



Discovering Emily Jacqueline Pearce

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Consider the following question as you read *Discovering Emily*:

Why is it important to follow your heart even if it seems like an impossible journey?

Story

Young Emily Carr has no interest in learning to be a lady. She loves animals and the outdoors and she is beginning to discover that what she loves most of all is drawing and painting. How will she ever find a way to develop her talent in the straitlaced world of nineteenth century Victoria, British Columbia?

Author

Jacqueline Pearce pored over the writings of Emily Carr, especially all her childhood stories, in order to write a book for young children that would introduce them to one of Canada's greatest artists by telling a moving story about a girl who follows her dreams. Jacqueline is the author of several books, including *The Reunion* (Orca, 2002). She lives in Burnaby, British Columbia.

Curricular Integration

Language Arts

- Journal writing: Choose a particular Emily Carr painting, "Wood Interior," for example, and use it as the starting point for a writing activity. (i.e. Poetry, descriptive paragraph, factual report)
- Discovering Emily is written from Emily's point of view. What do you think the story would be like if it were written from Dede's point of view? Or Father's? Choose one chapter and rewrite it through another character, one who sees things differently from Emily.
- Opinion writing: Emily Carr was not famous while she was alive, but a recent painting of hers "Quiet" sold for over one million dollars. Research information about her life and prepare a report as to why you think she is so famous today.

- Should Emily Carr be included in the Group of Seven? Divide the class into groups of 4-8 and have half the group read about one of the above. Once they have the background information, have them discuss in their groups either for or against the question. Chapter 8 from the book, *Strategies That Work* by Stephanie Harvey, (362.1) called “Visualizing and Inferring.” contains useful information for this lesson.
- The sequel to *Discovering Emily, Emily’s Dream*, is coming out in the spring of 2005. In it, Emily is a teenager. Pretend that you are Emily Carr and you are fifteen years old. Or, if you prefer, pretend that you are Emily’s little brother, Richard. Write journal entries about your life and your feelings. Then read *Emily’s Dream* and compare Jacqueline Pearce’s interpretation of Emily’s and Richard’s lives with your interpretation.

Drama

Divide the class into five or six groups and choose a key scene for each group to turn into readers’ theatre. Then have the groups perform the scenes in the order in which they occur. Discuss the different techniques and approaches that each group uses.

Mathematics

As you can see from her art, trees were an important part of Emily’s life. The following math and science activities will get you paying close attention to trees.

- The Measurement of Trees: Following one of the basic formulas (mathforum.org/paths/measurement/tree.html) for measuring the height of tall things, calculate the heights of trees in your area and compare those results to known tall things (i.e. Empire State Building, Victoria Falls, Giant Redwoods) Information on tree heights may be found in *Douglas Fir* (585), *DK Eyewitness Guides: Tree* (582) or similar books.
- Graphing Heights: Show students examples of a variety of types of graphs: circle, bar, line and pictograph for example. Using information found in the math lesson above or in information books, have students create a graph of their choice representing heights of trees. This may also be done using a locally available computer program such as Appleworks.

Science

- Trees: British Columbia is a much-forested province containing many varieties of deciduous and coniferous trees. Using *The Tree Book* as a guide, have students research some of these varieties. Compare the information to some amazing tree facts such as the oldest, tallest and widest or to tree trivia in your area.
- The Life Cycle of a Tree: Plant acorns, pinecones or other tree seeds available to you. Carefully water and care for the seed and keep a record of its growth pattern. Research your particular tree species to find out information about its stages of growth, life expectancy, common growing area and any special features.

Social Studies

History

- Consider the following question: How does art help a society develop its culture? Define what the word “culture” means before you begin this activity. Read about different world cultures and develop a list of steps a society might take to develop their culture.
- Read about how the Group of Seven artists connected with each other and became famous. Compare them with other artists who painted at the same time.
- Research the time in history from 1871-1945 and create a timeline of the major events of this time. These may be major world events or ones that occurred in your country.
- Compare a typical day in 2004 with a day in the 1880s. Choose a role to conduct your observations through: adult, child, storekeeper, politician, etc. Create a chart listing at least ten activities and how they differ in each time period.
- Using *The Emily Carr at Home and At Work Guide* look at the lesson “First Nations and Emily Carr.” Students will explore Emily Carr’s life by reading about how she lived.

Art

After looking at Emily Carr's paintings of trees consider these activities:

- With pastels or paint as your medium, represent a tree or trees that are located by your school.
- Using charcoal, draw a species of tree you are familiar with or that grow in your area. With each of these drawings as your guide, write a poem describing the feelings that come from the picture. (See *Images of Nature: Canadian Poets and the Group of Seven* (811) for examples)
- Using Appleworks or another computer painting program, create a painting in the style of one of Emily Carr's.

Suggested Resources

Fiction

Alma, Ann. *Under Emily's Sky*.

Bouchard, David. *If You're Not From The Prairie*.

Bunting, Eve. *Dandelions*.

Gaetz, Dale Campbell. *Mystery From History*.

Horne, Constance. *Emily Carr's Woo*.

Spalding, Andrea and David. *The Lost Sketch*.

Wilson, Eric. *The Emily Carr Mystery*.

Nonfiction

(Dewey Decimal Classification numbers appear in parentheses where applicable.)

Bogart, Jo Ellen. *Emily Carr at the Edge of the World*. (759.11)

Debon, Nicolas. *Four Pictures of Emily Carr*. (759.11)

Guinness World Records 2004. (032)

Klerks, Cat. *Emily Carr: The Incredible Life and Adventures of a West Coast Artist*. (920)

Langston, Laura. *Pay Dirt! The Search For Gold in British Columbia*. (971.1)

Libby, Wendy M.L. *Using Art to Make Art*. (372.5)

Macleod, Elizabeth. *The Kids' Book of Great Canadians*. (971)

Neering, Rosemary. *Emily Carr*. (759.1)

Newlands, Anne. *Emily Carr: An Introduction to Her Life and Art*. (759.11)

Penner, Lucille Recht. *Westward Ho! The Story of the Pioneers*. (971)

Sherow, Victoria. *Life During the Gold Rush*. (979.4)

Online

“Artcyclopedia” www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/carr_emily.html

“Emily Carr At Home and At Work Teacher Guide”
collections.ic.gc.ca/EmilyCarrHomeWork/guide/

“To The Totem Forests” www.emilycarr.org/

“Tree Book For British Columbia”
www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/library/documents/treebook/

A Few Words From the Author

Dear Readers,

When I was a girl growing up near Victoria on Vancouver Island, all the famous artists seemed to be men and from somewhere else, and all the interesting history stories seemed to be written about other places. This was discouraging. I wanted to be both a writer and an artist, but there didn't seem to be any local role models, and no one seemed to be interested in painting or writing about the place in which I lived. Then I discovered Emily Carr. She had once been a girl like me who had walked the same streets I often walked down when I visited my grandmother in Victoria, and she grew up to be a

famous artist who loved and painted the same Vancouver Island forests that I loved. Her example was inspiring, and her swirling life-filled portraits of trees resonated with my own deep affinity for trees.

Emily Carr lived from 1871 to 1945. It fascinated me to imagine what Victoria must have looked like back when she was a girl. I often wished I had a pair of magic glasses that I could set to different time periods and look through to see what things looked like in different times. When she was a girl in Victoria there were no tall buildings, no cars, no paved roads, no computers, no telephones, and there was no electricity. People walked, rode horses or drove in carriages pulled by horses. There were fewer people, fewer buildings, cows often escaped from their fields and walked on the wood plank sidewalks, and the streets smelled of horse dung. Imagining myself into the story of Emily Carr was the closest thing I could get to that pair of magic glasses.

People often remember Emily Carr from her later years as an eccentric older woman who wore shapeless clothes, an odd hairnet, and pushed around an old baby buggy to do her shopping and carry her animals (including her pet monkey). My aunt, who grew up in Victoria, remembers seeing her like this, pushing her buggy down a street. Sometimes, this image of Emily Carr seems to get in the way of people knowing who she really was. Any woman who chose art over getting married and being what everyone expected had to be a little weird, hadn't she? That's what people of Emily's day seemed to think. But Emily was once an ordinary girl – a spunky, stubborn girl who loved to draw and paint and who loved animals. That's the Emily I wanted to get to know and tell people about.

Jacqueline Pearce, June 2004