

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

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**Orville Norman Fisher****1911 - July 1999**

**Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts (Diploma 1933)**

**Vancouver School of Art Graduates' Association**

**Official War Artist, 1st Canadian Field Historical Section**

**Canadian Society of Graphic Artists**

**B.C. Society of Artists (Vice-President 1948)**

Orville Fisher was one of the early graduates of the Vancouver School of Art, receiving his diploma in 1933, after taking training from [Frederick. H. Varley](#) and others.

In 1931-32 he won the [Vancouver Exhibition Association](#) Scholarship of \$50.00, open to "third year drawing and painting students."

He completed post-graduate work at the [B.C. College of Arts](#) before joining [E.J. Hughes](#) and [Paul Goranson](#) in an artistic partnership. They completed murals for the Malaspina Hotel in Nanaimo, and for the B.C. Pavilion at the 1939 Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco.



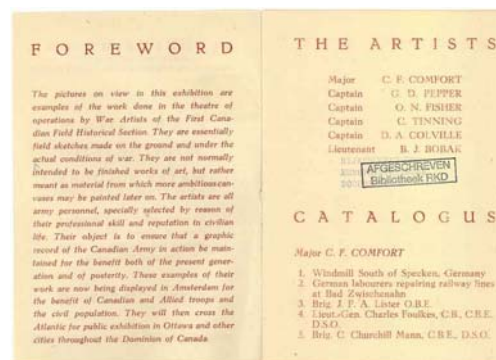
The [Spring 1936](#) edition of *The Smock Pocket*, the [Vancouver School of Art Graduates' Association](#) newsletter, noted that Fisher and [E.J. Hughes](#) "are now working on their second murals for the First United Church. The original ones (size 9' x 30' each), drew much favorable comment. They have also had an exhibition of etchings in the Gallery. The number of sales passed all previous Gallery records."



Fisher joined the Canadian Army as a Sapper in 1940, but was transferred to Ottawa and became an official War Artist. He took part in the Normandy invasion, landing on Mike Beach. His comments on making sketches under fire are noted in *Canvas of War*. He continued on with the army as far as Nijmegen before returning to England. He returned to the front at Rotterdam, where he was working when the war ended.



His work was in at least two exhibitions immediately after the war in Europe ended. One exhibition, held at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, had the lengthy title of *Canadian war artists: water colours and line sketches of scenes during the Canadian Army's advance through Italy, Holland and Germany by official Canadian war artists*. The other exhibition had a similar title, was of work done during the advance through France and Belgium, and was held at the Palais des Beaux-arts, at Brussels, Belgium. His rank was Captain at the end of the war.



Exhibitions of war art toured across Canada after the war, but the paintings were then given to the National Gallery, where they remained largely unknown and unseen for 25 years.

Fisher returned to Vancouver, where he worked as a muralist, painter, graphic artist, teacher, and interior decoration designer. He assisted Charles Comfort on a large mural in the Toronto-Dominion

Bank on Pender Street at Granville, a mural which remained *in situ* until early 2003, when the bank vacated the premises. The mural was relocated to the Academic Quadrangle at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. with the official re-dedication of the installation in April 2004 after conservation work on it. Fisher also completed five murals for the lobby of the B.C. Electric Building. He taught at the Vancouver art school, and was Head of the Graphics Department.

A number of his pastels of the construction of the Vancouver Vocational Institute hung in the lobby of the Vancouver Community College for many years.

He also exhibited in the 1949 B.C. Artists at the Vancouver Art Gallery, and the BCSFA annual exhibitions in 1937, 1947, and 1950. He designed the exhibition catalogue cover for the 1947 BCSFA show.

He submitted three drypoints to the 1949 B.C. Graphic exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery, all three of them were selected for the exhibition.

## Exhibitions

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

DATE	EXHIBITION	LOCATION
1947 April 8 - 27	<u>Exhibition by Orville Fisher</u> (VAG x0775)	<u>Vancouver Art Gallery</u>

### GROUP EXHIBITIONS

DATE	EXHIBITION	ARTWORK
1935 December 6 - 15	<u>VAG</u> Group Show: <u>Goranson</u> , <u>Hughes</u> , Fisher	
1936 Feb. 21 - Mar. 5	<u>PASOVAS</u> Annual Group Show	(drypoints)
1936 August 11 - 21	<u>VAG</u> Group Show: <u>Goranson</u> , <u>Hughes</u> , Fisher	
1936 Dec. 8 - 20	<u>VAG</u> <u>Goranson</u> , <u>Hughes</u> , Fisher: Drypoints	
1937 Dec. 3 - 10	<u>VAG</u> <u>Goranson</u> , <u>Hughes</u> , Fisher: Prints	
1945 July 12 - 26	Canadian War Artists, Amsterdam	German Marines vacating their ships German prisoners surrendering material The Liberators German arms dump Issuing instructions Victory parade Refugees Prisoners entering concentration area at The Hague

		Allied ships unloading relief supplies - Rotterdam
		Pointing our harbour installations - Rotterdam
		River Maas - Rotterdam
1949 July 12 - July 31	<a href="#">VAG</a> <a href="#">Stanley Park in Pictures</a>	Zebra Fish at Aquarium, English Bay
1949 Nov. 22 - Dec. 11	<a href="#">VAG</a> <a href="#">First B.C. Graphic</a>	Egg to Adult Thrust
		Fraser Valley
1950 April 25 - May 14	<a href="#">BCSA</a> <a href="#">40th Annual Exhibition</a>	Ship in B.C. Marine Dry Dock
		War Memories

## References

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

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

**4th BURNABY NATIONAL PRINT SHOW** (refer to [BAG67](#))

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

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

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

**FISHER, Orville (Orville Norman Fisher)**

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

**VANCOUVER ARTIST: Orville Fisher**

1999 September; by Michael Clark, Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design.  
*Visions* newsletter, Volume 6 Issue 1, page 6.  
One page biography with 3 illustrations of his work & 1 photo of artist.

**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 historical essays, biographical notes, index.

Article on Fisher page 68; one work illustrated "Mending the Nets".

**Canvas Of War - Painting the Canadian Experience 1914 to 1945**

2000, by Dean F. Oliver, Laura Brandon; Foreword by J.L. Granatstein  
Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., ISBN 1-55054-772-0

178 pages illustrated in colour and b&w  
Includes reproductions of Fisher's paintings, biographical information.

### **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  
7 references *cited* for Fisher, including M listed above.

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

**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 Fisher

**OUR CHANGING LANDSCAPE (2008)** (refer to [BAG08](#))

**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](#))

### **Clippings**

"[Paul Gorenson](#) (sic), **Orville Fisher**, [James Dickie](#) and [Alec Dalgleish](#) are the lucky students who have sold their work."

From "[In The Domain of Art](#)"

*Vancouver Province*, February 10 1934

"... artists invited to join the club for the exhibition include: . . . **Orville Fisher** . . ."

From "[PASOVAS EXHIBIT - Pioneer Art Students' Show](#)" by (unknown)

*Daily Province*, February 21 1936

"Dry-points are shown by [E.J. Hughes](#), [Paul Goranson](#) and **Orville Fisher**, three gifted young men whose recent exhibition in the Art Gallery will be remembered by visitors."

From "[FINE PASOVAS ART EXHIBITION](#)" by (unknown)

*Vancouver Sun* (?), February 21 1936

"**Orville Fisher**, [Edward Hughes](#), and [Paul Goranson](#) became known all over Canada through their mural paintings in the First United Church, while their exhibition of Dry Points and Etchings in the Art Gallery last December were widely praised."

From "[GRADUATES IN ART](#)" by Cintra

(unknown newspaper), April 25, 1936

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