

## B. C. Binning

*Bather*, c.1945

ink and watercolour on paper  
45.9 cm x 34.9 cm

Collection of the Vancouver Art  
Gallery, Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 98.57.9



## B. C. Binning

*Bather, c.1945*



Image source: Vancouver Art Gallery Library:  
Canadian Artist Files

### Artist's Biography

Nationality: Canadian

Born: 1909-10-02, Medicine Hat, Alberta

Died: 1976-03-16

Bertram Charles Binning was born in Medicine Hat, Alberta in 1909 and moved with his family to Vancouver. As a boy he spent much of his time visiting his grandfather's architectural offices and when he moved to the West Coast he was on the water much of the time, boating and fishing; both pastimes were to influence him as an artist. Illness prevented him from becoming an architect but in the following years he studied at the Vancouver School of Art; University of Oregon; Art Students' League, New York, under Yasuo Kumyoshi; and in London, England at the Central School of Art and the Westminster School of Art; also under Henry Moore; in New York under Amédée Ozenfant.

On his return to Canada he taught at the Vancouver School of Art 1939-1949 and he developed his fine calligraphic almost Oriental pen drawings. One of these works "View From Glen Eagles" a scene on the edge of the water was selected by Paul Duval for reproduction in Duval's book on prints and drawings and Donald W. Buchanan observed Binning's uniqueness among Canadian artists in doing solely pen-and-ink drawings. About 1949 he began his semi-abstract easel paintings. These works although completely different in style were still of boats, sea, sun, and coastal elements. His canvas "Ships In A Classical Calm," has been written about and reproduced in every book of Canadian art since its completion and was exhibited at the 1954 Venice Biennial. Its attractive cool blues, greys, and browns, and superb design have made it an irresistible choice of writers as an example of his work. He did a number of such paintings up to the time of his visit to Japan when a more simplified abstraction and brightness in colour entered his paintings.

In architecture he is regarded as a colour expert. One of his first articles on this subject appeared in *Canadian Art* magazine in 1954 with a photograph of his colour scheme implemented in a B.C. Electric Co. power sub-station. He also wrote for this magazine on the problems of an artist when working with mosaics using for illustrations his own mosaics in Vancouver which he did for Radio CKWX Studios; British Columbia Power Corporation, and his 44 foot mosaic at the Imperial Bank Building. His murals have been largely abstract geometrical patterns contained within squares and rectangles and have decorated several offices in Vancouver. In his home which he designed himself he has done one of these murals, and a long hallway serves as a gallery for his easel paintings. He is represented in the National Gallery of Canada by several paintings. At the University of British Columbia he was Head, Department of Fine Arts and also Curator of its gallery for many years. He lived in Vancouver until his death.

### Artistic Context

Nationality: Canadian

Training: Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts; Studied under Mark Gertler, Amédée Ozenfant and Henry Moore

Group: Abstraction; Modernism; Canadian Group of Painters; Canadian Society of Graphic Arts; B.C. Society of Artists; 20th Century

Peers: Frederick Varley; Charles Scott

## B. C. Binning

*Bather*, c.1945

Provenance: Transfer from Women's Auxiliary Provincial School Loan Scheme

Subject: boats; stylized seascapes; abstract forms

### Other Works in the Vancouver Art Gallery Collection

B.C. Binning  
*Ships at Quiet Anchor*, 1948  
oil and graphite on hardboard  
Gift of the Vancouver Art Gallery Women's Auxiliary  
VAG 49.7

B.C. Binning  
*Seaside and Bicycle*, 1944  
ink on paper  
Gift of the Artist  
VAG 54.13

B.C. Binning  
*West Bay*, 1945  
pen and ink on paper  
Gift of the Vancouver Art Gallery Women's Auxiliary  
VAG 54.14

B.C. Binning  
*Centennial Suite*, unknown  
silkscreen on paper  
Gift of the Faculty and Administration of Simon Fraser University  
VAG 68.31.11

B.C. Binning  
*White Shadow*, c.1969  
oil on canvas  
McLean Foundation Fund  
VAG 69.19

B.C. Binning  
*Fair Weather Signals*, 1949  
oil, ink, pencil on canvas  
Bequest of C.S. Band  
VAG 70.2

B.C. Binning  
*Convoy at Rendezvous*, 1948  
oil on canvas  
Bequest of C.S. Band  
VAG 70.3

B.C. Binning  
*Optional Module—Colour No. 13*, 1969-1970  
acrylic on canvas  
McLean Foundation Funds  
VAG 70.95 a-d

B.C. Binning  
*Classical Island*, 1968  
oil on canvas  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 82.19

## B. C. Binning

*Bather*, c.1945

B.C. Binning  
*Pink Sea*, 1960  
oil on canvas  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 82.20

B.C. Binning  
*Theme on Green Moonlight*, c.1956  
oil on canvas  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 82.21

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*, unknown  
oil and acrylic on canvas  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 82.22

B.C. Binning  
*Four Ships in Variable Weather*, 1948  
oil on paperboard  
Gift of J. Ron Longstaffe  
VAG 83.29

B.C. Binning  
*Purple Calm*  
oil on canvas  
Gift of J. Ron Longstaffe  
VAG 83.30

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*  
oil on composition board and wood  
Gift of J. Ron Longstaffe  
VAG 83.31

B.C. Binning  
*Optional Modules in Blue and Greys*, unknown  
acrylic on canvas  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 84.5 a-h

B.C. Binning  
*Optional Modules in Greys and Red*, unknown  
acrylic on canvas and wooden slats  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 84.6 a-c

B.C. Binning  
*St. Elmo's Shield*, 1968  
acrylic on composition board and wood  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 84.8

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled #24*, unknown  
acrylic on composition board  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 84.10

## B. C. Binning

*Bather*, c.1945

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled #25*, unknown  
acrylic on composition board  
Gift of Mrs. B.C. Binning  
VAG 84.11

B.C. Binning  
*Wine Leaves*, 1970  
silkscreen on paper  
Gift of J. Ron Longstaffe  
VAG 84.12

B.C. Binning  
*Kiss in Nine Pieces*, c.1970  
acrylic on canvas  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 85.56 a-i

B.C. Binning  
*St. Augustine's Shield*, 1967  
acrylic on composition board  
Gift of Mrs. B.C. Binning  
VAG 86.180

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*, 1954  
oil on burlap  
Gift of the O'Brien family, in memory of Michael J. O'Brien  
VAG 88.32

B.C. Binning  
*Optional Module*, 1970  
acrylic on canvas  
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Ben Kanee  
VAG 88.33 a-f

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*, c.1944  
ink on paper  
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund  
VAG 88.42

B.C. Binning  
*Flotilla in Primary Colours*, c.1955  
oil on burlap on hardboard  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Peacock  
VAG 89.9

B.C. Binning  
*Portrait of Jessie*, 1941  
oil on plywood  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 89.20

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*, c.1955  
oil, ink, pencil, metallic paint and metal hinges on wood and composition board  
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund  
VAG 89.23.2

## B. C. Binning

*Bather*, c.1945

B.C. Binning  
*Armouries*, 1943  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 89.62.1

B.C. Binning  
*Cariboo Scene*, 1943  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. B.C. Binning  
VAG 89.62.2

B.C. Binning  
*Cariboo Scene*, 1943  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. B.C. Binning  
VAG 89.62.3

B.C. Binning  
*555*, 1944  
ink, watercolour and pencil on paper  
Gift of Mrs. B.C. Binning  
VAG 89.62.4

B.C. Binning  
*Girl Painting*, 1940  
pen and ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. B.C. Binning  
VAG 89.62.5

B.C. Binning  
*Jessie*, 1940  
graphite on paper  
Gift of Mrs. B.C. Binning  
VAG 89.62.6

B.C. Binning  
*Nude*, 1944  
ink on wove paper  
Gift of Mrs. B.C. Binning  
VAG 89.62.7

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled (Young Girl Painting)*, 1941  
graphite on paper  
Gift of Mrs. B.C. Binning  
VAG 89.62.8

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled (Farm in the Cariboo)*, 1941  
graphite on paper  
Gift of Mrs. B.C. Binning  
VAG 89.62.9

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled (Farm in the Cariboo)*, 1941  
graphite on paper  
Gift of Mrs. B.C. Binning  
VAG 89.62.10

## B. C. Binning

*Bather*, c.1945

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled (Farm in the Cariboo)*, 1941  
graphite on paper  
Gift of Mrs. B.C. Binning  
VAG 89.62.11

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled (Farm in the Cariboo)*, 1941  
graphite on paper  
Gift of Mrs. B.C. Binning  
VAG 89.62.12

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled (Farm in the Cariboo)*, 1941  
graphite on paper  
Gift of Mrs. B.C. Binning  
VAG 89.62.13

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled (Farm in the Cariboo)*, 1941  
graphite on paper  
Gift of Mrs. B.C. Binning  
VAG 89.62.14

B.C. Binning  
*Dark Cloud*, 1969  
oil and gesso on canvas  
Gift of John S. Brock  
VAG 90.16

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled (Floats, Boat Rental and Fish Sign)*, 1941  
pencil on wove paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 90.72.1

B.C. Binning  
*Princess Alice*, 1945  
ink on wove paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 90.72.2

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled (Plant in Bloom, Rowers, Birds)*, 1943  
ink on wove paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 90.72.3

B.C. Binning  
*Cariboo*, 1941  
oil on wove paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 90.72.4

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled (Male seated Beside a Bureau)*, 1945  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 90.72.5

## B. C. Binning

*Bather*, c.1945

B.C. Binning  
*Flower Arrangement*, 1943  
ink on wove paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 90.72.6

B.C. Binning  
*Forest Interior*, 1943  
ink on wove paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 90.72.7

B.C. Binning  
*Forest and Plant Forms*, 1943  
ink on wove paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 90.72.8

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled (Water, Road, Air)*, 1943  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 90.72.9

B.C. Binning  
*Black and White Day*, c.1970  
acrylic on hardboard  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAg 90.73.1 a-c

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled Abstract*, 1970  
oil on canvas  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 90.73.2

B.C. Binning  
*Theme Painting*, 1953  
oil on burlap  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 91.40.1

B.C. Binning  
*Theme Painting*, 1955  
oil on burlap  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 91.40.2

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*, 1967-1968  
acrylic on canvas  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 91.40.3

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*, 1939  
goauche and graphite on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 91.40.4

## B. C. Binning

*Bather*, c.1945

B.C. Binning  
*Maquette for the Imperial Bank Mural*, 1957  
oil on canvas mounted on composition board  
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund  
VAG 92.2.1

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*, 1959  
screenprint on paper  
Gift of Gordon and Marion Smith  
VAG 92.8.3

B.C. Binning  
*Playground*, 1942  
linocut on laid paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 92.42.1

B.C. Binning  
*Nude Reflected*, 1943  
ink on wove paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 92.42.2

B.C. Binning  
*Young Painter*, 1944  
ink on paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 92.42.3

B.C. Binning  
*Student*, 1940-1949  
ink on cartridge paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 92.42.4

B.C. Binning  
*Bird Cage*, 1942  
pen and ink on wove paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 92.42.5

B.C. Binning  
*Two Cottages*, c.1940  
pen and ink on wove paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 92.42.6

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled* c.1970  
acrylic on canvas  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 92.42.7

B.C. Binning  
*Optional Module*, 1969-1970  
acrylic on canvas  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 92.42.8

## B. C. Binning

*Bather*, c.1945

B.C. Binning  
*Figures on Beach with Dog, Diving Platform, Dinghy and Boat*, 1945  
ink and watercolour on wove paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 92.42.9

B.C. Binning  
*Boats at a Dock*, 1945  
ink and watercolour on wove paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 92.42.10

B.C. Binning  
*Jessie and Bert*, 1945  
ink and watercolour on wove paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 92.42.11

B.C. Binning  
*Study for 555*, unknown  
ink and graphite on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 93.46.1

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*, 1945  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 93.46.2

B.C. Binning  
*Teatime, Gleneagles*, unknown  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 93.46.3

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*, 1941  
graphite on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 93.46.4

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*, 1945  
watercolour on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 93.46.5

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*, unknown  
graphite on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 93.46.6

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*, unknown  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 93.46.7

## B. C. Binning

*Bather*, c.1945

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*, 1945  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 93.46.8

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*, 1940  
graphite on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 93.46.9

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*, 1941  
pencil on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 93.46.10

B.C. Binning  
*Maquette for Untitled*, 1955  
paint, canvas, pulpboard, aluminum foil on wood and metal  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 94.46.1

B.C. Binning  
*Ivy Wall*, 1970  
screenprint on wove paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 94.46.2.1

B.C. Binning  
*Summer Ivy*, 1970  
screenprint on wove paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 94.46.2.2

B.C. Binning  
*Autumn Vine*, 1970  
screenprint on wove paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 94.46.2.3

B.C. Binning  
*Falling Leaves on Red Sky*, 1970  
screenprint on wove paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 94.46.2.4

B.C. Binning  
*Summer Vine*, 1970  
screenprint on wove paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 94.46.2.5

B.C. Binning  
*Garden Potting Shed*, c.1945  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 95.43.1

## B. C. Binning

*Bather*, c.1945

B.C. Binning  
*Wilson Grooming His Dog*, c.1945  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 95.43.2

B.C. Binning  
*Preparation for Tea at Rockcliffe*, c.1945  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 95.43.3

B.C. Binning  
*Sketch for Picnic (Jessie and Bert) and verso: Figure with Cup*, c.1945  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 95.43.4

B.C. Binning  
*View of Water, Boats Through Trees*, c.1945  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 95.43.5

B.C. Binning  
*Two Students*, 1945  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 95.43.6

B.C. Binning  
*Portrait of Seated Young Man*, 1943  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 96.12.1

B.C. Binning  
*Home, Garden, Store, Bicycle, Sea in Background*, 1944  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 96.12.2

B.C. Binning  
*Woman on Veranda Knitting*, 1945  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 96.12.3

B.C. Binning  
*Jessie at Tea Table*, c.1945  
graphite on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 96.12.4

B.C. Binning  
*National Hotel Rm. 9, Vernon, B.C.*, c.1945  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 96.12.5

## B. C. Binning

*Bather*, c.1945

B.C. Binning  
*209 Plaza Hotel, 1: Below Zero, Kamloops*, c.1945  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 96.12.6

B.C. Binning  
*Arbutus, Seaside Cottage and Woodpile*, c.1945  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 96.12.7

B.C. Binning  
*The White Horse*, 1939  
oil and graphite on hardboard  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 97.41.1

B.C. Binning  
*Sea People and Signal Tower*, 1950  
oil, gouache, gesso on plywood  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 97.41.2

B.C. Binning  
*Female Figure*, 1942  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 98.57.2

B.C. Binning  
*Old Stove, Pavilion*, 1942  
graphite on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 98.57.3

B.C. Binning  
*Sailor Beware*, c.1942  
graphite and pencil crayon on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 98.57.4

B.C. Binning  
*Figures on Beach*, c.1944  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 98.57.5

B.C. Binning  
*Lucy on Chair*, c.1944  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 98.57.6

B.C. Binning  
*People on Deck*, c.1944  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 98.57.7

## B. C. Binning

*Bather*, c.1945

B.C. Binning  
*Tea at Rockliffe*, 1945  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 98.57.8

B.C. Binning  
*Bather*, c.1945  
ink and watercolour on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 98.57.9

B.C. Binning  
*Sailor in Boat*, c.1945  
ink and watercolour on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 98.57.10

B.C. Binning  
*Suspicious Man*, c.1945  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 98.57.11

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*, 1952  
oil and gesso on board  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 99.39

B.C. Binning  
*Ships and Tower*, 1948  
oil on panel  
Gift of J. Ron Longstaffe  
VAG 2000.32.1

B.C. Binning  
*BCB by BCB*, c.1942  
ink on paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 2000.32.1

B.C. Binning  
*[Reclining Woman]*, c.1942  
ink on paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 2000.40.2

B.C. Binning  
*[Seated Woman]*, 1943  
ink on paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 2000.40.3

B.C. Binning  
*[Young Student]*, c.1944  
ink on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Jessie Binning  
VAG 2000.40.4

## B. C. Binning

*Bather*, c.1945

B.C. Binning  
*Untitled*, 1954  
oil on canvas  
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund  
VAG 2002.12

B.C. Binning  
*Nude*, c.1942  
ink on paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 2004.9.1

B.C. Binning  
*Eagle Island, boats in foreground*, 1945  
ink on paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 2004.9.2

B.C. Binning  
*Jessie having tea, two dogs*, 1942  
graphite, coloured pencil, charcoal on paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 2004.9.3

B.C. Binning  
*Plants, powerpoles, two houses*, 1943  
ink on paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 2004.9.4

B.C. Binning  
*Table and Stil Life*, 1942  
graphite on paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 2004.9.5

B.C. Binning  
*Five dinghies, moored sailboat, tree*, 1941-42  
graphite on paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 2004.9.6

B.C. Binning  
*Still Life*, 1938-39  
ink on paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 2004.9.7

B.C. Binning  
*Neville Reid*, 1941  
graphite on paper  
Gift of Jessie Binning  
VAG 2004.9.8

B.C. Binning  
*Musicians*, c.1945  
ink and watercolour on paper  
Gift of Jesse Binning  
VAG 2004.9.9

B. C. Binning  
Bather, c.1945

## Further Reading

*B.C. Binning: A Classical Spirit.* Victoria: Art Gallery of Victoria, 1986.

*B.C. Binning: A Retrospective.* Vancouver: UBC Fine Arts Gallery, 1973.

Thom, Ian M. *Form and Meaning: The Drawings of B.C. Binning.* Vancouver: Charles H. Scott Gallery, 1997.

*Vancouver Art Gallery Collection: B.C. Binning.* Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1994.

## Exhibition History

### Exhibitions at the Vancouver Art Gallery

*75 Years of Collecting: The Road to Utopia.* September 23, 2006 - January 1, 2007.

## Archival History

### Acquisitions Justification

*Acquisition Record*

1998

[transcription]

**Bertram Charles Binning**  
b. 1909, Medicine Hat, Alberta  
d. 1976, Vancouver

10 works -see attached list

**Alistair Macready Bell**  
b. 1913, Darlington, England  
d. 1997, Vancouver

**Bittern 1975**  
drypoint  
10.7 x 7.5 cm (impression)

**Donor** Mrs. Jessie Binning  
**Appraised Value:** tbd (PADAC)

**Provenance:** estate of the artist; gift of the artist (Bell)  
**Exhibited:** see attached list

Bertram Charles Binning has been described as "one of the great influences on the development of the contemporary school of West Coast painting." He studied at the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts under Charles Scott, Frederick Varley and Jock Macdonald (1927-32), at the University of Oregon (1936), at the Central School of Art, the Westminster School of Art and the Ozenfant Academy (under Amedee Ozenfant and Henry Moore) in London, England (1938). Since the mid 1940s Binning exhibited his drawings and paintings internationally while being active in Vancouver's academic community



## B. C. Binning *Bather*, c.1945



(Vancouver was home to Binning since his family moved to this city in 1913). He was appointed Instructor of Drawing at Vancouver School of Art (1934-39) and was Assistant Professor, School of Architecture, U.B.C. (1949), Associate Professor (1955-61), Professor (1961-1974) and Head of the Department of Fine Arts, U.B.C. (1955-1968) which he founded in 1955. B.C. Binning received numerous awards in his lifetime including the Allied Arts Award, Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (1962) and a Doctor of Letters from U.B.C. in 1974, the year he retired from the university.

The work of B.C. Binning is known for its formalist use of clean lines, geometric shapes and rich sense of color. His activity as a painter is in two periods, around the time of his training and then, following a very successful series of pencil and ink drawings, after 1948. The later period lasted until a few years before his death and eventually moved into complete abstraction and colour experiments.

The Vancouver Art Gallery has a major collection of works by B.C. Binning which has been developed over the last decade with the assistance of Mrs. Jessie Binning. The collection has been built with attention to both paintings and drawings. The present group of ten works will complement the existing collection by providing the Gallery with new subject matters and drawings in a variety of media from an important point in his career. The works represent a good cross-section of the type of drawing activity which Binning became best known for—lively ink renderings with close attention to form and pattern. The watercolours are also typically bright in spirit and form and many of these works have been exhibited previously. The majority were included in an exhibition of Binning's work organized in 1979-80 at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and some were included in the recent showing of Binning's drawings at the Charles H. Scott Gallery.

This selection was made as part of a longstanding commitment to build the holdings of Binning works on paper at the VAG and with a view to strengthening weaker areas of our holdings. The works are all in fairly good condition, given the fact that Binning generally employed poor materials. As Binning generally used India ink, which is extremely stable in aqueous baths, we anticipate that considerable

improvement will be possible in the discoloured works. Two of the drawings have previously been conserved and are therefore in superb condition.

The addition of this group of works will give the VAG the most comprehensive and important collection of Binning works on paper in public hands.

Along with the 10 works by B.C. Binning, Mrs. Binning has offered the Gallery a single work by Alistair Bell. While primarily self taught, Bell studied life drawing at the Vancouver School of Art in the 1930s and etching and lithography at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London, England (1959). He began to exhibit nationally in the early fifties and from 1967 on pursued printmaking full time. His work has been included in many international graphics exhibitions since 1957 including Pan American Graphics Biennale, Santiago (1963 and 1965) and International Exhibition of Contemporary Xylography, Museum of Modern Art, Madrid (1972). Bell's work is held in collections around the world including Museum of Modern Art, New York; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and the National Gallery of Canada. A major national touring retrospective exhibition of Bell's work was organized by the Burnaby Art Gallery in 1971 and a major retrospective was held at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria in 1982. Bell's drawings and graphics were seen in solo exhibitions at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1951, 1957 and 1961.

Bell's long devotion to the graphic media — drypoint, etching, wood engraving and woodcut — has resulted in a distinguished body of work. Although widely varied in technique, subject and scale his prints are marked by strong, linear

B. C. Binning  
*Bather*, c.1945

patterns, an acute sense of composition and a deep understanding of the forms of his subjects. A draftsman of unusual skill, Bell is also a keen observer, discarding superfluous detail or "accurate" anatomy and colouring, in favour of the essence—the spirit of this subject. This small drypoint, *Bittern*, is typical of his direct approach to animal subject matter and the use of line on a plate. The Gallery has 37 works by the late artist in the collection and this print will make a fine addition to our holdings of works by both Bell and of B.C. graphics in general. The work is slightly discoloured but should respond well to conservation.

Recommend acceptance.

Research: Linda Sawchyn  
Assistant Curator

**ACQUISITION CONDITION REPORT**  
Conservation  
1998-10-05

**[transcription of excerpt]**

VANCOUVER ART GALLERY

**ACQUISITION CONDITION REPORT**  
WORKS OF ART ON PAPER

IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: TL 98.136.8  
ARTIST: BC Binning  
MEDIUM: ink and watercolor on paper  
TITLE: Bather  
DIMENSIONS: 46.5 x 35.3  
DATE: 1945  
EXISTING CONDITION REPORT: No  
DETAILS: unsigned

**SUPPORT**  
medium weight, machine made paper, cream colored.  
Slightly discolored overall. Brown-gummed paper tape (1.0 cm wide) around all edges on front of work.  
Reverse: 8 pieces of Brown-gummed paper tape on reverse  
2 Japanese paper hinges along T edge.  
-2.5 vertical line of graphite? near center of reverse.

**MEDIUM**  
TYPE: ink drawing (black) with watercolor  
GENERAL CONDITION: good

EXAMINED BY: Monica Smith  
DATE: Oct 5/98



**B. C. Binning**  
*Bather, c.1945*

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