

the exhibit and the history of New France. Also, it would be wise to introduce a few three-dimensional objects in display cases to give more varied texture to the exhibits. A simple colour-coding of the panels to go with the themes and introducing a few arrows to indicate the flow would provide a better sense of unity. Finally, the production of a more useful short guide to the exhibit (rather than the self-congratulatory hype handed out) is essential — one that explains how documents are used as well as tells us what they are.

In sum, the PAC has missed an opportunity there. New France is a rich subject and much more than some of its parts.

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**Emily Carr: Her Later Years.** KERRY DODD. Mounted at the Emily Carr Gallery, Victoria, 20 May 1986. No catalogue.

*Emily Carr: Her Later Years* opened on May 20 at the Emily Carr Gallery in Victoria, operated by the Provincial Archives of British Columbia. The news release accompanying the exhibition states that its focus is upon the achievements of Emily Carr between 1930 and 1945, when her sketching, writing, and painting activity was at its most intense. Paintings from the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, the Edmonton Art Gallery, the Glenbow Museum, and the Vancouver Art Gallery have been assembled for the exhibition.

The display consists primarily of fifteen landscape paintings (three of which depict totem poles), grouped aesthetically rather than chronologically. They are labelled with titles, dates, media descriptions, and names of collectors. In glass cases beneath the paintings are vintage newspaper clippings, along with the curator's descriptions of Emily Carr's life and work, including a few extracts from the artist's writings.

The paintings exhibited are superb, most of them depicting the intensity of wind and light in the forest and the sky which, to Emily Carr, distinguished the Pacific coast from the placid landscapes that she had sketched in England as a young woman. Some of the clippings shown are also superb. A *Star Weekly* feature about the artist, published in 1928, is headlined "Some Ladies Prefer Indians"; another article about her appears in a local newspaper on the "Women's Work" page. Her courage in painting seriously and in attempting to document the culture of British Columbia's native people is easily inferred.

Along with the clippings, the textual descriptions prepared as background to the paintings contain important information. Emily Carr's relationship to an artistic community in central Canada, for instance, is noted. Unfortunately, both the clippings and the descriptions are too general in nature. There is no discussion of individual paintings, and some of the clippings actually originate outside of the dates chosen to bound the exhibition.

In addition, in spite of the reference in the news release to a "creative outpouring in sketching, writing and painting", the display is not multi-faceted. It contains neither sketches nor any of the poems, short stories, or letters which Emily Carr produced in great quantity during this period. It is disconcerting to be shown clippings about her newly-published books without being given the opportunity to see any of them in their original

draft or published form. The Provincial Archives of British Columbia houses a collection of Carr documents in many forms, but their variety and quality is not reflected here, and some of the display space available, in fact, is unused.

The exhibition would probably have differed little had it been produced by any other gallery in Victoria. Treatment of the paintings as documentary art (examination of the information conveyed about totems, for example; or discussion of the evidence in the artist's style of a romantic approach typical of an era) is apparently not the curator's purpose. In fairness, the stated focus of the exhibition is a prolific period in the life of Emily Carr herself. Her background and her changing purposes, however, are not probed, and the circumstances in which she produced each painting are not adequately researched. For instance, the curator indicates that after a hiatus Emily Carr returned to Indian themes with a new approach, but she offers no explanation of how or why. The artist herself had given the issue attention before entering her "later period":

Went with Miss Buell and Mrs. Housser to tea at Mr. A.Y. Jackson's Studio Building. I loved his things, particularly some snow things of Quebec and three canvasses up Skeena River. I felt a little as if beaten at my own game. His Indian pictures have something mine lack — rhythm, poetry. Mine are so downright. But perhaps his haven't quite the love in them of the people and the country that mine have. How could they? He is not a Westerner and I took no liberties. Next time I paint Indians I'm going off on a tangent tear. There is something bigger than fact: the underlying spirit, all it stands for, the mood, the vastness, the wildness, the Western breadth of go-to-the-devil-if-you-don't-like-it, the eternal big spaceness of it.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the elements that should be present in an archival exhibition are missing from this one but it is redeemed by the inclusion of some well suited clippings. In future, a multimedia display (perhaps incorporating a sample of the Carr records transferred last year from the Public Archives of Canada to the Provincial Archives of British Columbia) accompanied by an itemized catalogue would be atonement for an approach that almost obscures the relationship of the Carr Gallery to the Archives which sponsors it.

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<sup>1</sup> Journal entry 14 November 1927 cited in Emily Carr, *Hundreds and Thousands: The Journals of Emily Carr* (Toronto, Vancouver, 1900), p. 5.