My name is Margaret Hirst, and I am an undergraduate student at St. Michael’s College at the University of Toronto. In early 2009 I took Father Donovan’s course, *The Spiritual in Modern Art*, for which I wrote the reflections on art that follow. Since I had never studied art, let alone modern art, I must admit that I joined the class with some trepidation. Now, looking back, I can honestly say the course was a revelation to me and has forever changed the way I view art. My background of study in the Christianity and Culture program at St. Michael’s was a great advantage to my studies in this area. I believe the most important thing I learned was first, how the spiritual can be expressed in modern, even abstract art, and secondly, how much artists struggle to express this spirituality. These truths can be seen in the two short essays below.

Emily Carr’s religious struggle was extensively documented in her journals and letters. She tells us, in her own words, of her spiritual and artistic journey to express her own undogmatic Christocentric spirituality; this progression is visible in her paintings *Indian Church* and *Scorned as Timber, Beloved of the Sky*. In *Gothic Lament*, Sorel Cohen’s use of an iconic Christian image – Christ crucified – underneath the Brooklyn Bridge, encourages various interpretations of the work, such as, for example, the secular world crushing the religious world. Looking at the work through a Christian lens, however, I saw something joyous: an echo of the mystic experience of Catherine of Siena who envisioned Christ as a bridge to God. Since studying these and other artists and their spiritual struggle and message, I find myself looking for layers of meaning and spirituality in all art. The following two reflections are examples of my search for spiritual meaning in art.