

December 13, 2017

The Royal BC Museum celebrates Emily Carr's birthday with eight new originals

VICTORIA, BC—Today, the Royal BC Museum confirmed the recent purchase of eight original Emily Carr artworks: seven pages of a “funny book” and a watercolour that, together, reflect both Carr’s artistic range and her loyalty to and affection for a long-time friend.

“This watercolour and pages from a funny book created for her friend are an important addition to our extensive Emily Carr collection of over 1100 pieces,” says Angela Williams, Deputy CEO and VP of Collections, Research and International Programs of the Royal BC Museum. “These images reflect Emily Carr's early life and career, and help us understand more about her as an artist, writer and friend.”

One work, from 1901, is a series of seven ink cartoon sketches and rhyming verse that was originally a hand-made book but was, in subsequent years taken apart and separately framed. The story in this “funny book”—a term Carr coined to describe her amusing cartoon and verse sequences—is of the shared adventure of Carr and her friend Hannah Kendall, as they attempted to view the 1901 funeral cortege of Queen Victoria in London.

To contemporary eyes, the book, featuring a hapless and humorous episode, with both text and illustrations, resembles a prototypical comic book.

Until the funny book surfaced and research was undertaken, no one knew the true identity of the “Kendal” Carr had written about in her autobiography (*Growing Pains*) and had no idea that theirs was an important and longer term friendship, lasting beyond Carr's time in England.

The second work is an early, undated watercolour, possibly a BC woodland scene. Dr. Kathryn Bridge, Curator Emeritus of the Royal BC Museum and an authority on Emily Carr, believes it was created between 1908-1910. Dr. Bridge believes Carr gave Kendall the funny book in 1901 and theorizes Carr may have brought the watercolour with her as a gift for her friend in 1910 when she stopped in England on her way to France.

The eight artworks were purchased from Kendall’s great-nieces who live in Zimbabwe. The purchase was made with funds from the Royal BC Museum Foundation.

The Royal BC Museum has been storing the items for safekeeping since 2011 for the owners. The Royal BC Museum exhibited them at the Wing Sang venue in Vancouver at an Emily Carr exhibition entitled *Intimate Glimpses*.

The Royal BC Museum, already holding the world’s largest collection of Emily Carr artwork and writing, is now the proud owner of eight more pieces.



About the Royal BC Museum

The Royal BC Museum explores the province's human history and natural history, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for reflection. The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. We are a hub of community connections in BC—onsite, offsite and online—taking pride in our collective histories.

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