

Emily Carr
A Room of Her Own

HORIZONS

TEACHER STUDY GUIDE SPRING 2024



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VANCOUVER ART GALLERY TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR SCHOOL PROGRAMS

This school tour highlights two distinct exhibitions: *Emily Carr: A Room of Her Own* and *HORIZONS*. Students will spend time in each exhibition exploring how artists interpret the <u>landscape</u>, and then participate in a workshop inspired by the work of Emily Carr (1871–1945).

Emily Carr: A Room of Her Own takes a chronological view of Carr's works from 1905 to 1937. Presented in a single room, the exhibition is an opportunity to delve deeper into Carr's practice, looking closely at her works in charcoal, watercolour and oil on canvas, as well as her unique use of gasoline and oil on paper. The works focus on Indigenous culture and the forests of British Columbia.

HORIZONS is a conceptual art project conceived by artist Garry Neill Kennedy (1935–2021). In 1980, Kennedy was invited to participate in a group exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada. He responded to the invitation with a proposal to rehang landscape paintings so that their horizon lines were at his eye level. This proposal, known as HORIZONS, was declined, and the project was never developed. In this exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery, Kennedy's proposal is realized posthumously as a tribute to the artist's life and work. A selection of historical and modern landscape paintings drawn from the Gallery's permanent collection have been hung with their horizon lines at the eye level of the artist, which means some pieces are hung higher than the standard hanging height, and others are hung lower, creating the kind of intervention in gallery and museum norms that Kennedy explored in his practice during the 1980s.

DEAR TEACHER,

This Teacher Study Guide will assist you in preparing for your class tour of the exhibitions *Emily Carr: A Room of Her Own* and *HORIZONS*. It provides activities to facilitate discussion before and after your visit. Engaging in the suggested activities will reinforce ideas generated by the tour and build continuity between the Gallery experience and your ongoing work in the classroom. Most activities require few materials and can be adapted easily to the age, grade level and needs of your students. <u>Underlined</u> words in this guide are defined in the Glossary section.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Emily Carr: A Room of Her Own and HORIZONS takes place on the <u>unceded</u> territories of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilwətat (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

EMILY CARR: A ROOM OF HER OWN AND HORIZONS HAVE 3 MAIN GOALS:



TO INTRODUCE

STUDENTS TO LANDSCAPE WORKS FROM THE GALLERY'S PERMANENT COLLECTION



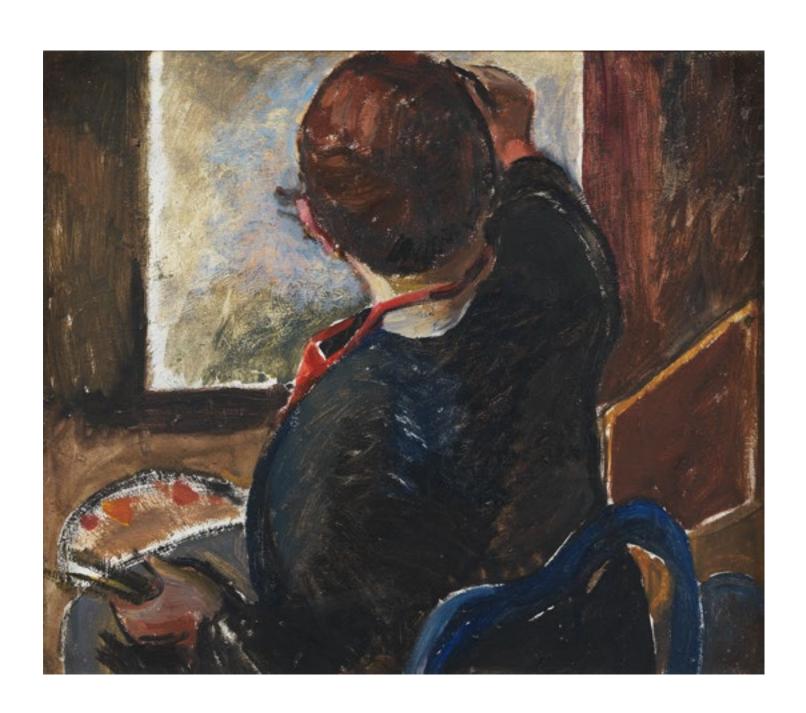
TO CONSIDER

THE WORKS OF EMILY CARR AND THE CONCEPTUAL ART PROJECT CREATED BY GARRY NEILL KENNEDY



TO EXPLORE

INDIVIDUAL ARTWORKS IN THE CONTEXT OF IDEAS, MATERIALS AND PROCESS



GLOSSARY

ABSTRACT(ION) A style of art that can be thought of in two ways:

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

AVANT-GARDE Art that pushes the boundaries of ideas and creativity, introducing new forms or subject matter.

BEAVER HALL GROUP A Montréal-based group of Canadian painters. The group was active between 1920 and 1922 and is notable for its equal inclusion of men and women artists, as well as for its embrace of modernism. They painted a variety of subjects, including portraits, landscapes, urban scenes and still lifes, in a mix of modernist and traditional styles.

CANADIAN GROUP OF PAINTERS A collective of twenty-eight artists from across Canada. Formed in 1933 as a direct outgrowth of the Group of Seven, its policy was "to encourage and foster the growth of art in Canada which has a national character." Both men and women artists were invited into the CGP.

CONCEPTUAL ART(IST) The idea (or concept) behind the work is more important than the finished art object.

GROUP OF SEVEN A group of Toronto-centred Canadian painters devoted to landscape painting (especially of northern Ontario subjects) and the creation of a national style. The group was active from 1920 to 1933. In 1933, their name was changed to the Canadian Group of Painters.

HORIZON LINE The line where the earth and sky appear to meet.

INDIGENOUS The first inhabitants of Canada, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

LANDSCAPE Artwork of which the primary focus is natural scenery, such as mountains, forests, cliffs, trees, rivers, valleys, etc. Traditionally, landscapes have been paintings or drawings depicting natural scenes and are often concerned with light, space and setting.

MODERN(ISM) | MODERNIST An approach to art, prominent from 1850 to 1970, that embraced new ideas ranging from science to political thought. The modernists rejected the restrictions of past art traditions and stressed innovation over all other criteria.

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

UNCEDED A term for a relationship between the Government of Canada and Indigenous peoples when no treaties have been established. In general, "unceded" means that the lands and waters of Indigenous peoples were never surrendered and were taken without permission.



PRE-TOUR ACTIVITIES ALL AGES



1. GRADES 4-12 WHO ARE THE ARTISTS? Pre-Tour Activity



2. ALL GRADES FOREST FORMS Pre-Tour Activity

Harold Mortimer-Lamb, Emily Carr in Her Studio, 1939, scan of negative, Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Claudia Beck and Andrew Gruft

Emily Carr, Deep Forest, c. 1931, oil on canvas, Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust



3. ALL AGES
THREE LINE LANDSCAPE
Pre-Tour Activity



4. ALL AGES SKETCH AND PAINTPost-Tour Activity

PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY

OBJECTIVE

Students are introduced to the life, artistic process and works of Emily Carr and Garry Neill Kennedy, who are represented in two distinct exhibitions.

MATERIALS

- Writing materials
- Access to the internet Artist Information Sheet
 (p. 13) and Student Worksheet (p. 14)

PROCESS

- Divide the class into small groups.
- Give each group one of the categories from the Artist Information Sheet (p. 13), and ask them to consider what they need to find out in order to complete their section.
- Have students conduct research using the internet, either at home or at school.
- Ask each group to find and describe a piece of work by the artist and add it to the space provided on the worksheet.
- Have each group present their information while the rest of the students fill in their worksheets.

CONCLUSION

Discuss the following:

- What were some of the most interesting things that students learned or discovered?
- Which works are students curious to see in the exhibitions?
- Do the artists' works connect to, or resonate with, the students' lives? Why or why not?
- Are there any artists, ways of working or ideas that the students would like to know more about?

PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY

EMILY CARR (1871-1945)

Born in 1871, Emily Carr was one of the most important British Columbian artists of her generation, best known for her work documenting the totem poles of the Indigenous peoples of the province of British Columbia and for her forest Indigenous peoples of the province of British Columbia

Carr began taking art lessons in Victoria as a child and continued her studies in San Francisco and England, where she most likely began sketching outdoors. She also travelled to France to study drawing and painting, this time returning to Canada with a new, modern way of painting, using bold colours and large brushstrokes. In 1912, she travelled north to visit Indigenous villages on the Skeena River and Haida Gwaii, and she produced her first major canvases of Indigenous subject matter influenced by her painting explorations in France. Carr offered to sell these works to the provincial government, but the government rejected the work on the grounds that it was not "documentary"; it was too abstract. Dejected, Carr produced very few paintings over the next decade. She returned to Victoria to make a living by running a boarding house, raising sheepdogs, making pottery and giving art lessons.

In 1927, Carr's work was included in the *Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art: Native and Modern* at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. This major exhibition introduced her art to other Canadian artists, particularly members of the <u>Group of Seven</u>, who recognized the quality of her work. In the 1930s, Carr began devoting most of her attention to <u>landscape</u>, particularly the forest, as her subject. She sought to capture a "sense of awe" in her paintings of the forest, sketching outdoors using thinned oil paint on paper during the summer and making final paintings in her studio using oil paint on canvas during the winter. Her work became increasingly abstract as she experimented with shape, colour and movement.



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

PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY

GARRY NEILL KENNEDY (1935-2021)

Garry Neill Kennedy was an award-winning conceptualartist and educator who turned the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) into an internationally renowned centre for conceptual and avant-garde art in the 1960s and 70s.

Born in St. Catharines, Ontario, Kennedy studied art as an undergraduate at the Ontario College of Art and Design (now OCAD University) and the University of Buffalo, and he received his MFA from Ohio University in 1965. A retrospective of his work was presented in 2000 at the National Gallery of Canada, and in 2004 he received the Governor's General Award in Visual and Media Arts. That same year, he was also made a member of the Order of Canada. Though he received national and international recognition during his career, it was in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where Kennedy truly made his mark.

From 1967 until 1990, Kennedy served as the president of NSCAD. At thirty-two years old, he was the youngest-ever person to serve in that position. His

groundbreaking ideas transformed what had been an unknown, conservative art school run out of a church into an internationally recognized centre for modern arts education. He was not well received at first because he created Pop and conceptual art that challenged the status quo. While running the college, he never stopped teaching and making art. Kennedy, whose work often confronted institutional power and politics, put the college on the map during the Vietnam War, and he encouraged his students and visiting artists to explore that topic in their work. He stepped down after twenty-three years as the president of the college but continued to teach and create art for the rest of his life.

Kennedy spent the last seven years of his life in British Columbia, where he moved to teach at the University of British Columbia. He died in 2021 in Vancouver. He will be remembered as a significant art education innovator and artist.

PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY

ARTIST INFORMATION SHEET

EMILY CARR

- Born and died in Victoria, BC
- Modernist painter who experimented with colour, shape and brushstroke
- Best known for painting the forests of British Columbia and <u>Indigenous</u> villages and totem poles
- One of the most important British Columbian artists of her generation
- Towards the end of her life, wrote many books, which were critically acclaimed
- Received the Governor General's Award for Literature
- · Sketched outdoors using thinned oil paint on paper; made final paintings in her studio using oil paint on canvas

GARRY NEILL KENNEDY

- Born in St. Catharines, ON, and died in Vancouver, BC
- An award-winning conceptual artist and educator
- Turned Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) into an internationally renowned centre for conceptual and avant-garde art
- Received the Governor's General Award and was made a member of the Order of Canada
- At thirty-two, he was the youngest-ever person to serve as president of NSCAD
- His groundbreaking ideas transformed NSCAD
- · His art confronted institutional power and politics

PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY

STUDENT WORKSHEET (FILL IN THE CHART WITH THE FOLLOWING)

	EMILY CARR	GARRY NEILL KENNEDY
PERSONAL INFORMATION		
INTERESTING FACT		
KNOWN FOR		
NAME AN ARTWORK		

ALL GRADES | FOREST FORMS

INSPIRED BY EMILY CARR



OBJECTIVE

Create an <u>abstract</u> forest collage focusing on shape, form and colour.

DISCUSSION

Bright, blended colours and simplified shapes characterize many of Emily Carr's paintings. As she progressed as a painter, her works became increasingly <u>abstract</u> and simplified, particularly the trees in her paintings of BC forests. Over time, Carr began to simplify her colours as well. She did not attempt to portray her subjects in a realistic manner; rather, she used the real world as inspiration for abstract, personal interpretations of her subjects.

MATERIALS

- Construction paper, tissue paper and/or other paper in a variety of colours
- Pencils
- Scissors
- Glue

ALL GRADES | FOREST FORMS

INSPIRED BY EMILY CARR

PROCESS

- Look closely at Emily Carr's painting Deep Forest (c. 1931).
 How has she <u>abstracted</u> the forest using colour, line and shape? Find some shapes that she has used for trees.
- Gather a selection of paper in a variety of colours.
- Draw some of the shapes you notice in Carr's painting on your chosen paper.
- Show light and shadow by using papers with different shades of colour.
- Arrange your shapes onto a background sheet of construction paper to create a bold and simplified <u>landscape</u>.
- When you are satisfied with your composition, glue down the shapes carefully.

CONCLUSION

Display your collages in the classroom and discuss the following:

- What elements did you use or consider from Emily Carr's painting Deep Forest?
- What did you find easy or challenging about creating your collage?
- What similarities and differences do you notice in the artworks?
- Do you perceive landscape and nature differently now? Why or why not?











PROJECT EXTENSION | HORIZONS

Inspired by Garry Neill Kennedy

The art in museums and galleries is often hung at fifty-seven inches, measuring from the floor to the centre of the artwork. This height is based on the average height of viewers and the optimal alignment of their eyes with the artwork. Conceptual artist Garry Neill Kennedy liked to challenge rules. HORIZONS is a conceptual art project by Kennedy in which a selection of landscape paintings are rehung so that the horizon line is at the eye

level of the artist. By breaking the rule of thumb used by museums and galleries for hanging artworks, Kennedy creates a very different look in the space.

As a class, hang your finished paintings so that all of the horizon lines match. How does this change the way the work is hung?

ALL AGES | THREE LINE LANDSCAPE

INSPIRED BY TAKAO TANABE



OBJECTIVE

Create an abstract landscape using just three lines.

DISCUSSION

Takao Tanabe is one of the most important <u>landscape</u> painters in Canadian art and a tireless supporter of the visual arts in Canada. He has long been identified with landscape, but

his approach to this subject matter has radically changed over the course of his career. Ian M. Thom, Senior Curator Emeritus at the Vancouver Art Gallery, has described Tanabe as the "poet of the ocean shore."

Born in 1926 in the small fishing settlement of Seal Cove near Prince Rupert, British Columbia, Tanabe and his family were unfortunately among those of Japanese ancestry "resettled"

Takao Tanabe, The Land 20, 1977, acrylic on canvas, Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of J. Ron Longstaffe, VAG 82.82, Photo: Vancouver Art Gallery

ALL AGES | THREE LINE LANDSCAPE

INSPIRED BY TAKAO TANABE

during the Second World War, first to an internment camp at Hastings Park in Vancouver, and then to the Lemon Creek Internment Camp in the Kootenays. Tanabe eventually moved farther inland, joining his brother in Winnipeg. There, immediately following the war, he attended the Winnipeg School of Art. After graduating, Tanabe returned to Vancouver in 1949, and, over the next few years, he travelled to New York, Europe and Japan to study art. During this time, he taught both commercial art and painting at the Vancouver School of Art (now Emily Carr University of Art + Design). He became the head of the art department and artist-in-residence at the Banff School of Fine Arts in 1973.

Tanabe chose to explore the prairies that were familiar to him, and he produced a major series of prairie landscapes pared down to two elements: land and sky. In 1980, Tanabe moved to Vancouver Island, where he took



Student example



Student example

up permanent residence and turned his attention to the coastal landscape.

Tanabe has exhibited his work internationally and is the recipient of several honorary degrees, as well as the Order of British Columbia, the Order of Canada and the Governor General's Award.

MATERIALS

- Watercolour paper or heavy cardstock
- Watercolour paints
- Paintbrushes, container of water
- Pencil
- Copy paper for sketching

PROCESS

 Look at Takao Tanabe's painting The Land 20 (1977).
 This is part of his prairie series in which he pared down the landscape to two elements, land and sky. How has he done this in the painting? Can you find three lines that create the <u>landscape</u> in his painting—a straight line, a curved line and a jagged/wiggly line?

- You will create a pared-down landscape inspired by the work of Takao Tanabe using just three lines: a straight line, a curved line and a jagged/wiggly line.
- Fold a piece of paper in half, fold it in half again and then fold it in half one more time. This will give you 8 separate boxes when you open up the paper.
- Using a pencil, draw over the lines of the folds, creating boxes for you to sketch in.
- Now it's time to add the lines. Each line should begin and end at either the edge of the box, or at another line you have already drawn, so that they create shapes.
- Keep filling all the boxes with different combinations of three lines to develop your compositions.
- Choose one of the compositions and draw it large on a sheet of watercolour paper.
- Now add watercolour. You can experiment using light and dark shades, warm and cool hues, or just random colours you find appealing.

OTHER OPTIONS

Instead of watercolour, you could use crayons, markers, pastels, acrylic paint or tissue paper.

CONCLUSION

- Display the artworks in the classroom. Discuss the following:
- · How are the artworks the same or different?
- What elements did you use or consider from Takao Tanabe's The Land 20?
- What was easy or hard about creating your painting?
- What are some techniques that you discovered?
- If you were to do the project again, what would you do the same and what would you do differently?



Student example



Student example



PROJECT EXTENSION | HORIZONS

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ALL AGES | SKETCH AND PAINT

INSPIRED BY ANNIE SAVAGE

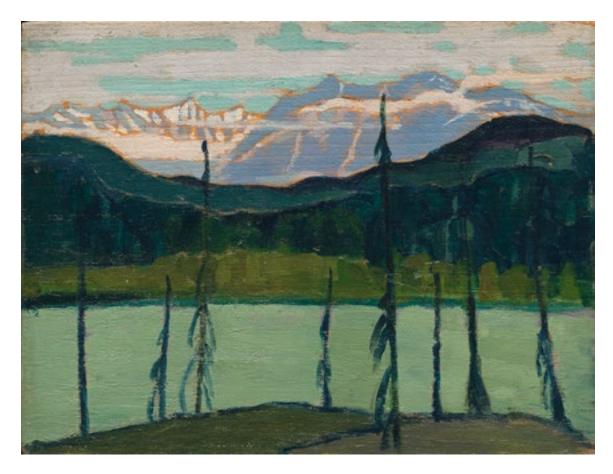
OBJECTIVE

Discover Anne Savage's process creating sketches outdoors, and then, back in the classroom, create a painting based on the sketch.

DISCUSSION

Montréal artist Anne Savage is known for her <u>landscape</u> paintings. Her early paintings were heavily influenced by the <u>Group of Seven</u>, with whom she shared a romantic vision of the Canadian landscape as a symbol of nationalism. But her later work shows a loose, gestural style that is all her own, characterized by muted colour. During her lifetime, she was best known as an innovator in art education. Her approach was based on her belief in the natural creativity of children. Her ideas had a major impact on how art is taught today. Although she was a passionate teacher, Savage saw herself first and foremost as a painter. She had an ongoing

interest in landscape painting, in which she was always experimenting and simplifying, and she worked extensively in the Laurentian Mountains in southern Québec. The many artworks she created of this region have been seen as a reflection of her family connection to place and her personal attachment to nature. In 1927, she was invited by the Government of Canada to travel to the Skeena River district of British Columbia to paint, as an outsider, the Indigenous ways of living on the land. As a painter, Savage was at the centre of modern art in Canada in the 1920s and 30s. She was a founding member of the Beaver Hall Group and Canadian Group of Painters, and she helped form the Child Art Council, which later became the Quebec Society for Education Through Art. As a member of the League for Women's Rights, she spoke out against sexism, and through a series of CBC broadcasts, she sought to inspire other women. By the end of her life, Savage's impact was not only through her canvases but also on the lives of women and children.



Anne Savage, The Skeena River, B.C., 1927-28, oil on panel, Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Acquisition Fund, VAG 96.14, Photo: Vancouver Art Gallery

ALL AGES | SKETCH AND PAINT

INSPIRED BY ANNIE SAVAGE

MATERIALS

- Drawing pads or clipboards with sheets of paper
- Pencil crayons or crayons
- Watercolour paper
- Paint
- Paintbrushes
- Water in containers

PROCESS

- Look closely at Anne Savage's painting, The Skeena River, B.C. (1927–28). Part of Savage's process was to go outside and, through sketching, <u>abstract</u> the <u>landscape</u> around her before coming inside to create abstract landscape paintings. How has Savage abstracted the landscape using colour, line and simplified shapes?
- Gather your drawing pad and pencil crayons or crayons.
- Go outdoors and create a sketch. Choose an outdoor area with some greenery or one or more trees. You will use your sketches to make a painting later. Think of some of the ways you can simplify the shapes, use lines or change the colours to abstract your landscape sketch.
- Decide on a starting perspective. For example:
 - Close up, with tree trunk or branches filling the page
 - From a distance, including grass, trees and sky
 - Looking up, including the top of the tree and an expanse of sky
 - A single tree
- Look closely at the greens and yellows of the leaves, the browns and greys of the trunk and branches, and the blues and greys of the sky. Do you notice any

- surprising colours, like purples, pinks or oranges? Add those colours to your work too. Remember, landscape painters like Anne Savage didn't just use one colour, but mixed and blended colours and shades to create rich, dense surfaces.
- Make a few colour sketches from different perspectives or angles, from close up and far away. Fill the page with quick detail, broad strokes of colours, lines and shapes that include all the elements in your line of vision.
- Within a week of making your sketches, look at your artwork and choose one you would most like to make into a painting. What parts of the sketch do you want to leave in? What parts would you like to change? Does the composition feel balanced, or are there some areas where you would like to add something or remove something? Would you like to combine elements from two different drawings?
- Gather your painting supplies and set up your desk area so that you can see your sketches while you paint.
- Paint a new landscape. Fill the page, layering and blending colours as you work.

CONCLUSION

- Display your paintings alongside your sketches in the classroom and discuss the following:
- What elements did you use or consider from Anne Savage's painting The Skeena River, B.C.?
- What did you find easy or challenging about abstracting the landscape?
- Did you choose to change anything from your sketch when you created your painting? Why or why not?
- What similarities and differences do you notice in the class artworks?
- Do you think your sketches could stand alone as finished works? Do you prefer any of your sketches to your final paintings? Why or why not?

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PROJECT EXTENSION | HORIZONS

Inspired by Garry Neill Kennedy

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FURTHER LEARNING

TEACHER AND STUDENT RESOURCES

WEBSITES

https://www.thecoast.ca/arts-music/garry-neill-kennedy-the-artist-who-put-nscad-on-the-map-dies-at-86-26979242

The National Gallery of Canada

The Canadian Encyclopedia

BOOKS

lan Thom, *Takao Tanabe: Life and Work* (Art Canada Institute, 2024).

Sarah Milroy, ed., *Uninvited: Canadian Women Artists in the Modern Movement* (Figure 1 Publishing, 2021).

Emily Carr, *Hundreds and Thousands: The Journals of Emily Carr*. Douglas and McIntryre, 2006.

lan Thom, *Emily Carr Collected*. Douglas and McIntyre, 2013.

VIDEO

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8 bQoPbcxdo

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Additional Support from:

Joanie Anderson

Emily Carr: A Room of Her Own is organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Diana Freundl, Senior Curator