertised for psychiatrists in leading international medical journals, Osmond answered the call. He arrived in Saskatchewan in 1951 and soon became the superintendent of Saskatchewan Mental Hospital at Weyburn. He later reflected that he had felt stifled in London, while Weyburn represented an opportunity for adventure.

Osmond’s thirst for experimentation was quenched with LSD. A few months after arriving in the province he began studying hallucinogenic drugs, primarily mescaline and later LSD. He worked closely with psychiatrist Abram Hoffer in Saskatoon and Duncan Blewett in Regina and also developed connections reaching beyond the province. For instance, Aldous Huxley beckoned Osmond to California to explore mescaline and later LSD together. Their blossoming friendship over the next several years led to the introduction of the word “psychedelic” to refer to the sensations accompanying an LSD experience, including its mind-manifesting properties, which gave rise to visual hallucinations, distortion of time and space, and a general increase in levels of anxiety. The experience also produced a period of intense self-reflection, which seemed capable of allowing users to generate a perspective on themselves in a manner that resembled an out-of-body experience. After collecting autobiographical writings of people diagnosed with schizophrenia and comparing them with his own perceptions after taking LSD, Osmond concluded that the drug provided critical insights into the experience of madness.

Osmond’s model psychosis suggested that LSD might become a critical tool for chemically stimulating empathy among psychiatrists, social workers, and nurses employed in these facilities. Combining Osmond’s imaginative perspectives on psychiatry with Huxley’s lucid prose and Hoffer’s biochemical analysis, the researchers proposed that LSD could offer a window into the perceptual world of schizophrenia. Government officials in Saskatchewan took this idea one step further and invited architect Kiyoshi Izumi to study the asylum under the influence of LSD and to subsequently make recommendations for structural
Izumi’s first adventure with madness through LSD stimulated his interest in spaces, confinement, and the experiences of being exiled from one’s community. Significantly, his personal trials as a Japanese Canadian merged with his professional outlook as an architect.

Izumi’s parents had immigrated to Vancouver from Japan in the 1910s, and Kiyoshi was born in 1921. After receiving his education at the London School of Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Harvard University, he did not relish the thought of returning home to British Columbia, where anti-Japanese sentiments ran high in the late 1940s. Indeed, Japanese-Canadians in that province had been segregated in internment camps during the Second World War and were not allowed to return to the B.C. coast until 1949. Instead Izumi set his sights on Saskatchewan, where there were few Japanese families, no internment camps, and some family friends. Feeling somewhat exiled from his home community, he soon settled in Regina and eventually went into private practice as an architect.

When he began his experimentation with LSD, his reflections were striking and disorienting: “There was the indescribable feeling of hearing colors, smelling colors, seeing sound and ‘seeing’ texture in a form which was almost a direct tactile feeling.” Over time his observations evolved to help him produce architectural and design reforms that he genuinely believed took the perceptual world of institutionalized patients seriously. Ultimately, his work on architectural space, design, and madness drew international attention.

Izumi incorporated his own personal experiences into his professional craft as he observed the inner spaces of the asylum under the influence of LSD. He readily accepted that in the modernist style in architecture, which prioritized function over form, designs needed to eschew the desires of the architect and instead embrace the needs of the consumer of that space. In the case of the asylum, the consumer was the disenfranchised, alienated, and disempowered patient. Therapeutic spaces, Izumi suggested, must therefore accommodate the emotional needs of patients conditioned to distrust their own perceptions of reality. To redirect those feelings towards a more confident, even empowered, interpretation of one’s surroundings meant blending modern architectural features, such as smooth surfaces and flush designs, with a more concerted focus on how detailed features made someone feel in that space.

Izumi’s LSD experiments had a significant influence on his sense of design features, structure, and form as they pertained to feelings of belonging or alienation, integration into or exile from one’s society. He concluded that decisions about designs in hospital spaces were often guided by cost, efficiency, foolishness, or staff preference. Rarely if ever were the patients’ views taken into consideration. If the reverse were true, he believed the therapeutic results might be enhanced. For example, “the hard glaring and highly reflective surfaces of polished terrazzo floors, enamel or glazed tile walls and white ceiling tiles created spaces of unusually intimidating qualities particularly if other people were also in this space. The acoustical qualities of such enclosed space heightened the effect of tautness and this quality became indistinguishable with your tensions, both psychologically and physically.” His findings implied that feelings of alienation from one’s community, one’s family, or even one’s own healthy thoughts were further aggravated by structural settings and design features that amplified a sense of exile from reality.

He also suggested that for patients with disordered perceptions, these institutional spaces became home, whether comfortable or not, so designers should attempt to combine features that merged homelike settings within an institutional environment. He claimed, “One became very aware of the different kinds of an environment simply but not quite accurately expressed by applying the following kinds of adjectives such as hard, soft, warm, cool, hot, cold, resilient, etc. etc. to the visual, acoustical, tactile, olfactory. The otherwise perceived environment involved your emotional, intellectual, conscious and sub-conscious state which was affected by the psychotonic qualities of the people.” These spaces then created negative emotional and psychological responses that were particularly damaging for people who were confined there due to their disturbing and dysfunctional perceptions.

Izumi grew sympathetic to the plight of the confined patient and further experimented with chemically induced disorientation in an effort to more accurately catalogue spaces from this perceptual framework. Over time, he wrote, “I began to see like a patient.” For example how a room “leaked” and this related to perceiving your body become a very gelatinous (sic) and fluid form and “seeing” yourself flow and ooze out through cracks and other openings that are distinct from the accepted openings such as doors and windows. Sometimes it was your soul or mind in a “gaseous” form. To be “startled” by the monotony of one color, in this case a beige throughout the institution, may sound contradictory but there was such a phenomena which often immobilized you. Similarly, the ubiquitous terrazzo floor, the suspended ceilings, and similar uniformity added to one’s confusion of relating oneself to time and space. The number of similar elements in a room, added to the spatial and/or time dimension of the room and also added to a certain difficulty of identifying your own [body].

Many features of institutional spaces that appeared benign to the healthy observer caused anxiety or enhanced a sense of alienation for patient or temporary psychotic voyeur. By carefully linking the environment with emotions and mental health, Izumi made the somewhat radical suggestion that mental hospital spaces ought to be restructured and decorated from the patient’s point of view.

Izumi’s notes also contained statements and observations that he collected from patients at the Weyburn Hospital, drawing particular attention to the affective qualities of the architectural design. One schizophrenic patient commented on the need for additional space to feel comfortable. He explained to Izumi that he needed “social and emotional freedoms to co-ordinate the body to the environment in a manner which protects freedom to make decisions without interference.” This patient continued by suggesting that other people may see the schizophrenic patient as simply fast or slow, ambitious or lazy, and so on, but he explained that his behavioral reactions were related to comfort in the decision-making process, which Izumi interpreted as the need for safe “psychic space.”

Meanwhile, Izumi remained under pressure from the provincial government to produce an appropriate design for the expanding mental health system. He ultimately proposed what he called a “socio-petal” model for the new hospital,
a circular design that he felt, based on his observations of disculturation within the institution, would aid the hospital’s main therapeutic function by creating space that was conducive to social interactions (fig. 10). In other words, he believed the mental hospital required an architectural layout that fostered community. His socio-petal design incorporated features of modernism and austerity—for example, flat roofs, minimal exterior ornamentation, monolithic volumes, and the use of only one color (usually white or off-white), concrete with steel and large expanses of exterior glass—alongside a desire to build a hospital for patients rather than for its staff. The circular design provided private spaces for patients along the perimeter of the building and expanded space for social contact as they moved outside their private space. The extra barriers or buffers, he felt, created unambiguous divisions in the hospital and allowed for an unobtrusive entrance into a room or, similarly, an escape into privacy.

In her description of Sunhill, Emily Carr had complained about the very layout of the institution on her creative and psychic life more than half a century before. He also paid attention to the interior designs in the institution, retaining his core objective that the institution should foster a design that facilitates the building and rebuilding of social relationships. For example, he focused on the appropriate colouring, texture, and arrangement of floor tiles. Conscious of the ways that coloured tiles could create illusions of distance, security, and gaps or holes in the floor, he carefully chose patterns in common spaces that created a sense of security in a homelike environment. Conversely, he resisted arrangements that created solid lines and might therefore suggest barriers.

His provocative recommendations fell on deaf ears. By the mid-1960s, LSD research had become mired in its association with countercultural activities, drug abuse, and unethical medical activities. Izumi’s findings, like those of Osmond and his colleagues, were entangled in a cultural war on drugs that discarded scientific evidence in favour of drug control. Locally, Saskatchewan elected a new government that withdrew its support for pre-existing projects in a strenuous effort to distance itself from the socialist experiment. Meanwhile, new psychiatric medications reached unprecedented levels of commercial and therapeutic success, and their promoters claimed to have unlocked the doors of the asylum and allowed patients to resume their lives in the community. The idea of a new institution, even one imagined from the empathetic perspective of Kiyoshi Izumi, appeared as a relic of the past and as a painful reminder of stagnation and alienation. Izumi’s work became collateral damage in a cultural maelstrom over ideology, public policy, and a new era of psycho-pharmaceuticals.

Although his plans were never fully realized in architectural form, Izumi’s observations on institutional spaces attracted attention from psychiatrists, architects, and administrators from around the world. Commentators praised the attention to detail and the structural considerations for privacy and persona. He paid attention to the psychological walls of the asylum and strive to create a rehabilitative space prefaced upon a philosophy of integration over segregation. Although personally, Izumi cautioned against the casual assumption that modern life outside an asylum shielded one from madness; perhaps he still believed that institutional spaces, with all of their consequences, might yet have something to offer. “The [modern] environment,” he warned, “is becoming ever intensively impersonal, depersonalizing, disculturating and dehumanizing.” The issue for Izumi was not that the asylum had failed to segregate madness from society, but that modern society had accelerated the pace at which it alienated its members without pausing to consider the consequences. Carr’s experience in the modernized industrialized cities of both London and, later, Paris demonstrates this alienation, as during both journeys she quickly tired of the large city; “I could not stand the airlessness of the life [drawing] rooms for long,” she wrote, “the doctors stating, as they had done in London[,] that ‘there was something about these big cities that these Canadians from their big spaces couldn’t stand, it was like putting a pine tree in a pot.’”

Although Emily Carr wrote about the impact of the architecture and routines of the institution on her creative and psychic life more than half a century before Izumi made his comments, they both offered insights into the complicated connections between institutions and madness, urbanity and sanity, and nature and humanity. They both remind us of the way that madness continually influences our society in productive ways, but also of the enduring human impulse to alienate or confine that which we do not understand.
1 Emily Carr, Pause: A Sketch Book (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2007), 17.


3 Ibid., 32–33.


5 Ibid., 4.

6 Ibid., 6.


8 Carr, Pause, 21.


11 Susan Crean, ed., Opposite Contraries: The Unknown Journals of Emily Carr and Other Writings (Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 2003), 254.
top left
Just as you've feeling better/And joy your bosom fills,/Down falls your heart to zero/For in comes nurse with pills.

bottom right
March 30–31 I found several nests, mostly thrushes', and built largely in furze and brambles.

bottom left
Our Medical Advisers

68

69
top left
5 o’clock a.m./Apr 15, 1903/Darn ’Em

top right
Morsel and Patty Worming

bottom right
Rings on his fingers/Hook in his nose/Vulgarity pure/wherever he goes.

top
Reunion of The Morsel & the babe./ May 1st/Anticipation

bottom
Receipt for bringing out full expression of Hokey’s countenance
The beast depositing his food in an envelope as soon as Doctor’s back is turned prior to burying it.

Hokey — only 3 eggs, 0 sausages, 2 porridges, 3 cups of tea and a little bit of bacon besides toast and butter. What’s the good of my taking a tonic if I cannot get more than that for breakfast Matron!
CONVOLUTED BEAUTY:
IN THE COMPANY
OF EMILY CARR

Cedric & Nathan Bomford
Joanne Bristol
Emily Carr
Louise Lawler
Marianne Nicolson
Charlotte Salomon
Karen Tam
Mark Wallinger
Thomas Zipp
Emily Carr, Sketchbook for "Pause," 1903 with Cedric and Nathan Bomford, Down by the River (detail), 2014

Cedric and Nathan Bomford
Down by the River, 2014
mixed media installation

with Emily Carr, Shoreline, 1936; Marianne Nicolson, Carnival/Carnivore, 2014; and Emily Carr, Strangled by Growth, 1931
Emily Carr
Strangled by Growth, 1931
oil on canvas
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust
Emily Carr
Shoreline, 1936
oil on canvas
McMichael Canadian Art Collection
Gift of Mrs. H.P. de Pencier

Emily Carr
The Crying Totem, 1928
oil on canvas
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust
Joanne Bristol
Le Vol Quotidien, 2014
newsprint
previous
Karen Tam, in collaboration with呂陸川(Lui Luk Chun)
鸕鶿飛(Flying Cormorant Studio [For Lee Nam]), 2014
mixed media installation
opposite
鸕鶿飛(Flying Cormorant Studio [For Lee Nam]) (detail)

Emily Carr
Pine Forest, 1924
oil on paper
Collection of the Mendel Art Gallery
Gift of the Mendel family, 1965

Karen Tam, in collaboration with呂陸川(Lui Luk Chun)
鸕鶿飛(Flying Cormorant Studio [For Lee Nam]) (detail), 2014
Fig. 11 Two of Professor Lui Luk Chun’s painting teachers, artists Pan Tianshou (1897–1971) and Wu Fuzhi (1900–1977), on Anhui province’s Mount Huangshan (a recurring subject of poetry and Chinese ink painting since the Tang Dynasty), 1962

Fig. 12 Professor Lui Luk Chun (top row, 2nd from the left) with his university classmates, including his wife, Wang Wen Rong (bottom row, 2nd from the left), at the China Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou, 1959

Karen Tam, in collaboration with呂陸川(Lui Luk Chun)鸕鶿飛(Flying Cormorant Studio [For Lee Nam]) (detail), 2014

following
Karen Tam’s collaborator, Professor Lui Luk Chun, in his Montreal studio, March 2014
Lorem Ipsum
Fake Title, 1988
photo
75.3 x 38.8 cm
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery
Emily Carr
Dancing Trees, c. 1940
canvas on paper laid down on canvas
McMichael Canadian Art Collection
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Max Stern, Dominion Gallery, Montreal

opposite
Thomas Zipp
Figure-Ground Specification in Terms of Structural Information. The Rivalry between Different Pattern Codings (detail), 2013
mixed media installation
following
installation view
Mark Wallinger
Threshold to the Kingdom, 2000
video installation

Video stills from the performance by Thomas Zipp of Figure-Ground Specification in Terms of Structural Information. The Rivalry between Different Pattern Codings, 2013.
Marianne Nicolson
Whose Land Is This Anyways? 2014
billboard installed in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Marianne Nicolson
Carnival/Carnivore, 2014
acrylic on wood with brass, copper, silver inlay
Louise Lawler

Birdcalls, 1972–81
audio recording and text, 7:01
LeWitt Collection, Chester, CT
installed in the Civic Conservatory at the Mendel Art Gallery

VITO ACCONCI
CARL ANDRE
RICHARD ARTSCHWAGER
JOHN BALDESSARI
ROBERT BARRY
JOSEPH BEUYS
DANIEL BUREN
SANDRO CHIA
FRANCESCO CLEMENTE
ENZO CUCCHI
GILBERT and GEORGE
DAN GRAHAM
HANS HAACKE
NEIL JENNEY
DONALD JUDD
ANSELM KIEFER
JOSEPH KOSUTH
SOL LEWITT
RICHARD LONG
GORDON MATTACLARK
MARIO MERZ
SIGMAR POLKE
GERHARD RICHTER
ED RUSCHA
JULIAN SCHNABEL
CY TWOMBLY
ANDY WARHOL
LAWRENCE WEINER
List of Works in the Exhibition

Archival photographs in the exhibition and source material, as indicated by the photo essay, They Who Hold the World Together: Emily Carr’s Ecological Poetics.

Copyrights on the original photographs are included in quotation marks.

Unknown photographer

Emily Carr in her pet monkey, Wos, warning him off the Campbell, Meteochon, British Columbia 1934
inkjet print from original photograph, printed 2014
G-00410, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives (photo essay p. 37, detail)

Edythe Hembruff-Schneider

Emily Carr’s pet monkey, Wos, warning him off the Campbell, Meteochon, British Columbia 1934
inkjet print from original photograph, printed 2014
G-00413, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

Unknown photographer

Carr with Dogs and Cat and Wos in a Drees c. 1930
inkjet print from original photograph, printed 2014

Ruth Hembruff-Hermitage

Preparing upper while waiting for Emily to return from sketching

Emily Carr’s corazon, “Elephant,” Meteochon, British Columbia.

Helen Hembruff-Rasch (left with Brusselas Griffon dog); Frederick J. Brand, Edythe Hembruff-Schneider (then Brand) 1935
inkjet print from original photograph, printed 2014
G-01185, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

Unknown photographer

One of Emily Carr’s batik shawlpaks c. 1930s
inkjet print from original photograph, printed 2014
G-02943, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

Unknown photographer

Emily Carr and Wos, the monkey, perched on her right shoulder, in backyard, Simcoe St., Victoria, British Columbia 1930
inkjet print from original photograph, printed 2014
G-02945, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

Unknown photographer

Emily Carr seated on porch steps with her Brussels Griffon dog and black cocker c. 1930
inkjet print from original photograph, printed 2014
H-02819, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

Emily Carr seated in her studio and holding two of her pets, 316 Beckwith St., Victoria, British Columbia 1938
inkjet print from original photograph, printed 2014
H-02812, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

Emily Carr seated in her studio and holding two of her pets, 316 Beckwith St., Victoria, British Columbia 1938
inkjet print from original photograph, printed 2014
I-51885, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives (photo essay p. 37, detail)

Archived Munich

Emily Carr on horseback during her visit to the Cariboo 1919
inkjet print from original photograph, printed 2014
I-51889, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives (photo essay p. 40)

Unknown photographer

Lady June, the dog, and Emily Carr visit a Walkabout a Merry Christmas 1942
inkjet print from original photograph, printed 2014
I-51890, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives (photo essay p. 52)

Unknown photographer

Emily Carr and her three dogs c. 1930–40
inkjet print from original photograph, printed 2014
I-51889, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives (photo essay p. 40)

B-07510, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

inkjet print from original photograph, printed 2014

Emily Carr seated in her studio and holding two of her pets, 316 Beckwith St., Victoria, British Columbia 1938
inkjet print from original photograph, printed 2014
I-51885, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives (photo essay p. 37, detail)

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G-01185, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

inkjet print from original photograph, printed 2014

Emily Carr seated in her studio and holding two of her pets, 316 Beckwith St., Victoria, British Columbia 1938
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H-02819, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

Emily Carr seated on porch steps with her Brussels Griffon dog and black cocker c. 1930
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Emily Carr on horseback during her visit to the Cariboo 1919
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I-51889, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives (photo essay p. 40)

Unknown photographer

Lady June, the dog, and Emily Carr visit a Walkabout a Merry Christmas 1942
inkjet print from original photograph, printed 2014
I-51890, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives (photo essay p. 52)

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Emily Carr and her three dogs c. 1930–40
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London in 2014.

Cedric Bomford (b. 1975, Canada) is a photographer and installation artist whose work explores the impact of environmental change on buildings, yet full of historical presences. Recently, the brothers have worked in a new direction, collaborating on projects that extend beyond previous work and shared interests. Their collaborative work includes Deadhead, an installation produced by Other Sights for Artists' Projects in Vancouver; British Columbia (2014), and an installation for the group exhibition when the grid goes soft at MÖT International in London (2012). Additionally, their work has been exhibited at Vancouver Art Gallery (with Jim Bomford); Open Space Gallery, Victoria; the International Symposium of Contemporary Art, Baie-Saint-Paul, Quebec; and the Nanaimo Art Gallery.

Cedric Bomford received an MFA from Mohawk Art Academy in Sweden and has been exhibited in such spaces as Kunsthallen Han- novre, Kunsthalle Heidelberg, and Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Germany; Bombay's Kursthalle, Sweden; Azad Art Gallery and Parkgallery, Tehran; and the Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taiwan. Nathan Bomford received an MFA from the University of Victoria, British Columbia. His work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in Germany and across Canada.

Jiewyn Liew is an artist whose work investigates relationships between nature and culture, and between the body and language. She received an MFA from Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, Canada, and has presented installations, performances, and videos in North America and Europe. Bristol also works curates, and she has taught at a number of Canadian universities. She is currently completing a PhD at the Bartlett School of Architecture in London, England, using performance and writing to study interspecies relationships in urban contexts. Her thesis, titled interspecies spaces, combines research in spatial culture with the emergent field of animal studies.

In the decade prior to her death in 1945, Carr devoted much of her time and energy to animal studies through painting. Within a year she created over 1,300 small gouaches, large watercolours, and mixed media works. She is best known for her paintings of the totemic carvings of the First Nations of the Pacific Northwest Coast. Nicolai's artistic training encompasses traditional Kwakiutl walkways and forms and culture as well as Western Euro-

CedricZueblin (b. 1947, Brotnow, New York) is an American artist. She graduated from Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, in 1969. Since the late 1970s her practice has concerned the workings of contexts and objects. Laxer is known for her photographs that include images of an in-museum, private collections, auction houses, and storage. Her imag-

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Wallinger's works include the sculpture Ecce Homo (1998), the first major artwork to feature a large sculpture in the Tate Modern. He has been described as one of the most important living artists to have emerged from the UK. Since the mid-1990s he has been a member of the Tate Modern's international advisory board.

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List of Figures

8. Emily Carr
Three Birds, Two Nests, 1902 *
ink and graphite on paper
22.7 x 17.7cm
PD06129, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

1. Emily Carr
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watercolour on brown paper
37.1 x 28.4 cm
PD06176, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

3. Emily Carr
The Olson Student: These Are the Students Who Laughed at Her Gear, 1901 *
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29.3 x 23.1 cm
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32.6 x 63.5 cm
PD06156, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

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Westminster School of Art Sketch, 1901 *
watercolour and ink on paper
45.8 x 35.5 cm
PD06152, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

2. Unknown photographer
Art School, St. Ives, early 1900s *
watercolour on paper
PD06151, Courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

11. Two of Professor Lui Luk Chun’s painting teachers, artists Pan Tianshhou (1897-1971) and Wu Fuzhi (1900-1977), on Anhui province’s Tianshou (1897-1971) and Wu Fuzhi (1900-1977), on Anhui province’s Mount Huangshan (a recurring subject of poetry and Chinese ink painting since the Tang Dynasty), 1962. Photo: Lui Luk Chun

12. Professor Lui Luk Chun (top row, 2nd from the left) with his university classmates, including his wife, Wang Wen Rong (bottom row, 2nd from the left), at the China Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou, 1959. Photographer unknown.

Charlotte Salomon, Life? or Theatre? (1941–43)

English translations of the original German texts for the selections on pages 104–105.

4175
FRANZSKA: “In Heaven everything is much more beautiful than here on earth—and when your Mommy has turned into a little angel she’ll come down and bring her little lambkin, she’ll bring a letter, telling her what it’s like in Heaven, what is up there in Heaven.”

Franziska was a somewhat sentimental disposition. She would often take the child to bed with her and tell her about a life after death in celestial spheres, a life that was said to be simply glorious and for which she seemed to have a terrible yearning, and she often asked Charlotte whether it wouldn’t be wonderful if her mother were to turn into an angel with wings. Charlotte agreed that it would, only she asked her mother not to forget to tell her in a letter—which she was to deliver personally as an angel and deposit on Charlotte’s windowsill—what it was like up there in Heaven.

4294
“One, two, three, four, five, six, do you play witch’s tricks? Now we are only three.”

4304
ACT TWO
The sawacki—a symbol bright of hope. The day for freedom and for bread now dawns—Just at this time, many Jews—who, with all their often unmistakable efficiency, are perhaps a pushy and insistent race—happened to be occupying government and other senior positions. After the Nazi takeover of power they were all dismissed without notice. Here you see how this affected a number of different souls that were both human and Jewish!

4338
PROFESSOR: “No, your work is not satisfactory.”
CHARLOTTE: “Oh Professor, is it worth my while to go on with my painting?”
PROFESSOR: “Who dare say whether it is or it isn’t—it’s up to you.”

4397
Meanwhile Charlotte is totally absorbed in her efforts to express in an etching Daberlohn’s profound subconscious fascination for her. A man standing by the sea, surrounded by a group of young people. He is addressing them, and they are listening. In the background a youth of medium height points to his forehead. He is implying that they are all round the bend and crazy.

CHARLOTTE: “Even if it drives me out of my mind—I have to get it the way I want it. The print still isn’t right. The print still isn’t...”

4794
One evening, while walking in the glorious countryside, the following poem burst forth from the mangled heart of seventy-year-old Mrs. Kramer: “The world is filled with suffering and horror. Virtue and reason now prevail no more. Friendship and trust are all destroyed. Is this the threshold of a dawning age? Ah me, if only peace were not so far. Yet, changing hearts and souls of men, ethal, nature remains, unchangeable and fair. Birdsongs resounds, the trees and flowers bloom, and all around the sky’s moonlight seethes mountain and dale in opalescent mist. Why all this questing for Creation’s meaning, why all this searching for the whence, the whither? Just as, in fading, Nature has endured, so is survival of our ash assured!”

4857
“Joy, O joy, divine spark, daughter of Elysium, let us come from out the dark into Thy most sacred realm.”

"Presented in the exhibition in the form of digital reproductions on iPad"
Published to record the exhibition Convoluted Beauty: In the Company of Emily Carr, presented from June 27 to September 14, 2014 at the Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.

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Exhibition curator: Lisa Baldissera
Publication coordinator: Jillian Cyca
Copy editor: Audrey McClellan
Translator (Emily Carr: Often the other..., Vinciane Despret): Laura Browne Sayre
Design: Andrew Di Rosa and Bartosz Gawdzik, Small, Toronto, ON
Printed in Canada by Friesens, Altona, MB

All photography by Troy Mamer, Mendel Art Gallery, unless otherwise noted, except the following:
Troy Grondahl, Mendel Art Gallery: p. 96
Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam: pp. 98–99
McMichael Canadian Art Collection: pp. 66–73, 80, 92, 100
Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery: pp. 79, 81, 101
Karen Tam: p. 90–91

Distributed by ABC Art Books Canada
229 - 372 rue Ste. Catherine W.
Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3B 1A2

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication
Convoluted beauty : In the company of Emily Carr / curated by Lisa Baldissera; essays by Lisa Baldissera, Vinciane Despret and Erika Dyck.

Catalogue of an exhibition held at the Mendel Art Gallery from June 27 to September 14, 2014 which includes seven paintings and one original sketchbook of drawings and writing by Emily Carr and works by international artists.
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 978-1-896359-86-1 (pbk.)

I. Mendel Art Gallery, issuing body, host institution
II. Baldissera, Lisa Convoluted beauty

ND249.C3A4 2014a 759.11 C2014-905230-8

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The Mendel Art Gallery is a non-profit organization supported by its members, and donations and grants from the City of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Arts Board, Canada Council for the Arts, and Saskatchewan Lotteries.

The Mendel Art Gallery is grateful to Tourism Saskatoon, B’nai Brith Lodge 739 and Congregation Agudas Israel, Saskatoon, for sponsoring this exhibition.

City of Saskatoon
Art Council of Canada
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B’nai Brith Lodge 739