

Art & Artists in Exhibition: Vancouver 1890 - 1950

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William Perceval Weston

November 30 1879 - December 20 1967

B.C. Society of Fine Arts (Member 1910, President 1922-1926 & 1931-1937, Life Member 1938)

British Columbia Artist (B.C.A., 1921)

Vancouver Exhibition

Canadian Group of Painters (Charter Member 1933)

Royal Canadian Academy (Associate 1936)

Royal Society of Artists, London (Elected Fellow 1938)

Federation of Canadian Artists (Founding Member 1941)

Western Group of Painters (1948)

W.P. Weston was born in Battersea, London, England, on November 30, 1879. He was one of the wave of British educators and artists who arrived in Vancouver around the turn of the century. He was trained in England at the Putney School of Art, in London. He arrived in Vancouver in 1909 and took up the position of Art Teacher at King Edward High School. He started an extensive exhibiting career in Vancouver that year, putting work into the Second Exhibition of the new B.C. Society of Fine Arts, as well as putting one painting into the Vancouver Studio Club autumn exhibition.

In 1910 he was appointed Drawing Supervisor for the Vancouver School Board. In 1912 he became head of the Night School programmes. In 1914 he was appointed Art Master at the Provincial Normal School in Vancouver. Weston gave a lecture titled *The Place of Art in Education* for the Vancouver Institute on March 15, 1917. Weston gave another lecture for the Vancouver Institute on December 9, 1929, titled *Modern Developments in Architecture*.

His painting *November* was reproduced in the February 15, 1918 issue of the Studio Magazine, published in London, England (see also 1919 review by McEvoy below).

Weston exhibited extensively for many years with the B.C. Society of Fine Arts, from 1909 to 1930, from 1936 through to 1962, and in the group's final exhibition in 1967. The 1930 exhibition catalogue noted that he was on the Society's Executive Committee.

Weston exhibited in Victoria with the Island Arts and Crafts Society in 1913 and from 1927 to 1930.

The 1922-1923 issue of the Provincial Normal School annual noted the following about Weston on "The Faculty" page:

"An artist - but we need say no more, for his deeds and not our words have forever left their imprint upon the minds of the classes of our year - we have all struggled for the result which is at once so simple and yet so difficult to obtain.

One of the things which we like most about Mr. Weston is his genuineness. A blob of colour is a "blob of colour" and a bunch is a "bunch"."

In the same catalogue, on the "From the Faculty Page", Weston noted:

"Much of our knowledge and pleasure is gained through the eye.

The eye, however, must work and see with intelligence. Drawing constitutes a measure of our ability to see a thing completely and intelligently, hence its value in general education."

Weston taught Class III in 1922-23, and the class page included the following little poem on page 25:

Little daubs of crayon,
 Little daubs of paint.
 Make Class III's B. B.
 Just what it ain't.

On page 56 of the 1922-23 Normal School Annual, it was noted that the Annual Dance was to be held in the gymnasium, but "not the gymnasium in its ordinary, barren, week-day school dress, but a veritable fairy-land, transformed under Mr. Weston's artistic direction. The room was adorned with rose and green streamers, and the lights, enclosed in dainty, flowerlike shades, cast a soft radiance over all. A special feature of the decorations was a large yellow moon hung over the balcony, which added a most realistic touch to the Moonlight waltzes by shedding its moonbeams over the throng of dancers."

Weston was also included in the Humor pages of the 1922-23 Normal School annual:

Mr. Weston: We'll take this period for catching up on anything you are behind in.

Bergie: Alright, Mr. Weston, I am going to catch up on my sleep.

Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z

Also:

Mr. W___n: What is righteous anger?

Student: Being angry without swearing.

Under the heading of "Pedagogical Psalms:"

Mr. Weston: "I am as a wonder unto many." Ps. 71.7

Included in a poem about the Normal School are the following lines about Weston:

Then we see the drawing master,
 See the great man, Mr. Weston;
 Just a touch of brush on paper,
 See! look! but it is so simple!
 And we look, but in amazement.
 Then he shows us very clearly,
 Just how simple is the method.
 How each step blends with the other.

And lastly:

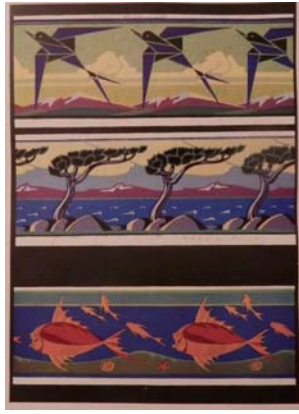
Cook (to Mr. Weston): "I hear they are going to magnetize the rear axle of the Ford."

"What's the idea?"

"So it will pick up the parts that drop off."

In 1924 Weston taught *Elementary Art* at the Summer School for Teachers, held in Victoria.





In 1925 he wrote the "Manual of Drawing and Design for Elementary and High Schools" with [Charles H. Scott](#), then Supervisor of Art, Vancouver, and [Spencer Perceval Judge](#), then Art Master, Vancouver. Weston re-wrote this book by himself in 1934, at the request of the publisher. Unfortunately, both Judge and Scott took this exclusion badly, and they apparently ceased to be friends with Weston.



He had work in the annual *B.C. Artists* exhibitions at the [Vancouver Art Gallery](#) in the inaugural 1932 exhibition, and in 1933, 1939, 1940, 1942, 1944, 1945, and 1947. He also showed work at the [Vancouver Exhibition](#) in 1924, 1925, and 1930.

Weston was made an Associate of the [Royal Canadian Academy](#) in 1936. He has been mistakenly identified as the first artist of Western Canada to be so honoured, but in fact [Sophie Pemberton](#) was made an Associate in 1906. Weston was one of 31 Charter members of the [Canadian Group of Painters](#), the successor organization to the [Group of Seven](#) and the Group of Eleven, and exhibited in their first group show in Atlantic City, sponsored by Heinz.

Weston was on the Faculty at the Provincial Normal School for many years. The 1932-33 School Annual gave the following insights into his teaching:

MR. WESTON

"His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand;
His manners were gentle, complying and bland;
Still born to improve us in every part,
His pencil our faces - his manners our heart."

"As our training at Normal draws to a close, we, the members of Class III, begin to realize how deeply indebted we are to our class teacher, Mr. Weston. His unfailing encouragement and boundless enthusiasm have been a great help to us all. Even those students who were sure that the drawing of

such things as birds, animals and fish was far beyond their ability have been able to produce some remarkable results."

He was also included in one of the jokes on the "Alleged Humor" page:

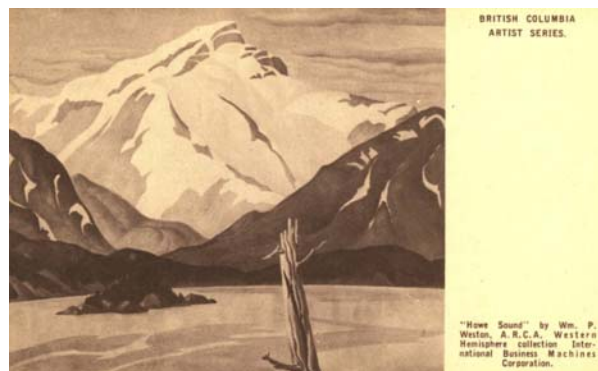
A Lady Member of the Sketch Club: "How do you make eyes, Mr. Weston?"

Mr. Weston: "How should I know? I'm a married man."

Weston was one of the Faculty members who looked after the Normal School's Outdoor Club, which made trips to local scenic spots such as Grouse Mountain, Hollyburn Ridge, and Seymour Creek. He also sponsored the Normal School's [Sketch Club](#), both assisting the group and sketching with them. The 1932-33 school annual also a reproduction of one of his pen and ink Christmas cards of Grouse Mountain on the page for the Sketch Club.

The [Spring 1936](#) edition of *The Smock Pocket*, the [Vancouver School of Art Graduates' Association](#) newsletter, noted that Weston was one of three jurors for the association's Fourth Annual Exhibition.

In 1938 he exhibited a painting in the 55th Annual Spring Exhibition of the [Art Association of Montreal](#). His address was given as 1045 West 15th Ave., Vancouver in the exhibition catalogue. In 1939 he exhibited at the New York World's Fair. He also exhibited at the Tate Gallery, London England, and the Toronto Art Gallery.



He 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 with the [B.C. Society of Fine Arts](#) in their [39th Annual Exhibition](#) in 1949.

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

For many years Weston created Christmas cards from his paintings, re-rendering his large paintings into small black and white prints. Some he did while laid up in bed with health problems. The cards were printed in small numbers, with an inscription printed inside expressing seasonal greetings for that year. These would then be signed by Weston and his wife and mailed to family and friends. They have become quite collectable, and often sell for \$200 to \$400 at auction. The cards were produced by silk-screening, and Weston kept the screens. The screens were inherited by his daughter, who has re-printed some of the cards from them for her own Christmas greetings. She has, however, used a different type of paper than that on the original prints by Weston, and there is no printed greeting inside the later cards.

Weston had numerous solo exhibitions, including at the Vancouver Art Gallery in [1946](#) and 1949, and at the Victoria Arts Centre in 1949. Weston died December 20, 1967, age 88. His distinctive work continues to be enjoyed by collectors, and sells for ever increasing prices.

Refer also to website created for Weston's work:

www.wpweston.com

Exhibitions

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

DATE	EXHIBITION	LOCATION
1934 Sept. 21 - 30	Paintings and Drawings	Vancouver Art Gallery
1938 July 12 - 27	Six Local Artists	Vancouver Art Gallery
1941 April 8 - 20	Solo Exhibition	Vancouver Art Gallery
1945 May 1 - 17	Solo Show - 31 pictures	Vancouver Art Gallery
1946 Nov. 12 - Dec. 1	Exhibition	Vancouver Art Gallery

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

DATE	EXHIBITION	ARTWORK
1909 Oct - Nov	Vancouver Studio Club Autumn Exhibition	Wimbledon Commons
1909 November	BCSFA Second Exhibition	A Village Church Perranporth, Cornwall Portrait of Mr. W. Weston Head of Lake Windermere Eastbourne from Beachy Head Sunset Effects On the Cornish Coast Fairy Folk
1910 May	BCSFA Third Exhibition	Morning Babbacombe Cove Sunset Granville Market Toronto Exhibition Grounds Coniston
1912 Nov. 25 - 30	BCSFA Annual Exhibition	Cornish Cliffs Twilight, Toronto Exhibition Grounds A Squally Day Portrait of my Father
1915 April	BCSFA Works by Members	

		Horseshoe Bay Moonrise A Sunny Day Nanaimo - The Mill Eastbourne from Beachy Head
1917 Sept. 14 - 22	<u>B.C.S.F.A. Eleventh Exhibition</u>	Summer Calm At Anchor The Burner On The Wharf, Gibson's Landing Winter November
1920 September 18 - 25	<u>BCSFA Annual Exhibition</u>	From Mount Tolmie Moonrise, Cadboro Bay The Cliff The Beach Launch, Coughlan's Fresh Breeze Off Gordon Head
1921 Sept. 19 - 24	<u>BCSFA 13th Annual Exhibition</u>	Evening, Oak Bay Dead Calm in the Gulf Birch Trees Sunset Soames' Point Summer Afternoon Sunset Glow, Cadboro Bay A Frosty Morning, Sunrise
1922 Sept. 16 - 23	<u>BCSFA 14th Annual Exhibition</u>	From the Hill Top, Victoria Soames Point Through the Trees, Grantham's Landing Morning Mist Sunset Through Smoke A Summer Night
1923 May 12 - 19	<u>BCSFA 15th Annual Exhibition</u>	The Close of Day Winter Becalmed 'Round the Mark, Dinghy Race Sunset, Little Mountain

1924 May 3 - 17	<u>BCSFA 16th Annual Exhibition</u>	Summer Morning, Grantham's A Camp, Grantham's Dingman's Cove, Gabriola Gibson's Landing Doris
1924 Aug. 9 - 16	<u>Vancouver Exhibition Annual Exhibition</u>	Summer, Howe Sound
1925 May 9 - 16	<u>BCSFA 17th Annual Exhibition</u>	(illegible) Beach, Howe Sound A Windy Day, Sea Island A Sketch, Winter The Passing Squall The Cloud Sunset, Deep Cove The Waterfront, Victoria Sunshine and Snow, Kamloops Autumn, Marine Drive
1926 May 8 - 15	<u>BCSFA 18th Annual Exhibition</u>	Trolling Sun Rising Through Fog Fog, Frost and Sunshine Yacht Race, English Bay
1927 June 10 - 25	<u>BCSFA 19th Annual Exhibition</u>	The Lions From Mt. Douglas Yacht Race, English Bay Shadows Winter Landscape The Avenue, Normal School The Court Yard, Normal School
1928 Feb 18 - Mar 18	<u>Palette and Chisel Club Exhibition</u>	Shadows
1929 May 18 - June 8	<u>BCSFA 21st Annual Exhibition</u>	Grouse Mountain - Winter The Sentinel In Howe Sound Mt. Brunswick Fallen Giant The Western Lion, Sunset Soames Ranch Hollyburn Ridge Twin Peaks

1929 Nov. 16 - 30	<u>BCSFA</u> <u>Winter Exhibition</u>	The Western Lion (Afternoon) Road to Swartz Evening, Howe Sound Garrow Bay Solitude Pines Mt. Baker Mountains, Copper Cove Rocks, Whytecliffe
1930 May 31 - June 14	<u>BCSFA</u> <u>Spring Exhibition</u>	Totems The Lions Grouse Mountain Crown Mountain Scrub Pines, Howe Sound Cheam, Chilliwack Snow Shadows
1930 Aug. 6 - 16	<u>VanExh</u> <u>Oil Paintings & Water-colours</u>	Cheam Oaks
1932 May - July	<u>VAG</u> <u>All Canadian Exhibition</u>	Scrub Pines, West Coast Peaks of Silence Study Study
1932 Oct. 5 - 30	<u>VAG</u> <u>1st Annual B.C. Artists</u>	Finis Summer Evening Pines Snow Shadows
1933 Sept. 22 - Oct. 15	<u>VAG</u> <u>2nd Annual B.C. Artists</u>	Jotunheim Winter Solitude Devil's Club Peaks
1938 Mar. 17 - Apr. 10	<u>AAM</u> 55th Spring Exhibition	Gleneagles
1938 April 29 - May 15	<u>BCSFA</u> <u>28th Annual Exhibition</u>	Winter Phantasy Life Force Erosion Flood Tide Church Mountain
1942 May 15 - 31	<u>BCSFA</u> <u>32nd Annual</u>	Spring November Mists The White Church, Vancouver Island

1942 Nov. 3 - 15	FCA Red Cross Benefit	Swamp
1943 May 15 - June 6	BCSFA 33rd Annual	Yale, B.C. (no information available)
		Abandoned Gravel Pit
		Arbutus
		Devil's Club
		Beach Study
1946 July 2 - 28	VAG Jubilee Exhibition	Yale, B.C.
1947 July 8 - 27	<i>B.C. Artists</i> Summer Exhibition	Castor Oil Plant
		Gleneagles
1948 May 18 - June 6	BCSFA 38th Annual Exhibition	Trail
		Arbutus
		Mt. Roderick
1949 May 3 - 22	BCSFA 39th Annual	Anvil Island
		Defiance
		Mt. Peak, Coast Range
		Kew Beach
		Yale
1949 Nov. 22 - Dec. 11	VAG First B.C. Graphic	Old Tree, Mt. Baker
		Cheam
1950 April 25 - May 14	BCSA 40th Annual Exhibition	Cornish Coast 1910
		Cedar Stump

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](#))

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

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 the Vancouver Maritime Museum; illust. in colour

Includes Foreword by Patricia E. Bovey, Introduction by James P. Delgado; list of works

Exhibition included work by **Weston**

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

RICHMOND ART GALLERY 25:25 - 1980-2005 (refer to [RAG05](#))

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

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

References - GENERAL

THE ANNUAL - PROVINCIAL NORMAL SCHOOL 1922 - 1923

Published by the Provincial Normal School, Vancouver B.C.
100 pages; illustrated with black and white drawings and photographs
Includes notes and jokes about **W.P. Weston**.

MANUAL OF DRAWING AND DESIGN FOR ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS

by W.P. Weston, [Charles H. Scott](#), [S.P. Judge](#)
1925, Authorized by the Dept. of Education of B.C.; Nelson & Sons, Toronto
Text and illustrations by Judge, Scott, and Weston; edited by Charles H. Scott

THE ANNUAL - PROVINCIAL NORMAL SCHOOL 1932 - 1933

Published by the Provincial Normal School, Vancouver B.C.
80 pages; illustrated with black and white drawings and photographs
Includes article on Normal School [Sketch Club](#), and notes and one illustration by Normal School Art Master Weston page 58.

WHO'S WHO IN NORTHWEST ART edited by Marion Brymner Appleton

"A Directory of Persons in the Pacific Northwest Working in the Media of Painting, Sculpture, Graphic Arts, and Handicrafts".
1941; published by Frank McCaffrey, Seattle Washington.

CREATIVE CANADA - VOLUME TWO, by University of Toronto Press

1972; ISBN 0-8020-3285-0
"A biographical dictionary of twentieth-century creative and performing artists."
2/3 column of information about Weston.

ISLAND ARTS AND CRAFTS SOCIETY - LIST OF EXHIBITORS

WESTON, WILLIAM PERCY

Royal Canadian Academy of Arts - Exhibitions and Members 1880 - 1979
Evelyn de R. McMann, University of Toronto Press 1981, ISBN 0-8020-2366-5

KATHARINE EMMA MALTWOOD - ARTIST (refer to [UVIC81](#))

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
 12 references *cited* for Weston

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

Clippings

"It is refreshing for a Surrey man - as I am - to come across breezy "Wimbledon Common," by W.P. Weston, but though such pictures are welcome I would rather see the artist's brush employed on the vanishing charms of B.C. Wimbledon Commons, thank Heaven! is safe for all time, but where is the square yard of the country round Vancouver which is not already "staked" and "on the market". Hurry up ye members of the Vancouver club or all the "paintable" bits round the suburbs will be gone."

From "[The Studio Club Autumn Exhibition](#)", by [Felix Penne](#),
B.C. Saturday Sunset, October 30 1909

"W.P. Weston is a new - and a welcome artist in Vancouver. "The North Arm - Summer Evening" (51), is good."

"[Vancouver Studio Club](#)", by [Felix Penne](#)
B.C. Saturday Sunset, November 6 1909

"W.P. Weston is another member of the organization, who is engaged in teaching. He is an artist of considerable capacity, and in some of his seascapes displays a power and vision which have made his contributions in this line of art to local exhibitions very acceptable."

From "[Art in British Columbia](#)", by [Bernard McEvoy](#)
Opportunities Magazine, 1910

"Mr. W.P. Weston's "Full Moon," though not a large picture is exceedingly attractive by reason of the exquisite modulation of light and color, and the highly decorative way in which a sketchily painted sapling spreads its branches over the main part of the picture. There is a reticence and tasteful handling in this picture that make it a very desirable work of art."

From "[With The B.C. Artists](#)", by "A Visitor"
Vancouver Daily Province, September 27, 1916

"Mr. W.P. Weston of Vancouver, a competent exponent of art, and a painter of much imaginative power, shows at his best in his fine breezy picture entitled "November". Simple in composition and powerful in treatment, this work bears the mark of artistic inspiration. It took the fancy of the editor of the "Studio" when it was first exhibited, and a reproduction of it appeared in the pages of that eminent London periodical of contemporary art."

From "[Local Work is on View](#)" by [Bernard McEvoy](#)
Vancouver Daily Province, October 2 1919

"Proceeding further on the modernist line, **Mr. W.P. Weston's** "Booming Ground, Gambier Island" No. 18, must be intended as a joke. Such florid color, such blues, greens and yellows were never seen on land or sea. Mr. Weston is certainly "joshing" his fellow members who became so deeply infected with the latest development of painting. In No. 15, Mr. Weston is perhaps more intelligible, and the remarkable tree in the yellow field, was evidently perceived through a pair of agitated and circumlocutory glasses. The twiddling twigs are very amusing. Mr. Weston further exemplifies his conversion or retraction in No. 29."

From "[B.C. Society of Fine Arts](#)" by [Bernard McEvoy](#)
Vancouver Daily Province, April 28 1928

"Decidedly the most striking picture from a masculine brush is the large landscape with a wind-tormented tree in the middle and an expanse of snow realistically painted with the afterglow of sunset upon it. It is impressionistic with a sane impressionism and gentle and simple looked at with understanding and delight. This is [Charles Scott's](#). (*Editor's note: the painting is actually by W.P. Weston, as corrected in a subsequent notice in the paper.*)"
(continues)

"**Mr. W.P. Weston**, always a standby of the society since he came here with fine credentials from London - an academic painter by education who experiments occasionally with modernism by way of recreation - is seen in six canvases which should be studied with the desire to get the artist's point of view, as he is not the man to do things without reason."

From "[B.C. Society of Fine Arts](#)", by [Diogenes](#)
Vancouver Daily Province, November 13 1930

"One-Man Display By W.P. Weston at Art Gallery Attractive" by (unknown)
Vancouver Daily Province, September 25 1934

"Art Textbook Author Shows His Paintings" by T.H.W.
News-Herald, September 25 1934

"W.P. Weston, A.R.C.A., not only shows examples of his strong characteristic B.C. landscapes but adds surprising achievement in entirely different compositions of skunk cabbages."

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

"The new executive committee is composed of ... W.P. Weston ..."
From "[B.C. Artists' Display To Calgary For Exhibition](#)," by [Palette](#)
Vancouver Daily Province, May-June 1942

"... Among those contributing paintings and drawings are: ... W.P. Weston, ARCA ..."
From "[Noted Artists Offer Paintings For Red Cross](#)"
Vancouver Daily Province (presumed), November 1942

"W.P. Weston has a fine study of the outdoors ..."
From "[Notable Exhibits of Artists' Work](#)" by [Mildred Valley Thornton](#)
Vancouver Sun (presumed), May 1944

"Weston Display Major Event In Province's Art History"
From "[In the Realm of Art](#)", by "[Palette](#)"
Vancouver Daily Province, November 13, 1946