



emily carr
university of art + design

**CRC and CFI
Strategic Research Plan: 2013-2018
Summary**

December

OBJECTIVES

The Emily Carr University Strategic Research Plan provides a framework for the growth and development of an increasingly rich array of faculty and student driven research at Emily Carr. This plan identifies the energy and momentum already present in our community and contextualizes it within our history and our aspirations for the future. On a practical level this plan will guide policy, infrastructure, and resource allocation.

This document describes the background and context of research at Emily Carr and lists the broad themes around which the major research areas and clusters are organized. These research themes are indicative of our core strengths and long-term goals and are resilient to changes in the research landscape.

At their core, Art + Design institutions focus on the joining of theory and practice through work on materials, ideas and images. Our work and our methodology drive our research and educational practice. The outcomes of our research activities are diverse, both in form and reach. Our research manifests in writing, theory, designs, films, objects, processes, art exhibitions, performances, public talks, public art, and projects and programs for social change and social enterprise. All of these are embedded in a dynamic conversation with receptor communities, driving the next steps, creating new knowledge in the process. Our Faculty and Students have been consistently successful in peer-reviewed publishing contexts including journals, conferences, and exhibitions.

CONTEXT OF RESEARCH AT EMILY CARR

In 2007, Emily Carr opened the Intersections Digital Studios, a CFI-supported research facility that enabled the development of significant research capacity. In the same year, a new Master of Applied Arts program was launched. Over the past five years, we have developed additional graduate programs, including a Low Residency Master of Applied Arts (2010), and a Master of Design (2013). The total number of resident graduate students currently varies between 25-40, with an additional 30 students in Low Residency. We plan to implement Master of Fine Arts (MFA) programs and create more links between our graduate program and the institutionally shared Masters of Digital Media (MDM) program at the Great Northern Way campus. We expect to double the number of graduate students at Emily Carr by 2020.

The planned move of Emily Carr to a new purpose-built campus in 2016 provides a key horizon for the 2013-2018 research plan. As we prepare for this move we imagining a new physical space but also re-imagining the ways we teach, and stay connected and responsible to our community and environment. The Academic Committee for the Great Northern way campus is developing next phase plans for the Masters of Digital Media (MDM) program and the Centre for Digital Media that incorporate the Emily Carr relocation, and for the development of a campus that houses the MDM program, industry partners, art galleries, fabrication shops, student residences, and studio spaces.

Because we are a specialized University, forming research and pedagogical links with other Universities increases our capacity to address problems from a multi-disciplinary perspective. We have many ties with Simon Fraser University (SFU) and UBC through personal and collaborative relationships between our Faculties. We have also begun a project that brings together three of the major Art + Design institutions in Canada (Emily Carr, OCADU, and NSCADU) within the GRAND-NCE research network. These and other projects demonstrate the unique capacity of Art + Design institutions to develop sustainable models for collaborative research.

SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH

Emily Carr is committed to the growth and support of the research undertaken by our Faculty and Students. The Intersections Digital Studios are the most visible connection to research support, housing technology and meeting

spaces. The Office of Research supports project development, grant writing, grant administration, internships, and partnership development. Faculty who are successful at obtaining tri-council funding for a project, are eligible for course releases in proportion to the size and duration of the grant. The President's Research Fund seeds Faculty and Students project development, and supports production, and dissemination of results.

The new campus gives us an opportunity to revisit the concept of a research hub within a University, and particularly within a shared campus space. As well as supporting the development of the research, the new spaces will serve as visible entry points to the process and results for the public and visitors to the campus. We will also have shared specialized technology labs that will be linked with other R&D facilities at the Great Northern Way campus.

CRC AND CFI ALLOCATION PLANS

The University currently has an allocation of four Canadian Research Chairs (CRCs). We have assigned these to areas connected to our thematic strengths and have recruited candidates for three of these positions, with an anticipated fourth within the coming years. We were originally allocated one Tier 1 and one Tier II Chair. We converted the Tier 1 Chair into two Tier II Chairs after having difficulty finding a suitable candidate. We have since been allocated a fourth Tier II Chair which we are currently in the process of filling. Being conscious of the gender gap in the national allocation of research chairs, we have made every effort to encourage women to apply for the positions.

The following table outlines the planned deployment of the chairs:

Research Theme(s)	Tier and Agency	Time Period
Materials Inquiry and Critical Making	Tier II (SSHRC) (1 male candidate)	2014-2018
Emerging Media and Communication Social Practice	Tier II (SSHRC) (1 female candidate)	2014-2018
Indigenous and Aboriginal Studies	Tier II (SSHRC) (1 male candidate)	2014-2018
Social Practice, Transformation, and Innovation in the Public Sphere	Tier II (SSHRC) (in recruitment)	2016-2017

Table 1 Planned Deployment of Canada Research Chairs by Research Theme, Tier, and Agency

The corresponding CFI infrastructure funds will be used to complement the technology currently available in the Intersections Digital Studios and to support the specific needs of the Research Chairs. The new equipment will include the areas of 3D prototyping, electronics, mobile media, and artistic production. The President, the Provost, the associated Dean, the Manager Technical Services, and the Director of Research Administration and Operations review all planned CFI applications to ensure fit within the strategic goals of the University.

RESEARCH THEMES

Indigenous and Aboriginal Studies

Within this theme we acknowledge the ways in which Canada has been shaped by the relationship between the indigenous population and the settlers of this land. By studying, and creating opportunities to retrieve and grapple with the complex, often painful, history and the current context of this relationship, we seek to inform and transform the relationship we have with each other and with the land itself. The research in this theme spans all Faculties and has a deep engagement with the aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities, both local and global. As the Idle No More movement attests, we cannot look to a sustainable future without recognizing the broken links between

government policy and the needs and concerns of the aboriginal populations, and indeed all citizens. We expect research in this theme to integrate indigenous modes of enquiry throughout the University, to inform curriculum and policy development, and to mobilize the community at large to address the challenges ahead.

We want the activities within this research theme to create an energetic environment for change. We aim to attract bright aboriginal students and Faculty who will see us as a welcoming and responsive place for engaging in direct and diverse conversations leading to innovation in education, social-economic development, community engagement, and global awareness.

Sustainability

This research theme reaches across art and design to address systemic barriers to sustainable practices and behaviours in design and manufacturing, art making, and social-economic policy. There are very active grassroots approaches to environmental awareness and sustainability. Building momentum, are top down approaches where governmental, institutional, and professional policies trigger changes that impact sustainability. Emily Carr is active in both these approaches. We teach, develop, and practice sustainable methods; and we participate in and lead conversations and partnerships that address systemic challenges in our fields.

In 2010, Emily Carr was ranked 2nd by Corporate Knights Magazine in an evaluation of Industrial Design programs in Canada. In 2011, the Interdisciplinary Sustainability Minor called Social Practice and Community Engagement (SPACE) was created within the Faculty of Culture and Community. In 2012, Emily Carr hosted a focused discussion of sustainability issues at the University, which included a visioning exercise that chronicled the already extensive activities in this area on campus, and documented priorities for development. Shortly after, the Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability (DESIS) Lab was formed. Emily Carr University is a founding member of the Partnership for Academic Leadership on Sustainability (PALS), which bring together representatives from 33 art and design institutions to share ideas and leverage each other's strengths to bring sustainable solutions to fruition.

We want to continue our leadership in this area and bring our current expertise to bear on curriculum development and deployment, institutional culture, and the design of the new campus and its associated policies and practices.

Health and Wellness

The health sector is of great importance to the public and governing bodies, both socially and economically. While they may share the ultimate goal of a healthy population, the systems are sufficiently complex to create competing interests. Innovation in the health sector has the reputation of being slow. Because of the risks inherent to change, this sector is more suited to careful adaptations that address the need to balance stability, uniformity, efficiency, and responsiveness. Yet these small changes can have a profound effect on the delivery of quality care, and the subjective experience of the health care system.

Emily Carr has been actively applying design methods to foster innovation in the health sector. In 2013, we formalized these activities by launching the Health Design Lab (HDL); a research cluster committed to applying collaborative solution-focused, human-centred research methodologies to complex issues in health care. The vision of the HDL is to be a recognized centre for research and design excellence in BC with an established reputation of providing innovative solutions to collaborative partners in health care.

A key factor in extending the reach and capacity of the HDL will be strategic partnerships with other academic institutions. Collaborative partnerships have been established with the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) and UBC. We also have community partnerships with Vancouver Coastal Health, the Dr. Peter Centre, and the G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre.

Materials Inquiry and Critical Making

Artists and designers have a historically deep engagement with material cultures and practices. Many of the major art + design institutions were developed during the late 19th and early 20th century as centres for artists and designers involved in the industrial trades. More recently, artists and designers have developed sophisticated practices for examining the processes and practices of late-industrial manufacturing and fabrication as a global and increasingly distributed phenomenon.

The *Material Matters* research cluster at Emily Carr investigates new materials and processes that reference traditional and contemporary modes of making. They are looking at ways in which additive manufacturing techniques can use waste from other processes, feed other processes like mold-making for foundry and ceramics, or can merge different materials such as cloth and plastics or electronics. The design of tools and technologies for 3D printing thus far have been mostly optimizing ease of use, and cost of materials, with less emphasis on sustainability or design methodologies. In this way this theme relates to the theme of *Sustainability*.

The field of Critical Making is concerned with the process of making as a mode of investigation. Rather than an end unto itself, the object produced is a means of understanding a problem space by creating a physical representation of an investigation. Because of these aims, Critical Making is invested in the democratization of making processes and tools. It is associated with the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) and Open Source movements. It promotes making as a way of knowing and critically engaging our relationship with technology and objects. Applying our expertise in materials, design, electronics, and art making we aim to integrate critical making into all our research themes, and to create opportunities for public discussion and participation in the act of making as enquiry.

Emerging Media and Communication

All media and communication forms are undergoing disruptive transformations largely due to new platforms for content creation and sharing that were previously constrained by publishing and distribution costs. The sheer volume of information and distribution channels has changed the way we assimilate information and has led to an uneasy relationship with our information sources. The importance of innovative ways of communicating information and promoting social feedback has never been so crucial, for coherence and for knowledge synthesis, sharing, and application.

In 2010, Emily Carr launched the Stereoscopic 3D Centre, which brings together and supports a community of researchers and practitioners in the area of 3D filmmaking, and other screen-based art forms. The Centre is now extending its reach to other areas of innovation in imaging including expanded temporal/spatial resolution, and other distribution mechanisms such as augmented and virtual reality.

The Social and Interactive Media (SIM) Centre, launched in 2010, has a mission to study and intervene in a media landscape that is increasingly tied to the social realm through new devices, sharing platforms, and interaction designs. The Centre is concerned with the sources of information, their availability, and the socio-political and economic context of content access, distribution, and analysis. With existing strengths in communication design including e-books, visualization, and visual analytics, this theme has clear ties to the theme of *Social Practice, Transformation, and Innovation in the Public Sphere*. It is also an important component to *Health and Wellness*.

Social Practice, Transformation, and Innovation in the Public Sphere

As a specialized institution we are in a unique position to examine how social innovation can be accomplished through the lens of art and design. We define social innovation as a broadly relevant, multi-partnered field that feeds across and within disciplines and contexts to achieve organizational, civic, political, aesthetic, economic or structural change that improves the lives of people. We see social innovation as deeply related to the ability of art and design to approach and solve problems.

Public art, design for communities, and social practice in the public realm are vibrant areas of work and investigation. This theme encompasses projects and research from interdisciplinary faculty from areas including Industrial Design, the Faculty of Design and Dynamic Media, the Faculty of Culture + Community and its pioneering SPACE minor, Public Art, Continuing Studies and Aboriginal Programs, feeding through diverse areas of the university. This work has a focus on creating a context and ethical framework for ongoing community engagement, which is expressed through internal and external collaborations, partnerships with industry, academia and non-profits, and innovative curriculum development.

The vision for *Social Practice, Transformation, and Innovation in the Public Sphere* at Emily Carr is to continue our long history of work in this field and to draw together our diverse activities under a single umbrella so as to become more effective, participatory, inclusive, cross-fertilized, and visible.

New Models of Entrepreneurship

Design is a key differentiator for successful businesses. Emily Carr has established a number of modes - from innovative curriculum, research initiatives, speaker series, and continuing studies programs - to build capacity, culture and community around entrepreneurship. This area stems from an interest in building and supporting entrepreneurial culture for our students. The work we do with industry provides a connection local, regional, national and international conversations around emerging players and ideas.

We are exploring initiatives that tackle the question of relevance, raising a number of questions. What is the role of research in the art and design university in relation to fast-moving software cultures of production? How can the university best interface with industry in a culture of perpetual change? How can we simplify design and research in industry contexts without losing nuance? How can the institution be adaptive and yet persist and be broadly relevant? And how can we grow a culture in our students that engenders profound confidence so that our students step into any industrial sector and create meaningful change?

Recognizing the unique position we occupy in the business, technology and innovation ecosystems in British Columbia we want to develop ways to complement existing accelerators, incubators and venture firms.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Indicators of our success will be seen by an increase in:

- Government sponsored grants and contracts;
- Graduate student enrollment and participation in Faculty research projects;
- Integration of undergraduate students into research;
- Cross-Faculty collaborations;
- Awareness of research activities at Emily Carr;
- Collaborations with other institutions;
- Community engagement activities;
- Industry contribution and collaboration;
- Measureable social and economic impact;
- Aboriginal awareness and participation.

PLANNING AND APPROVAL

This document was written in consultation with a broad cross-section of the Emily Carr community under the leadership of the Director of Research. It is endorsed by the President and is approved by the Senate.