

**Art & Artists in Exhibition: Vancouver 1890 - 1950**

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## Bertram Charles Binning

**February 10 1909 - March 16 1976**

**Vancouver School of Art (Diploma 1932)**  
**B.C. Society of Fine Arts (1941, Life Member 1963)**  
**Federation of Canadian Artists (Founding Member 1941)**  
**Canadian Society of Graphic Artists (1946)**  
**Canadian Group of Painters (1948)**  
**Royal Canadian Academy (Associate 1954, Member 1966)**

Binning was born in Medicine Hat, Alberta. He moved to Vancouver with his family, and graduated from Kitsilano Secondary School. He attended the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Art from 1927 to 1932, then studied in a number of cities in England and the United States before returning to Vancouver to teach at the Vancouver School of Art from 1939 to 1949.

The opportunity to study in the different cities was almost certainly a result of a recommendation made to the National Gallery of Canada by Arthur Lismer, one of the members of the Group of Seven. In 1935 Lismer was traveling through Western Canada on a lecture tour with more than one purpose, and he noted in a confidential report to the National Gallery his comments about meeting Binning at the Vancouver Art Gallery children's Saturday morning art classes:

*"Mr. Scott's chief aid is Mr. Bert Binning, a young man of considerable enthusiasm and ability but one who has seen nothing beyond the limited range of his immediate environment. He is doing excellent work with the classes, is himself a gifted young artist and one of the most able young men in this work I have seen. I think that he would profit by being given an opportunity of extending his experience and knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of child study in other centres. I suggest that a sum sufficient to cover his expenses be allowed the Art Gallery of Vancouver, through Mr. Scott, and that he be sent to Ottawa, Toronto, New York, Buffalo, Toledo, Worcester and Cleveland to make a study of the practice and activities in those centres. I consider these are worthwhile suggestions for the general expansion and progress of the idea of art gallery classes. On my own part, I would be glad to have him for a short time at the Art Gallery classes in Toronto and there would be no difficulty in getting him into good centres in the United States galleries."*

Binning was a founding member of the Federation of Canadian Artists in 1941, and B.C. Regional Director of the group from 1947 to 1949. He was also on the National Executive Member Brief Committee in 1949.

He exhibited with the B.C. Society of Fine Arts in their annual exhibitions in 1942, 1943, and 1949.

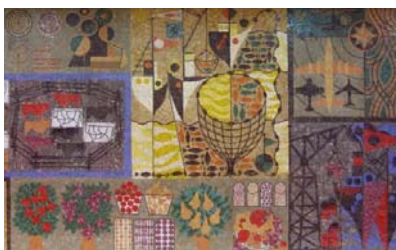
Binning was on a list titled "Leading Vancouver Artists," provided to the Labour Arts Guild on April 10, 1946 by the Vancouver Art Gallery to assist in the Guild's call for entries to the second annual B.C. At Work exhibition.

He exhibited artwork in the juried 1948 17th Annual B.C. Artists exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery.



On December 7, 1946 he gave a lecture for the Vancouver Institute titled *Prefabrication - The Ultimate in Modern Architecture*. On November 17, 1951 he gave another lecture titled *Report on Art and Architecture in America and Europe*.

Binning was very active doing architectural commissions around Vancouver. He designed the mosaic tile work for the B.C. Electric Building on Burrard Street (now the Electra condominiums), and another mosaic for the CIBC Bank on Granville Street at Dunsmuir (details illustrated below). He was Head of the U.B.C. Fine Arts Department from 1955 - 1968, teaching at U.B.C. both before and after holding that position.



Binning had an excellent sense of colour and design, and his work is sought after and fetching increasing prices. It is also distinctive, with his marine-themed paintings and single-line pen and ink drawings both being uniquely Binning. He died in Vancouver in 1976 at the age of sixty-seven.

## Exhibitions

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

DATE	EXHIBITION	LOCATION
1944 Feb. 29 - March 19	Solo Exhibition (62 drawings)	<a href="#">Vancouver Art Gallery</a>
1946 Feb. 19 - March 10	Solo Exhibition (43 pictures)	<a href="#">Vancouver Art Gallery</a>

### GROUP EXHIBITIONS

DATE	EXHIBITION	ARTWORK
1933 May 3 - 18	<a href="#">VAG</a> <a href="#">VSAGA 1st Annual Exhibition</a>	Anchors Ashore St. Andrew's Over the Roof Tops Back Lane Fisherman's Dry Dock (Lithograph) Little Mountain (Lithograph) Monday (Etching)
1934 Sept. 21 - Oct. 14	<a href="#">VAG</a> <a href="#">3rd Annual B.C. Artists</a>	Artist, Rear Elevation
1942 May 15 - 31	<a href="#">BCSFA</a> <a href="#">32nd Annual</a>	Margeurite Model Crouching (no information available)
1942 Nov. 3 - 15	<a href="#">FCA</a> Red Cross Benefit	Nude
1943 May 15 - June 6	<a href="#">BCSFA</a> <a href="#">33rd Annual</a>	The Dancer Gabriel Reclining Figure Enchanted Forest House with Trellis Holiday Excursion
1946 July 2 - 28	<a href="#">VAG</a> <a href="#">Jubilee Exhibition</a>	The White Ship
1948 May 18 - June 6	<a href="#">BCSFA</a> <a href="#">38th Annual Exhibition</a>	Four Ships in Variable Weather
1948 Sept. 18 - Oct. 10	<a href="#">VAG</a> <a href="#">17th Annual B.C. Artists</a>	Convoy Under Way Ships at Quiet Anchor
1949 May 3 - 22	<a href="#">BCSFA</a> <a href="#">39th Annual</a>	Drawing (Pen and Ink) Fair Weather Signals
1950 April 25 - May 14	<a href="#">BCSA</a> <a href="#">40th Annual Exhibition</a>	Reflected Ship Vacant and Occupied Squares
1953	<a href="#">VAG</a> Six B.C. Painters	Tall Ship Ship Chandlery

Ships at Quiet Anchor

## References - BIBLIOGRAPHY

Refer to [BIBLIO](#).

## References - GROUP EXHIBITIONS

**SOUVENIR CATALOGUE OF EXHIBITIONS OPENING  
THE NEW VANCOUVER ART GALLERY** (refer to [VAG51](#))

**100 YEARS OF B.C. ART** (refer to [VAG58](#))

**JOY AND CELEBRATION - VANCOUVER SUMMER 1967** (refer to [UBC67](#))

**B.C. ARTISTS' TRIBUTE TO COLIN GRAHAM** (refer to [AGGV74](#))

**PRINTMAKING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA 1889-1983** (refer to [AGGV83](#))

**VANCOUVER: ART & ARTISTS 1931 - 1983** (refer to [VAG83](#))

**GENERATIONS - FIVE DECADES OF ART IN WEST VANCOUVER 1912 - 1962** (refer to [WVMA99](#))

**DESIGNING A MODERN IDENTITY** (refer to [KAG01](#))

**A MODERN LIFE: Art and Design in British Columbia 1945-1960** (refer to [VAG04](#))

**PAINT - A PSYCHEDELIC PRIMER** (refer to [VAG06](#))

**OUR CHANGING LANDSCAPE** (refer to [BAG08](#))

**VISIONS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA** (refer to [VAG09](#))

**SHORE, FOREST AND BEYOND - ART FROM THE AUDAIN COLLECTION** (refer to [VAG11](#))

**COTTAGES TO COMMUNITIES** (refer to [WVHS11](#))

## References - GENERAL

**A DISQUISITION ON ABSTRACT PAINTING** by Lawren Harris.  
1954, Rous & Mann Press Ltd., Toronto; 16 pages; illustrated  
Includes one illustration by **B.C. Binning**

**MACLEAN'S MAGAZINE - B.C. CENTENNIAL ISSUE** (refer to [MAC58](#))

**CREATIVE CANADA - VOLUME ONE**, by University of Toronto Press  
1971; ISBN 0-8020-3262-1  
"A biographical dictionary of twentieth-century creative and performing artists."  
Includes one and a half full columns of information about Binning

**THREE HOURS LATER** (refer to [3BC74](#))

**VISUAL ARTS BRITISH COLUMBIA** (refer to [VABC77](#))

**A GUIDE TO SCULPTURE IN VANCOUVER** (refer to [GSV80](#))

**ROYAL CANADIAN ACADEMY OF ARTS - EXHIBITIONS AND MEMBERS 1880 - 1979**  
1981, Evelyn de R. McMann, University of Toronto Press, ISBN 0-8020-2366-5

**ART BANK CATALOGUE** (refer to [AB87](#))

**BINNING, B.C. (Bertram Charles Binning)**

*A Dictionary of Canadian Artists*, Volume 1, A - F, 5th Ed. Revised & Expanded 1997  
Colin S. Macdonald, Canadian Paperbacks. ISBN 0-919554-21-0

**ART BC, MASTERWORKS FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA** by Ian M. Thom  
2000, Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., ISBN 1-55054-808-5  
232 pages illustrated in colour and b&w  
Includes two sections on Binning; 2 full page colour illustrations of his work

**BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX OF ARTISTS IN CANADA**

2003, Evelyn de R. McMann, University of Toronto Press, ISBN 0-8020-2790-3  
250 pages; 9 pages of *works cited* referenced to 8,800 artists  
18 references cited for Binning, including CC1, M, and RCA listed above.

**WATERFRONT** by James P. Delgado, Executive Director, Vancouver Maritime Museum  
*"The illustrated maritime story of Greater Vancouver"*  
Published by Vancouver Maritime Museum and Stanton Atkins & Dosil Publishers  
2005, ISBN 0-9732346-5-2, 186 pages hardcover first edition with dust jacket  
Includes list of sources, index, credits, acknowledgements  
Extensively illustrated in colour and black and white with art and photographs  
Artwork reproduced from Atkins *Feckless Collection* includes print by Binning

**PUBLIC ART IN VANCOUVER - ANGELS AMONG LIONS** (refer to [PAV09](#))

**VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY - B.C. ARTISTS FILES** (refer to [VPL](#))

**VANCOUVER SCHOOL OF ART - LIST OF GRADUATES & STUDENTS** (refer to [VSA](#))

**THE LIFE AND ART OF HARRY AND JESSIE WEBB** (refer to [MTP14](#))

## Clippings

"B.C. Binning is always a master draftsman."  
From "[B.C. Society of Fine Arts Display Sets New High Mark](#)," by [Palette](#)  
*Vancouver Daily Province*, May 16, 1942

"Well-known Vancouver artists recently elected (BCSFA) members include ... B.C. Binning ..."

From "[B.C. Artists' Display To Calgary For Exhibition](#)," by [Palette](#)

*Vancouver Daily Province*, May-June 1942

" ... Among those contributing paintings and drawings are: ... B.C. Binning ... "

From "[Noted Artists Offer Paintings For Red Cross](#)"

*Vancouver Daily Province* (presumed), November 1942

"The quality of painting in B.C. exhibitions has been greatly strengthened by the inclusion of works by former students. This reflects the good work of a loyal and enthusiastic staff consisting at present of [Grace W. Melvin](#), [Fred A. Amess](#), **B.C. Binning**, [J.L. Shadbolt](#), and a number of other teachers, past and present, in the Day, Evening and Saturday Morning Classes."

From "[A Short Art History of British Columbia](#)", by [Charles H. Scott](#)

*Behind The Palette*, June 1947

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