

# THE TREE

FROM THE SUBLIME TO THE SOCIAL



Lee, Emmy. "The Tree: From the Sublime to the Social." *Vancouver Art Gallery*, 2008.



Jeff Wall  
*Pine on the Corner*, 1990  
transparency in lightbox  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Acquisition Fund  
VAG 93.44

## THE TREE: FROM THE SUBLIME TO THE SOCIAL

The tree is ripe with cultural connotations. It is a symbol of the individual in nature and is used as a model for the interconnectedness of all things, from the tree of life to the network in set theory, graph theory, computer data structure and linguistic analysis. It is strongly allied with cultural identity in Canada, where the maple leaf is waved proudly on the national flag and the historical importance of forests as subjects in paintings has helped shape a collective consciousness of our landscape. Here in British Columbia, where the forest industry is responsible for thirteen percent of the gross domestic product,<sup>1</sup> we are economically dependent on trees as well. Given its many meanings, it is not surprising that the tree has been a significant subject in art from the late nineteenth century to the present day, in many incarnations ranging from a motif to invoke the overwhelming, sometimes even terrifying beauty of nature, to a signifier of our precarious ecological position. Through such representations of the tree, we can begin charting society's complex and evolving relationship with nature.



Ed Pien  
*In awe of Her power*, 2006  
ink on shoji paper  
Collection of Robert Poulin



Alexander François Loemans  
*A Treed Precipice with Raging Waterfall, Rocky Mountains*, late 19th c.  
oil on canvas  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
Gift of Dr. Rodrigo Restrepo  
VAG 2002.40.2

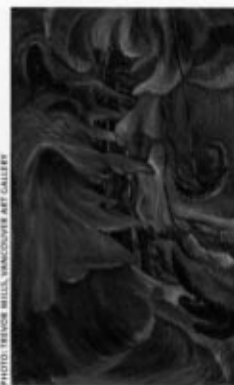
Trees have long been represented in paintings that seek to capture the awesome power and grandeur of nature. Dating from the late nineteenth century, Alexander François Loemans' painting *A Treed Precipice with Raging Waterfall, Rocky Mountains* is in the grand tradition of the sublime where nature is presented as magnificent and without bounds. The pleasure in viewing a scene that is sublime comes from knowing that what is seen, although fear-inspiring, is an illusion.<sup>2</sup> In Loemans' painting, a tree is perilously perched on the edge of a cliff, and as one is drawn in by the precarious position of this tree, one is struck simultaneously by the drama and beauty unfolding in nature.

Ed Pien's delicate paper cut-outs also negotiate this line between beautiful and frightening. Pien's *In awe of Her power* is a tangled web of branches, leaves and limbs evoking the tree of life that signifies the interweaving of all living things. In this filigree work cut from shoji paper, human forms dance in a dense forest, where branches weave and envelop them. Yet the limbs of the trees also engulf the figures in a menacing fashion, suggesting the nineteenth-century view of the forest as a place of trepidation, a refuge for those segregated from civilized society—ideas propagated by well-known fairy tales, in which harm befalls the hero or heroine who enters the sinister woods.

This idea of the “woods at night” as a culturally constructed place of dread is explored in Kevin Schmidt's projection *Fog*, where he presents two versions of the interior of a west coast forest, at once natural and unnatural, sublime and spectacular. One image is utopic; in it a fecund forest is engulfed by a thick rising mist, recalling Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog*. The other image is dystopic, showing trees and plants that have withered away. The detail in the



Arthur Lismer  
*September Gale*, 1920  
oil on wood panel  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
The Parnell Bequest  
VAG 2000.39.4



Emily Carr,  
*Cedar*, 1942  
oil on canvas  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
Emily Carr Trust  
VAG 42.3.28

projection is so precise, the picture so perfectly lit, the background so dark, that this image of nature is both enticing and frightening, real and surreal.

This sense of awe has long been associated with the spirituality of the forest. Turning to nature to stir a spiritual awakening is a major theme in the works of Emily Carr, who believed in the power of nature to inspire an understanding of a higher power; she thought that spiritual energy lived in nature itself. Her interpretations of west coast forests are bursting with life—undulating green boughs appear to move rhythmically on the canvas, swirling brushstrokes depict rays of light and



trees stretch up toward the sky, evoking a feeling of elation and transcendence. She wrote: "God is in them all. Now I know that is all that matters. The only thing worth striving for is to express God. Every living thing is God made manifest. All real art is the eternal seeking to express God, the one substance out of which all things are made."<sup>3</sup> Carr's well-known and beloved images of trees and forests have helped create an image of British Columbia that is inextricably linked to the spirituality of its wilderness.

Emily Carr's depiction of the west coast not only helped define an enduring image of British Columbia, but also captured her ideas about the "dying" First Nations cultures of the region, which, despite the assumptions of the time, have continued to thrive. This genre of landscape painting, in which trees figure prominently, often mirrors society's position *vis-à-vis* the natural world and chronicles embedded social values that range from struggle and domination of nature to sympathy and appreciation for it. For example, the Group of Seven and their contemporaries ignored both the indigenous presence on the land



Kevin Schmidt  
*Fog*, 2004  
 2 rollei medium-format projectors,  
 12 medium-format transparencies of image 1,  
 12 medium-format transparencies of image 2  
 Courtesy of the Artist and  
 Catriona Jeffries Gallery

and conventional British-influenced landscape aesthetics of their time. Instead, artists such as Arthur Lismer, Tom Thomson and later W.P. Weston set out to portray the Canadian landscape as vast, untamed and unrelenting—a site of boundless resources and great possibilities. Their iconic images produced a distinctly Canadian school of art based on the nation's physical environment, where images of rugged forests and solitary trees on cliffs have shaped and reinforced ideas of nationhood.

As much as trees have come to be associated with Canadian cultural identity, the single tree also symbolizes the solitary individual. Jeff Wall has suggested that in today's urban landscape the lone tree is an uncommon sight: "Rarely do we see an isolated tree in the city. The reason for this is profoundly ideological. The lone tree is the great ancient symbol of the mortal individual, rooted in the totality of nature yet suffering its solitary destiny. In an epoch when the totality of nature begins to

suffer mortally, we begin to be able to see it as an individual.”<sup>4</sup> The solitary tree in nature recalls the isolated life each person leads and the private fate one can never really share despite our entanglement in a larger community.

Such a personification of the tree is evident in Geoffrey James’ photographs, which focus tightly on individual trees to capture the variations in their bark, the particular curves of their trunks and the splaying of their branches. This studied attention emerges as a portrait revealing the spectacular differences between individual subjects, each of which has suffered a fate as personal as humans do, suggesting particularities of a myriad of characters through the manifestation of physical differences.

Is the representation of trees in art always loaded with societal values and symbolic weight? Can we distance ourselves from the representation of the world around us through abstraction? Robert Smithson has suggested that abstraction, at some level, is nature reduced to its most basic terms: “What are the lat-



(left)  
Patricia Deadman  
*Where the Trees Meet the Mountains*, 1991  
azo dye print  
Collection of the Vancouver Art  
Gallery, Acquisition Fund  
VAG 96.26.2

(right)  
Kirsten Everberg  
*Wood*, 2007  
oil and enamel on panel  
Collection of Mark and  
Suzanne Cohon

tices and grids of pure abstraction, if not renderings and representations of a reduced order of nature? Abstraction is a representation of nature devoid of ‘realism’ based on mental or conceptual reduction. There is no escaping nature through abstract representation, abstraction brings one closer to physical structures within nature itself.”<sup>5</sup>

The abstracted treescapes that Kirsten Everberg paints celebrate the intricate patterning of leaves and branches and the rich palette of colours inspired by the natural world. Everberg plays with the limits of representation first through her process, in which she amalgamates multiple photographs to form the image for a painting that is part real, part imaginary, and again in her manner of depiction by creating works that teeter on the edge of abstraction. Working with sumptuous oil and enamel paints, the glossy surfaces of her paintings are decidedly counter to the natural world they represent.

In his ongoing investigation of the limits of figuration and abstraction, Gordon Smith has painted the forests of the west coast for decades and believes that painting should be a "re-creation of an experience rather than an illustration of an experience."<sup>6</sup> Abstraction is a device he uses to give expression to his encounter with the natural world, rather than a faithful rendering of it. In *Byway Trees A VI*, for example, Smith conveys the atmosphere, colour and feeling of actually being in the forest.

Patricia Deadman also tends toward abstraction in her works to express both an illusory understanding of nature and the glory of the trees she portrays. The titles



Gordon Smith  
*Byway Trees A VI*, 2000–2001  
acrylic on canvas  
Collection of the Vancouver  
Art Gallery, Gift of the Artist  
VAG 2001.21

(below) Geoffrey James  
*Sitka Spruce, Haida Gwaii*, 2006  
silver gelatin print  
Collection of John and  
Patricia Patkau



of Deadman's works *In the Midst of Shadow Play*, *From a Distance You Can See the Trees*, *Where the Trees Meet the Mountains* and *Almost to the Far Side* reflect her desire to convey a poetic ambiguity surrounding the landscapes she represents. During the printing process, Deadman shakes the print to create a blurred image, abstracting the real into the unreal to create an emotive and elusive experience of the landscape. The lack of a focal point suggests the grandeur of the natural world through its dissolved, dream-like beauty, like a vision or a mirage.

Today, when so many people live away from nature in urban centres, how do we actually perceive trees and the natural world? Several artists in the exhibi-

tion question our ability to have an experience of nature that is unmediated by culture. *two turntables* by Nestor Krüger is a digital animation sequence that consists of two projections of leafless linden trees. The images are accompanied by two audio tracks, one with the sounds of industrial machines and engines; the other with the sounds of birds and animals. In experiencing this work, the viewer might consider how sound influences visual perception and how our experience of the environment is processed through various media and fed to us as images on the Internet or in magazines, television and film. We are less likely to encounter nature in an unencumbered state than as a consumable product prepackaged for us to enjoy.

Since 2001, Thomas Ruff has played with viewers' reading of images by appropriating JPEGs from the Internet and reproducing them on a grand scale. Through their extreme enlargement, Ruff's pictures of trees become dramatically pixilated so that the mathematical rules by which an image is compressed into a JPEG become apparent. In our era of easy reproduction, Ruff's works point out the qualitative distance between



Vikky Alexander  
*Lake in the Woods*, 1986–1992  
photo mural, mirror and wood-grained  
composition board  
Collection of the Vancouver Art  
Gallery, Acquisition Fund  
VAG 93.41 a-d

the real subject and its representation. In stretching his JPEGs to approximate the size of actual trees and revealing the resultant distortion, Ruff's work highlights the artificiality of our encounters with representations of nature in contemporary society.

*Lake in the Woods* by Vikky Alexander is an installation that embraces our simulated encounters with nature. It deliberately relies on artifice and is constructed of mirrors, photographic landscape murals and wood-grain veneers. Alexander's work considers the distanced experience of the natural world in today's consumer society, where nature is packaged as a fantasy of an idealized wild environment and imitations are substituted for the real thing.

Photographs by Arni Haraldsson taken at a tree museum in Iceland present the viewer with trees and their identification labels. Unable to survive the region's twin threats of harsh climate and human development, the trees pictured have



been preserved through human intervention as examples of their type. Visitors can observe them through an institutional framework, categorized according to a system determined by the tree museum rather than natural elements. Haraldsson's images question the interface between nature and artifice: are these trees still natural things when presented as artifacts?

Owing to the commonality of characteristics evident in trees and our shared understanding of these characteristics (i.e., roots in the ground, a trunk, branches and leaves), it seems they are an apt device for questioning both perception and collective assumptions. Mungo Thomson's *Silent Film of a Tree Falling in the Forest* references the philosophical question, "If a tree falls in a forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound?" This question can be traced back to George Berkeley's principle "*esse est percipi*" (to be is to be perceived<sup>7</sup>) and raises ontological issues as to whether something can exist without being perceived. Thomson's film kindles the viewer's anticipation as a group of towering trees are filmed before they crash to the earth one by one; the absence of sound as each tree hits the ground creates a



Arni Haraldsson  
*Alaskaepfi, Tree Museum,*  
*Hallormsstadur, Iceland, 2003*  
chromogenic print  
Courtesy of the Artist and  
Catriona Jeffries Gallery



Mungo Thomson  
still from *Silent Film of a Tree Falling in the Forest, 2005–2006*  
16 mm colour film, 7-minute loop  
Courtesy of the Artist

cognitive dissonance between what is expected and what is perceived, reinforcing the growing disconnect between the perception of an object and its reality.

Similarly, Rodney Graham's works of upside-down trees evoke the dissonance between how things appear and how they are. In reversing that which is resolutely known to exist in the real world, Graham creates a perceptual incongruity that, upon reflection, becomes a cognitive one. As he stated in an interview with Anthony Spira of the Whitechapel Gallery: "You don't have to delve very deeply into modern physics to realize that the scientific view holds that the world is really

not as it appears. Before the brain rights it, the eye sees a tree upside down in the same way it appears on the glass back of the large format field camera I use. I chose the tree as an emblematic image because it is often used in diagrams in popular scientific books and because it was used in Saussure's book on linguistics to show the arbitrary relation between the so-called signifier and the signified."<sup>8</sup> Graham relies on our communal understanding of the shared attributes of trees to point out the complex nature of perception, which engages both a physical process and a psychological one.

Many depictions of trees evidence humans' profound involvement with them. Even in landscape paintings and photographs, the absence or presence of the figure is always a consideration. Jeff Wall writes: "In making landscape we must withdraw



Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun  
*Clear Cut to the Last Tree*, 1993  
screenprint on paper  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
Acquisition Fund  
VAG 94.14.1



Rodney Graham  
*Oak, Banford, Oxfordshire, Fall 1990, 1990*  
chromogenic print  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
Anonymous Gift  
VAG 98.55

a *certain distance*—far enough to detach ourselves from the immediate presence of other people (figures), but not so far as to lose the ability to distinguish them as agents in a social space."<sup>9</sup> Wall's œuvre includes many significant images of trees from the delicate seedling in *A sapling held by a post*, to the towering evergreen in *Pine on the Corner*. While neither of these works includes a figure, they imply human

presence, if only by the suburban surrounds in *Pine on the Corner* or the string that ties the sapling to the post.

In Karin Bubaš series *Studies of Landscape and Wardrobe*, women figure prominently in the landscapes she photographs. This body of work takes inspiration from the films of Alfred Hitchcock and Michelangelo Antonioni in which costumes were used to give definition to the women's character and to construct visual drama. Bubaš creates tension in her images through the voyeuristic placement of the camera, which appears to capture the woman unawares, as well as through the woman's attire, which is incongruous with her surroundings. For example, the frothy pastel gown worn by the figure in *Girl in Apple Orchard*, while impractical in the outdoors, calls to mind the *fête galante* paintings of Antoine Watteau and Jean-Baptiste Pater. Bubaš' works present the trappings of culture that persist even when we attempt to commune with nature.

How can we connect with and empathize with the environment when we are



Karin Bubaš  
*Woman and Scorched Redwood*, 2007  
digital chromogenic print  
Courtesy of the Artist and  
Monte Clark Gallery



Lorraine Gilbert  
*Shaping the New Forest, Part 2 – The Portraits;*  
*Clothesline, Invermere, B.C., Dean and Millie's tent,*  
1988–1994  
chromogenic print  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
Gift of the Artist  
VAG 2003.26.38

so burdened by societal trappings? Liz Magor's *Handy Thing* is a sculpture in the form of a hollow log stuffed with a myriad of tools—a survival kit of sorts. This work relates to a series of works by Magor, including *Burrow* and *Hollow*, that are remarkably realistic-looking logs suggesting nature as the ultimate refuge, an idyllic place to retreat from the world. *Handy Thing* similarly connotes an escape to the woods, where one has everything necessary to sustain oneself—all the tools of life.

Our domination and use of nature in the practice of logging has been depicted for centuries, in historical works by artists such as Arthur Lismer, Sybil Andrews, E.J. Hughes and Emily Carr, and the subject continues to be of relevance to this day. Stephen Waddell's large-scale photographs *Logscaling* and *Logyard*, from his series of labourers, feature lone figures at work, cutting logs. While Waddell's work is about capturing the quotidian, a more complicated relationship to logging is documented in Lorraine Gilbert's *Shaping the New Forest* series, which includes both portraits of tree planters and the beautiful but devastated landscapes the planters begin to salvage. Gilbert's portraits purposefully recall turn-of-the-century images of loggers, engineers and farmers in the "wilderness" with a frontier-like quality and a Victorian sensibility of subjugation, assurance and command. She also employs the conventions of landscape photography—which has historically portrayed nature as grand and abundant—to convey the sweeping destruction resulting from aggressive logging industry practices. Young tree planters are also the subject of Althea Thauberger's film *Northern*, which presents the figures in a clear-cut area of forest, strangely awakening to participate in



Althea Thauberger  
still from *Northern*, 2005  
35 mm film transferred to HD  
Courtesy of the Artist

an operatic scene that recalls the drama of a history painting. While tree planters assist in restoring the ecosystem that has been decimated by the forest industry, they are in the contradictory position of sustaining logging practices by planting "crops" for future cuttings.

The felling of trees as raw materials to be used in various enterprises has also inspired politically strident work by artists such as Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun and Jochen Gerz. Yuxweluptun uses the iconography of Northwest Coast Native peoples to highlight issues such as Aboriginal rights, treaty processes and the destruction of nature by the forest industry. In *Clear Cut to the Last Tree*, a lone tree stands in a barren landscape accompanied by a figure keeled over in grief—a response to the surrounding environmental devastation. Yuxweluptun's paintings illustrate the crisis where the dismantling of an ecosystem precipitates the transformation of a fertile and green landscape into a near desert.

Gerz's *White Ghost* series of nine diptychs pictures aging nude figures in front of slash heaps from logged trees on Cortes Island. Gerz interviewed the subjects, and their responses convey their own implication and guilt as consumers of wood products. The title of the work refers to both the Chinese term for Caucasian persons and the lingering legacy of environmental depletion that this generation will leave behind.

The felling of trees has not just caused guilty consciences, it has also provoked social action. Ian Wallace's monumental work *Clayoquot Protest (August 9, 1993) I-IX* combines documentary photographs of a mass protest against clear-cut logging of old-growth forests at Clayoquot Sound on Vancouver Island with monochrome canvases. The scale of the works and their subject matter—a confrontation against the law in one of British Columbia's most significant incidents of civic unrest—suggest the genre of history painting and, in doing so, canonize this historic event.



Ian Wallace  
*Clayoquot Protest (August 9, 1993) I*,  
1993–1995  
chromogenic print, acrylic on canvas  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
Gift of the Artist  
VAG 99.15.1

Rather than simply pointing to change, Pedro Reyes' work *Palas por Pistolas* itself tries to effect societal change. In a Mexican city rife with violence, Reyes collaborated with an agency to exchange food vouchers for guns. He collected the weapons, flattened them and used the metal to make shovels. Each person who acquires a shovel is instructed to complete the artwork by using the tool to plant a tree and fulfil the goal of the work by being an agent of transformation of the environment.

But what does the future hold for our interaction with nature? Will technological progress come at further environmental expense? Andrew Dadson's *Hydroponic Grow-Op* is a strange hybrid of nature and industry where a "farm" of saplings grows indoors in the deep confines of an art institution. A completely human-made environment with monitored light levels, nutrients and water pH levels, Dadson's installation presents a vision of a society in which nature is so removed from the natural world that it is a function of technology.



Máximo Gonzáles' work also questions what societal development will mean for environmental preservation. In his work, he presents a dystopic, almost comical future where the extreme depletion of natural resources such as gasoline has rendered automobiles obsolete, useful only as planters for trees.

An ambiguity concerning nature is explored in Aernout Mik's elusive *Park*, a silent film with no clear narrative in which a crowd of people are gathered around a tree for no apparent reason. Some read, some dance, some jump up and down, and a dog roams among them. Their interaction seems at once a protest and a celebration. This mysterious *mêlée* appears to be an apt analogy for society's continuous difficulty in negotiating our multifaceted relationship to trees and nature. Our attitude alternates between appreciation and awe, physical pleasure and economic reliance, cultural significance and industrial use, and much, much more.

Gabriela Albergaria's installation offers some hope. Working with local authorities, Albergaria located a tree marked for felling by the City of Vancouver's Parks and



(left) Andrew Dadson  
*Hydroponic Grow-Up*, 2003  
cedar trees, PVC pipe, grow lights, wood, fan,  
rockwell, tinfoil, water barrel, pump, plant  
minerals and vitamins  
Courtesy of the Artist  
installation view at  
Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design

(right) Thomas Ruff  
*jpeg eno1*, 2008  
chromogenic print with diasec  
Courtesy of the Artist and  
David Zwirner, New York

Recreation Board and recycled its lifeless limbs. She reconstructed the fallen tree in the Gallery's central rotunda using traditional horticultural grafting techniques. Albergaria's re-creation of this giant reminds us of the regenerative power of trees, and the tree as a carrier and symbol of life. Jeff Wall writes that "the spectacle of the tragic death of something nobler than ourselves is the sublime shock which can inaugurate radical transformation. In this epoch, a tree standing self-consciously alone in the city would, better than any other monument or form of propaganda, evoke the environmental tragedy which indicates our economy, our culture of cities, our social order."<sup>10</sup> Perhaps Albergaria's tree can deepen our consciousness of the potential environmental tragedy that surrounds us and call us all to action.

—Emmy Lee, Assistant Curator

## NOTES

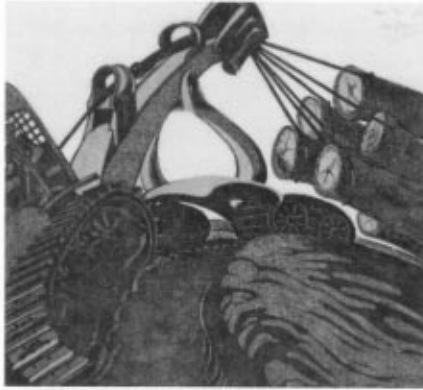
1. Council of Forest Industries website: [http://www.cofi.org/forest\\_industry\\_BC/economic\\_statistics.htm](http://www.cofi.org/forest_industry_BC/economic_statistics.htm)
2. Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
3. Emily Carr, "Hundreds and Thousands," in *The Complete Writings of Emily Carr* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1997), p. 675.
4. Jeff Wall, "Into the Forest: Two Sketches for Studies of Rodney Graham's Work," in *Jeff Wall: Selected Essays and Interviews* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2007), p. 94.
5. Nancy Holt, ed., *The Writings of Robert Smithson: Essays with Illustrations* (New York: New York University Press, 1979), p. 219.
6. Gordon Smith, quoted in Ian McNairn, *7 West Coast Painters* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Fine Arts Gallery, 1959), n.p.
7. George Berkeley referred to his philosophical position as "immaterialism," and subsequent scholars refer to his position as "subjective idealism."
8. Rodney Graham, excerpt from an interview with Anthony Spiria, Whitechapel Art Gallery, [http://www.whitechapel.org/content.php?page\\_id=461](http://www.whitechapel.org/content.php?page_id=461)
9. Jeff Wall, "About Making Landscapes," in *Jeff Wall: Selected Essays and Interviews*, p. 171.
10. Jeff Wall, "Into the Forest: Two Sketches for Studies of Rodney Graham's Work," *Ibid.*, p. 94.



Pedro Reyes  
*Palas por Pistolas*, 2007  
A weapon destroyed, melted and made  
into a shovel to plant a tree  
Courtesy of the Artist and Yvon Lambert  
New York/Paris



Liz Magor  
*Handy Thing*, 2004  
bronze  
Courtesy of the Artist and  
Equinox Gallery



(top) Sybil Andrews  
*Logging Team*, 1952  
linocut on paper  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
Acquisition Fund  
VAG 89.22.1

(top) Stephen Waddell  
*Logscaling*, 2005  
digital chromogenic print  
Collection of Michael and Susan Rich, Los Angeles

(bottom) Jochen Gerz  
*White Ghost #9*, 1998  
computer print on OEC paper  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
Gift of the Artist  
VAG 2007.3.9 a-b

(bottom) Aernout Mik  
*Park*, 2002  
video installation  
Courtesy carlier | gebauer



Máximo González  
*Red Tree*, 2007  
out-of-currency money collage  
Collection of Michael O'Brian



Nestor Krüger  
still from *two turntables*, 2002  
digital video on DVD, dual screen with audio  
Courtesy of Goodwater

## LIST OF WORKS

Gabriela Albergaria  
*Blenheim and 29th*, 2008  
installation with an oak tree, tree  
branches, screws, wood, string  
Courtesy of the Artist,  
Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo, Brazil  
and Vera Cortês, Art Agency,  
Lisboa, Portugal

Vikky Alexander  
*Lake in the Woods*, 1986–1992  
photo mural, mirror and wood-grained  
composition board  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
Acquisition Fund  
VAG 93.41 a-d

Vikky Alexander  
*Icy Pines*, 2004  
archival inks on canvas  
Collection of the Morris and Helen  
Belkin Art Gallery, University of  
British Columbia, Vancouver

Sybil Andrews  
*Hauling*, 1952  
linocut on paper  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
Acquisition Fund  
VAG 89.22.2

Sybil Andrews  
*Logging Team*, 1952  
linocut on paper  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
Acquisition Fund  
VAG 89.22.1

Karin Bubaš  
*Girl in Apple Orchard*, 2007  
digital chromogenic print,  
mounted to ultra mount and  
laminated with a UV laminate  
Courtesy of the Artist and  
Monte Clark Gallery

Karin Bubaš  
*Woman and Scorched Redwood*, 2007  
digital chromogenic print, mounted  
to ultra mount and laminated with a  
UV laminate  
Courtesy of the Artist and  
Monte Clark Gallery

Karin Bubaš <i>Woman in Redwood Forest</i> , 2007 digital chromogenic print, mounted to ultra mount and laminated with a UV laminate Courtesy of the Artist and Monte Clark Gallery	Patricia Deadman <i>Where the Trees Meet the Mountains</i> , 1991 azo dye print Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund VAG 96.26.2	Máximo González <i>Sawn Tree</i> , 2007 out-of-currency money collage Collection of Stuart Lal
Franklin Carmichael <i>Wild Cherry Blossom</i> , 1938 oil on paperboard Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery Gift of James and Barbara Mastin VAG 99.9.4	Patricia Deadman <i>Almost to the Far Side</i> , 1991 azo dye print Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund VAG 96.26.1	Rodney Graham <i>Jericho Tree, Winter</i> , 2007 chromogenic print Courtesy of the Artist and Donald Young Gallery, Chicago
Emily Carr <i>Forest</i> , 1931–1933 oil on canvas Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery Emily Carr Trust VAG 42.3.13	Kirsten Everberg <i>First Lake</i> , 2007 oil and enamel on panel Collection of Chris and Lori DeWolfe	Rodney Graham <i>Oak, Bandford, Oxfordshire, Fall 1990</i> , 1990 chromogenic print Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery Anonymous Gift VAG 98.55
Emily Carr <i>Deep Forest</i> , c. 1931 oil on canvas Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery Emily Carr Trust VAG 42.3.16	Kirsten Everberg <i>Wood</i> , 2007 oil and enamel on panel Collection of Mark and Suzanne Cohon	Arni Haraldsson <i>Hallormsstadur Forest, Iceland</i> , 2003 <i>Lindifura, Tree Museum</i> , <i>Hallormsstadur, Iceland</i> , 2003 <i>Hengibirki, Tree Museum</i> , <i>Hallormsstadur, Iceland</i> , 2003 <i>Alaskaepili, Tree Museum</i> , <i>Hallormsstadur, Iceland</i> , 2003 chromogenic prints Courtesy of the Artist and Catriona Jeffries Gallery
Emily Carr <i>Cedar</i> , 1942 oil on canvas Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery Emily Carr Trust VAG 42.3.28	Jochen Gerz <i>White Ghost #1–9</i> , 1998 computer print on OEC paper Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery Gift of the Artist VAG 2007.3.1–9 a–b	Arni Haraldsson <i>Hallormsstadarskogur – Gonguleidir</i> , 2007 inkjet print Courtesy of the Artist and Catriona Jeffries Gallery
Emily Carr <i>Grey</i> , 20th c. oil on canvas Private Collection	Lorraine Gilbert A selection of works from <i>Shaping the New Forest, Part 1 – The Landscape</i> , 1988–1994 chromogenic prints Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery Gift of the Artist VAG 2003.26.1–22	Lawren Harris <i>Trimming</i> , 1909 oil on canvas Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery Purchased with the assistance of the Government of Canada through the Cultural Property Review Board and the Acquisition Fund VAG 94.77.2
Emily Carr <i>Red Cedar</i> , 1931 oil on canvas Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery Gift of Mrs. J. P. Fell VAG 54.7	Lorraine Gilbert A selection of works from <i>Shaping the New Forest, Part 2 – The Portraits</i> , 1988–1994 chromogenic prints Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery Gift of the Artist VAG 2003.26.23–52	Lawren Harris <i>Loading</i> , 1909 oil on canvas Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery Purchased with the assistance of the Government of Canada through the Cultural Property Review Board and the Acquisition Fund VAG 94.77.4
Andrew Dadson <i>Hydroponic Grow-Op</i> , 2003 cedar trees, PVC pipe, grow lights, wood, fan, rockwell, water barrel, pump, plant minerals and vitamins Courtesy of the Artist	Máximo González <i>Project for the reutilization of vehicles after the extinction of petrol: Blooming peach trees on Citroen</i> , 2007 pencil and watercolour on paper Courtesy of the Artist	E.J. Hughes <i>Untitled (Caterpillar moving logs)</i> , 1939 pencil, watercolour and ink on paper Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund VAG 93.8.1
Patricia Deadman <i>In the Midst of Shadow Play</i> , 1991 azo dye print Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund VAG 96.26.4	Máximo González <i>Project for the reutilization of vehicles after the extinction of petrol: Walnut on Porsche</i> , 2007 pencil and watercolour on paper Courtesy of the Artist	
Patricia Deadman <i>From a Distance You Can See the Trees</i> , 1991 azo dye print Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund VAG 96.26.3	Máximo González <i>Red Tree</i> , 2007 out-of-currency money collage Collection of Michael O'Brian	



Geoffrey James  
*Willow, Ward's Island, Toronto*, 2005  
*Alder, Haida Gwaii*, 2006  
*Cedar, Stanley Park*, 2006  
 silver gelatin prints  
 Courtesy of the Artist and  
 Equinox Gallery

Geoffrey James  
*Sitka Spruce, Haida Gwaii*, 2006  
 silver gelatin print  
 Collection of John and Patricia Patkau

Nestor Krüger  
*two turntables*, 2002  
 digital video on DVD, dual screen  
 with audio  
 Courtesy of Goodwater

Arthur Lismer  
*September Gale*, 1920  
 oil on wood panel  
 Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
 The Parnell Bequest  
 VAG 2000.39.4

Alexander François Loemans  
*A Treed Precipice with Raging  
 Waterfall, Rocky Mountains*, late 19th c.  
 oil on canvas  
 Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
 Gift of Dr. Rodrigo Restrepo  
 VAG 2002.40.2

Liz Magor  
*Handy Thing*, 2004  
 bronze  
 Courtesy of the Artist and  
 Equinox Gallery

Aernout Mik  
*Park*, 2002  
 digital video on DVD  
 Courtesy carlier | gebauer

Ed Pien  
*In awe of Her power*, 2006  
 ink on shoji paper  
 Collection of Robert Poulin

Pedro Reyes  
*Palas por Pistolas*, 2007  
 A weapon destroyed, melted and  
 made into a shovel to plant a tree  
 Courtesy of the Artist and  
 Yvon Lambert New York/Paris

Pedro Reyes and Raphael Ortega  
*Palas por Pistolas*, 2007  
 5 single-channel video installation  
 Courtesy of the Artist and  
 Yvon Lambert New York/Paris

Thomas Ruff  
*Jpeg eno1*, 2007  
 chromogenic print with diasec  
 Courtesy of the Artist and  
 David Zwirner, New York

Kevin Schmidt  
*Fog*, 2004  
 2 rollei medium-format projectors,  
 12 medium-format transparencies  
 of image 1, 12 medium-format  
 transparencies of image 2  
 Courtesy of the Artist and  
 Catriona Jeffries Gallery

Gordon Smith  
*Wet Night*, 1953  
 oil on canvas  
 Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
 T. Eaton Co. Picture Purchase Fund  
 VAG 53.7

Gordon Smith  
*Byway Trees A VI*, 2000–2001  
 acrylic on canvas  
 Collection of the Vancouver Art  
 Gallery, Gift of the Artist  
 VAG 2001.21

Gordon Smith  
*Early Snow Roger's Pass #2*, 2007  
 oil on canvas  
 Courtesy of the Artist and  
 Equinox Gallery

Althea Thauberger  
*Northern*, 2005  
 35 mm film transferred to HD  
 Courtesy of the Artist

Mungo Thomson  
*Silent Film of a Tree Falling in the Forest*,  
 2005–2006  
 16 mm colour film, 7-minute loop  
 Courtesy of the Artist

Tom Thomson  
*Nocturne*, 1914–1915  
 oil on panel  
 Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,  
 Gift in Memory of Robert A.  
 de Lotbiniere Harwood by his Friends  
 VAG 52.8

Cy Twombly  
*Untitled (Title Page)*, 1975  
*Quercus Rubur*, 1975  
*Ficus Carica*, 1975  
*Laurus Nobilis*, 1975  
*Fagus Silvatica*, 1975  
 collage and coloured pencil on paper  
 and plastic film  
 Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
 Gift of Ira and Lori Young  
 VAG 83.110.1 / VAG 83.110.3 / VAG  
 83.110.8 / VAG 83.110.4 / VAG 83.110.6

Stephen Waddell  
*Logscaling and Logyard*, 2005  
 digital chromogenic print  
 Collection of Michael and Susan Rich,  
 Los Angeles

Jeff Wall  
*Pine on the Corner*, 1990  
 azo dye transparency and lightbox  
 Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
 Acquisition Fund  
 VAG 93.44

Jeff Wall  
*A sapling held by a post*, 2000  
 chromogenic print  
 Collection of Monte Clark and  
 Wylie Rauch, Vancouver

Ian Wallace  
*A selection from Clayoquot Protest*,  
*(August 9, 1993)* 1993–1995  
 chromogenic print, acrylic on canvas  
 Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
 Gift of the Artist  
 VAG 99.15.1–9

Carleton E. Watkins  
*The Dead Giant*, 30 ft. in diameter,  
*Tuolumne Grove, No. 823*, c. 1870  
 mammoth albumen print  
 Collection of Monte Clark and  
 Wylie Rauch, Vancouver

William Percival Weston  
*Unvanquished*, 1933  
 oil on canvas  
 Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
 Acquisition Fund  
 VAG 91.70

Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun  
*MacMillan Bloedel Eco-System Destroyers  
 and Their Preferred Weapons*, 1994  
 acrylic on canvas  
 Collection of the Morris and Helen Belkin  
 Art Gallery, UBC, Vancouver, Purchased  
 with the financial support of the Canada  
 Council for the Arts Acquisition  
 Assistance Program

Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun  
*Untitled*, 1997  
 acrylic on canvas  
 Collection of the Morris and  
 Helen Belkin Art Gallery, UBC, Vancouver,  
 Gift of the Artist



Gabriela Albergaria  
*Blenheim and 29th*, 2008  
 installation with an oak tree, tree branches, screws, wood, string  
 installation view, Vancouver Art Gallery  
 Courtesy of the Artist, Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo, Brazil and Vera Cortês, Art Agency, Lisboa, Portugal

## THE TREE: FROM THE SUBLIME TO THE SOCIAL

FEBRUARY 2 – APRIL 20, 2008

Published on the occasion of the exhibition *The Tree: From the Sublime to the Social*, curated by Daina Augaitis, Chief Curator/Associate Director, with Emmy Lee, Assistant Curator, Vancouver Art Gallery

The Vancouver Art Gallery gratefully acknowledges the support of the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council and Gaming Revenues, Canada Council for the Arts and the Government of Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage Museums Assistance Program and Cultural Spaces, Canada.

ISBN 978-1-895442-65-6

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750 Hornby Street Vancouver BC V6Z 2H7 Canada  
 Tel 604 662 4700 [www.vanartgallery.bc.ca](http://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca)

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