

Art & Artists in Exhibition: Vancouver 1890 - 1950

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Edward John Hughes

February 17 1913 - January 5 2007

Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts (Diploma 1933)

Vancouver School of Art Graduates' Association

Canadian Group of Painters

Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (ARCA 1966 RCA 1968)

Order of Canada 2001

Edward John Hughes has been one of the most long-lasting and individualistic artists in B.C. art history. He has been an accomplished, producing, full-time professional artist for over seventy years, and has produced an body of work that is outstanding. The recent solo retrospective exhibition of his work at the [Vancouver Art Gallery](#) in 2003 truly showed his stature as a chronicler of the West Coast, and of British Columbia.

He was born in North Vancouver on February 17 1913, although the family lived in Nanaimo. He returned to North Vancouver in 1923, and attended art classes with [Mrs. M.O. Verral](#). In 1929 he entered the [Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts](#). He received his diploma in 1933, then completed post-graduate studies at the school in 1934 and 1935. His pencil portraits of the 1935 Graduating Class were published in the school's 1935 annual, *Behind The Palette*.

The [Spring 1936](#) edition of *The Smock Pocket*, the [Vancouver School of Art Graduates' Association](#) newsletter, noted that Hughes and [Orville Fisher](#) "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."

Hughes and Fisher were sharing a studio on the 10th floor of the Bekins Building. They joined in a partnership with [Paul Goranson](#) and completed murals for the Malaspina Hotel in Nanaimo, and for the B.C. Pavilion at the 1939 Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco.

In 1939 Hughes enlisted in the Royal Canadian Artillery. In 1942 he was appointed as an official Canadian War Artist, and completed many paintings before his demobilization in 1946. He returned to the West Coast and lived in Victoria, B.C. where he continued to paint pictures of the local scenery, steamboats, islands, and ocean. He wasn't making much money from his work after the war, and when the Vancouver Art Gallery asked him for permission to put on a solo exhibition of his work in 1949, he replied that he couldn't afford to even ship his canvasses from Victoria to Vancouver, let alone frame them. The Gallery replied that he should simply roll them up and ship them C.O.D. to the Gallery, where they would be framed at no cost to the artist. Hughes apparently did not take them up on the offer.

He submitted two pencil drawings to the [1949 B.C. Graphic](#) exhibition at the [Vancouver Art Gallery](#), both of them were selected for the exhibition.

He exhibited paintings with the [Royal Canadian Academy of Arts](#) in 1950, 1968, and 1970.

In the decades since then, Hughes work has increased in value, with auction prices for his large canvasses now reaching over \$400,000.00. He lived on Vancouver Island until his death in 2007 at the age of 93, leaving behind a lengthy record of creative vision and achievement.

Additional exhibitions:

B.C. Artists at [VAG](#): 1949-52, 1954

[BCSFA](#): 1937

Exhibitions

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

DATE	EXHIBITION	LOCATION
1967	E.J. Hughes Retrospective	Vancouver Art Gallery
2003 January 30 - June 8	E.J. Hughes	Vancouver Art Gallery

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

DATE	EXHIBITION	ARTWORK
1935 December 6 - 15	VAG Group Show: Goranson , Hughes, Fisher	
1936 Feb. 21 - Mar. 5	PASOVAS Annual Group Show	(drypoints)
1936 August 11 - 23	VAG Group Show: Goranson , Hughes, Fisher	
1936 Dec. 8 - 20	VAG Goranson , Hughes, Fisher : Drypoints	
1937 Dec. 3 - 19	VAG Goranson , Hughes, Fisher : Prints	
1949 Nov. 22 - Dec. 11	VAG First B.C. Graphic	Qualicum Beach Indian Church, North Vancouver
1950 June 20 - July 9	VAG First Quarterly Group Exhibition	Indian Church, North Vancouver Houses, Qualicum Beach Steamer Approaching the Wharf, Nanaimo Street Scene, Courtenay Rock Formation, Gabriola Island Courtenay River Landscape

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](#))

SCAN: SURVEY OF CANADIAN ART NOW (refer to [VAG72](#))

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

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

64 - 94 CONTEMPORARY DECADES (refer to [ECU94](#))

BEYOND THE CANVAS - Artists, Stories and the Sea

by Jennifer Breckon and James P. Delgado

Featuring the Mary and Bill Everett Family Collection

2000, ISBN 0-9695221-4-2; exhibition at Vancouver Maritime Museum

Exhibition included work by **Hughes**

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

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

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

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

References - GENERAL

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

THE ETCHING REVIVAL (1852 - 1936)

Collections of the [Art Gallery of Greater Victoria](#) Number 8

Not dated, no ISBN; 24 pages; includes Introduction (author not listed)

Brief biographical information on artists including [Charles H. Scott](#) and **E.J. Hughes**

Trees on Savary Island 1936 illustrated

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 full column of information about Hughes

HIGH REALISM IN CANADA by Paul Duval

1974, ISBN 0-7720-0697-0, 176 pages, publisher Clarke Irwin

Extensively illustrated in colour and b&w

Includes index of reproduction and general index

Good chapters on [Eric Freifeld](#), **E.J. Hughes** and [Ernest Lindner](#)

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

BRITISH COLUMBIA ART COLLECTION 1974-80 (refer to [BCAC80](#))

ROYAL CANADIAN ACADEMY OF ARTS - Exhibitions and Members 1880 - 1979

1981, Evelyn de R. McMann, University of Toronto Press, ISBN 0-8020-2366-5

Definitive list of Academy members, includes a list of all exhibited paintings

List 5 paintings by Hughes in 3 exhibitions.

MURALS FROM A GREAT CANADIAN TRAIN by Ian Thom

1986, bilingual, published by Art Global / Libre Expression

192 pages, illustrated throughout in colour and black and white

History of the murals commissioned for the Canadian Pacific Railway's Park Cars

Includes works by **E.J. Hughes**, [W.J. Phillips](#), [A.Y. Jackson](#)

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

THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY ART COLLECTION

University of British Columbia 1948 - 1988

No ISBN, 64 pages, illustrated in colour and b&w

Includes history of the collection, artist biographies

HUGHES, EDWARD JOHN

A Dictionary of Canadian Artists, Volume 2, G - Jackson, 3rd Ed. 1989

Colin S. Macdonald, Canadian Paperbacks. ISBN 0-919554-04-0

VANCOUVER ARTIST: E.J. HUGHES

1997 January; by Michael Clark, Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design.

Visions newsletter, Volume 3 Issue 2, page 6.

One page biography with 2 illustrations of his work.

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 Hughes' paintings, biographical information.

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.

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
 17 references listed for Hughes, including CC1, M, and RCA listed above.

THE BOW - LIVING WITH A RIVER, edited by Gerald T. Conaty

Includes essays by G.T. Conaty, Daryl Betenia, Catharine Mastin
 2004; ISBN 1-55263-634-8; Glenbow Museum, published by Key Porter Books Ltd.
 160 pages, hardcover; extensively illustrated with artwork and historical photographs
 Includes essays, select artist biographies, art and general bibliographies, index
 Artwork by western artists includes **Hughes**

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 Hughes

ARTISTS IN THEIR STUDIOS (refer to [AIS07](#))[Vancouver School of Decorative & Applied Arts - List of Students](#)**VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY - B.C. ARTISTS FILES** (refer to [VPL](#))**Clippings**

"... artists invited to join the club for the exhibition include: . . . **E.J. Hughes** . . ."

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

"*A PENSIVE CLARITY - E.J. HUGHES*" by Anthony Robertson

Essay and six works reproduced (including front cover image)

VANGUARD, "*Published by the Vancouver Art Gallery*", December 1981/January 1982, pages 10 - 15.

"*ART FOR STUDENTS' SAKE*" by Robin Laurence

"Begun in 1948, the AMS art collection has grown into a significant repository for Canadian art."

TREK, "*The magazine of the University of British Columbia*", Fall 2007, pages 24-27
Essay, history of collection and works illustrated incl. Hughes' *Abandoned Village, Rivers Inlet*.

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